



Deuteronomy

A Verse-By-Verse Study

By Pastor Charlie Garrett

Copyright 2022, Emlen S. "Charlie" Garrett. All Rights reserved

SuperiorWord.org

(Rev 1)

CONTENTS

(Hyperlinked: Clicking a reference will take you to that location)

Deuteronomy 1:1-4	(An Eleven Days' Journey)	5
Deuteronomy 1:5-8	(Go in and Possess the Land)	23
Deuteronomy 1:9-25	(At the Door, Ready to Enter)	40
Deuteronomy 1:26-33	(The Goer Before You – HE)	61
Deuteronomy 1:34-46	(Many Days in Kadesh).....	79
Deuteronomy 2:1-12	(You Have Skirted This Mountain Long Enough)	99
Deuteronomy 2:13-23	(From the Midst of the Camp).....	118
Deuteronomy 2:24-37	(The Defeat of Sihon, King of Heshbon)	137
Deuteronomy 3:1-11	(The Defeat of Og, King of Bashan)	157
Deuteronomy 3:12-20	(Until the LORD Has Given Rest)	174
Deuteronomy 3:21-29	(Speak No More to Me of This Matter).....	191
Deuteronomy 4:1	(That You May Live).....	210
Deuteronomy 4:2-7	(For Whatever Reason We May Call Upon Him)	229
Deuteronomy 4:8-14	(That They May Teach Their Children)	249
Deuteronomy 4:15-24	(The Form of the Lord).....	268
Deuteronomy 4:25-31	(Seek the Lord Your God).....	289
Deuteronomy 4:32-40	(There Is No Other)	309
Deuteronomy 4:41-49	(On the East Side of the Jordan).....	328
Deuteronomy 5:1-6	(From Bondage to Bondage)	348
Deuteronomy 5:7-16	(Learning Vicariously - Hopefully!, Part I).....	368
Deuteronomy 5:17-22	(Learning Vicariously - Hopefully!, Part II)	389
Deuteronomy 5:23-33	(Now, Therefore, Why Should We Die?).....	410
Deuteronomy 6:1-5	(The Lord Our God, the Lord is One)	429
Deuteronomy 6:6-15	(Beware, Lest You Forget the Lord)	449
Deuteronomy 6:16-25	(Then It Will Be Righteousness for Us).....	468
Deuteronomy 7:1-8	(Because the Lord Loves You).....	487
Deuteronomy 7:9-16	(The Covenant and the Mercy).....	508
Deuteronomy 7:17-26	(The Great and Awesome God).....	528
Deuteronomy 8:1-9	(Man Shall Not Live by Bread Alone)	549
Deuteronomy 8:10-20	(And You Shall Remember the Lord Your God)	569
Deuteronomy 9:1-6	(Not Because of Your Righteousness)	588
Deuteronomy 9:7-17	(And the Mountain Burned with Fire).....	607
Deuteronomy 9:18-29	(Forty Days and Forty Nights Before the Lord).....	624

Deuteronomy 10:1-11	(Two Tablets of Stone Like the First)	644
Deuteronomy 10:12-22	(He Is Your Praise, and He Is Your God)	664
Deuteronomy 11:1-12	(Until You Came to this Place)	683
Deuteronomy 11:13-21	(Like the Days of the Heavens Above the Earth).....	703
Deuteronomy 11:22-32	(The Blessing and the Curse)	722
Deuteronomy 12:1-7	(The Place Where the Lord Your God Chooses, Part I).....	740
Deuteronomy 12:8-19	(The Place Where the Lord Your God Chooses, Part II)	759
Deuteronomy 12:20-32	(You Shall Not Add to It nor Take Away from It).....	781
Deuteronomy 13:1-5	(You Shall Walk After the Lord Your God, Part I).....	802
Deuteronomy 13:6-18	(You Shall Walk After the Lord Your God, Part II)	822
Deuteronomy 14:1, 2	(Sons of the Lord God)	841
Deuteronomy 14:3-21	(A Holy People to the Lord).....	860
Deuteronomy 14:22-29	(The Tithes of Israel)	879
Deuteronomy 15:1-11	(Ha'Shemitah - The Remission).....	900
Deuteronomy 15:12-23	(The Lord Your God Redeemed You).....	921
Deuteronomy 16:1-8	(A Passover to the Lord your God)	938
Deuteronomy 16:9-12	(You Shall Keep the Feast of Weeks)	957
Deuteronomy 16:13-22	(Observe the Feast of Tabernacles)	973
Deuteronomy 17:1-13	(Shall Be Put to Death the Dead)	992
Deuteronomy 17:14-20	(A King Over Israel).....	1010
Deuteronomy 18:1-8	(The Lord is His Inheritance)	1031
Deuteronomy 18:9-14	(An Abomination to the LORD).....	1050
Deuteronomy 18:15-22	(A Prophet Like Moses)	1068
Deuteronomy 19:1-13	(You Shall Prepare to You the Way).....	1086
Deuteronomy 19:14-21	(The False Witness).....	1104
Deuteronomy 20:1-9	(Conduct for War, Part I).....	1122
Deuteronomy 20:10-20	(Conduct for War, Part II)	1141
Deuteronomy 21:1-9	(And Atonement Shall Be Provided).....	1162
Deuteronomy 21:10-17	(The Rights of Wives in Israel)	1182
Deuteronomy 21:18-23	(He Who Is Hanged Is Accursed of God)	1203
Deuteronomy 22:1-12	(That You May Prolong Your Days).....	1224
Deuteronomy 22:13-21	(I Found That She Was Not a Virgin)	1243
Deuteronomy 22:22-30	(You Shall Put Away the Evil).....	1260
Deuteronomy 23:1-14	(Holy Conduct Before the Lord, Part I).....	1279
Deuteronomy 23:15-25	(Holy Conduct Before the Lord, Part II)	1300
Deuteronomy 24:1-4	(A Certificate of Divorce)	1320

Deuteronomy 24:5-22	(Remember What the Lord your God Did)	1343
Deuteronomy 25:1-10	(A Brother in Israel)	1362
Deuteronomy 25:11-19	(You Shall Not Forget).....	1381
Deuteronomy 26:1-11	(The First of the Fruit).....	1398
Deuteronomy 26:12-19	(The Third Year – The Year of Tithing)	1418
Deuteronomy 27:1-10	(An Altar of Stones)	1437
Deuteronomy 27:11-26	(All the Words of This Law)	1456
Deuteronomy 28:1-14	(The Blessings and the Curses, Part I).....	1477
Deuteronomy 28:15-29	(The Blessings and the Curses, Part II)	1498
Deuteronomy 28:30-37	(The Blessings and the Curses, Part III).....	1519
Deuteronomy 28:38-44	(The Blessings and the Curses, Part IV).....	1540
Deuteronomy 28:45-51	(The Blessings and the Curses, Part V)	1560
Deuteronomy 28:52-61	(The Blessings and the Curses, Part VI).....	1578
Deuteronomy 28:62-68	(The Blessings and the Curses, Part VII)	1598
Deuteronomy 29:1-9	(I Have Led You Forty Years in the Wilderness).....	1618
Deuteronomy 29:10-19	(That He May Establish You Today)	1638
Deuteronomy 29:20-29	(The Secret Things)	1657
Deuteronomy 30:1-10	(The Lord Your God Will Circumcise Your Heart).....	1675
Deuteronomy 30:11-20	(For He Is Your Life)	1694
Deuteronomy 31:1-8	(Then Moses Called Joshua)	1713
Deuteronomy 31:9-13	(So Moses Wrote This Law).....	1731
Deuteronomy 31:14-21	(A Witness for Me Against the Children of Israel)	1748
Deuteronomy 31:22-30	(A Witness Against You)	1768
Deuteronomy 32:1-6	(The Song of Moses, Part I)	1786
Deuteronomy 32:7-14	(The Song of Moses, Part II)	1805
Deuteronomy 32:15-22	(The Song of Moses, Part III).....	1826
Deuteronomy 32:23-33	(The Song of Moses, Part IV).....	1845
Deuteronomy 32:34-43	(The Song of Moses, Part V).....	1865
Deuteronomy 32:44-52	(Because You Did Not Hallow Me).....	1886
Deuteronomy 33:1-5	(The Lord Came From Sinai)	1907
Deuteronomy 33:6-11	(Moses Blesses Israel, Part I)	1925
Deuteronomy 33:12-17	(Moses Blesses Israel, Part II).....	1944
Deuteronomy 33:18-22	(Moses Blesses Israel, Part III).....	1962
Deuteronomy 33:23-29	(Moses Blesses Israel, Part IV)	1979
Deuteronomy 34:1-12	(You Shall Not Cross Over There).....	1996

Deuteronomy 1:1-4 (An Eleven Days' Journey)

Today, we enter into our first sermon from the last book of Moses. Before we go even one more thought, it must be stated that the Law of Moses is not an end in and of itself. It is a part of God's unfolding revelation, which – by itself – is incomplete.

Unfortunately, the Jews as a collective whole, still reject some or all of the further revelation of what He has presented to the world. But equally unfortunately, so have many supposed Christians, who bear that title in name only.

The New Testament clearly reveals that the New Covenant has superseded the Old. It is done, it is obsolete, it is set aside, it is annulled, and it is nailed to the cross. Christ fulfilled it, He called out "It is finished," and He died, thus releasing us from the bondage of the law.

However, this does not mean that the law serves no purpose. In fact, without the law, we wouldn't understand our need for grace. A thousand times a thousand points of theology find their basis in the law as well. And, of the Law of Moses, Deuteronomy holds a very special place. Adam Clarke realized this and penned these words to consider–

"The Book of Deuteronomy and the Epistle to the Hebrews contain the best comment on the nature, design, and use of the law; the former may be considered as an evangelical commentary on the four preceding books, in which the spiritual reference and signification of the different parts of the law are given, and given in such a manner as none could give who had not a clear discovery of the glory which was to be revealed. It may be safely asserted that very few parts of the Old Testament Scriptures can be read with greater profit by the genuine Christian than the Book of Deuteronomy."

Clarke spoke of "the glory which was to be revealed." He certainly is referring to Christ Jesus who not only came under this law, but who also gave forth this law, taught this same law to the people of Israel, and who then died in fulfillment of it.

Without knowing Deuteronomy, we cannot appreciate the life of Jesus Christ, nor can we appreciate the things He said and taught to the people He dwelt amongst. And so, as is right and fitting, we begin our trek today through this marvelous piece of literature known as Deuteronomy.

Text Verse: *“The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd. ¹² And further, my son, be admonished by these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is wearisome to the flesh. ¹³ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:
Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man’s all.
¹⁴ For God will bring every work into judgment,
Including every secret thing,
Whether good or evil.” Ecclesiastes 12:11-14*

I chose these words for our text verse because they speak of goads, used to prod us along into an understanding of what God intends for us. In a few minutes, you will hear about a nice pattern which includes the thought of goads in it. The two fit together so well that it seemed natural to cite Solomon here.

He says that we are to “Fear God and keep His commandments.” Unfortunately, people take verses like that, and others from the New Testament, and they misapply them to the Christian. Such is an error in theology – a serious and eternity-changing error.

We are to understand all things revealed in the Bible in their intended context. In properly understanding God’s dispensations, and in applying verses in the context of those dispensations, we won’t be led down the wrong path concerning what commandments we are to be obedient to, and what it means for us when we fail to do so.

Let us be sure to take the book of Deuteronomy in its intended context. It is a part of the tutoring mankind needs in order to be brought to that marvelous Gift of grace which is found in Jesus Christ our Lord. And believe it or not, that is even revealed in the book of Deuteronomy itself.

The very book which proclaims the laws for Israel, also gives us hints and pictures of its own fulfillment and ending. Marvelous, isn’t it! It’s all to be found in His superior word. And so, let’s turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. An Introduction

The book of Deuteronomy is the fifth book of the Law of Moses and of the Holy Bible. Its Hebrew name is derived from the first words of the book, *elleh ha’devarim*, which

literally means “These *are* the words.” However, it is generally simply called *Devarim*, or “Words.”

In Hebrew, the word consists of the letters *dalet*, *beit*, *resh*, *yod*, and *mem* which numerically equal 256. This is numerically the same as the Hebrew word, *dorbon*, or goad, that is a word used by Solomon as he closes out the book of Ecclesiastes, as we saw in our text verse today –

“The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd.” Ecclesiastes 12:11

Therefore, we would be wise to use the book of Deuteronomy to goad us into a better understanding of God’s wonderful story of redemption as it points to the Person and work of Christ.

It is also the same numerical value as the name Amariah, or “Yah Said.” As this book is a recounting of the words of the Lord, that is a most apt description of the book’s contents. It is also the numerical value of the phrases *l’olam v’ed*, or “forever and ever” which is commonly found in Scripture; and *hittiv mealelim*, or “to make one’s actions good.”

Both of these in Hebrew have a numerical value of 256. The law stands forever and ever as a witness against man, but one’s actions can be made good through the fulfillment of this law by Another, if that imputation is accepted. Christ fulfilled it, and we can be granted His righteousness through an act of faith.

As far as the dating of Deuteronomy, there is dispute as to when this, along with the other 4 books of Moses, was written. However, the conservative and traditional dating can be figured based on when Solomon’s Temple was built. By tracing back from that day as stated in 1 Kings 6:1, which indicates 480 years from the Exodus, we can assert with relative confidence that it was penned in the year 1405 BC.

The Exodus occurred in the year 2514 Anno Mundi. This is now the ending of the fortieth year since the Exodus, as is noted in Deuteronomy 1:3. Therefore, it is recorded in the 11th month of the year 2554 Anno Mundi.

The timeframe for the writing of the book goes from the 1st day of the 11th month of the 40th year (Deuteronomy 1:3) until maybe as late as sometime in the twelfth month. This is certain because at the death of Moses, it says that Israel mourned for him for thirty

days (Deuteronomy 34:8). After that, the first recorded date in the book of Joshua is the 10th day of the 1st month of the 41st year.

A period of at least three (or more) days preceded that, as is recorded in Joshua 1 & 2. Therefore, Moses died no later than the 7th day of the 12th month of the 40th year, possibly earlier. As his death is recorded in Deuteronomy, the book took five weeks, or less, to be spoken out and recorded. However, the final note that the people mourned for Moses for thirty days must be added to that to complete the narrative.

The English name for the book is derived from the Greek name given to it from the words *deuteros* and *nomos*, or literally, “second law.” This Greek title surely means “a copy” or “a repetition,” rather than the actual etymological sense of “a second law,” meaning something different. The English name then comes from the Latin Vulgate translation out of the Greek which says *Deuteronomium*.

However, both of these ideas spring from Deuteronomy 17:18. In that verse, the king of Israel is commanded to write down his own copy of this law. There, the Hebrew reads, *mishneh ha’torah*, meaning a copy or double of the law. The Greek translation of that then says *deuteronomion*, meaning “this second law,” and thus, “a copy of this law.”

As far as a historical context, the book is given as a reiteration and expansion on the words given by the Lord at Sinai. There are recountings of the events which occurred in the wilderness, and which led the people to their time of punishment for having rejected the Lord. There is also the speaking forth of the commandments of the Lord to the people, imploring them to stand fast on the law and to not deviate from it.

The final four chapters of Deuteronomy include the passing of Moses’ authority from him to Joshua, the next leader of the people of Israel. This is followed by the second Song of Moses, the first having come after the crossing of the Red Sea. And, also found there is the blessing of Moses upon the tribes of Israel. And finally, there is the record of the death of Israel’s great lawgiver upon Mount Nebo, outside of the Land of Promise.

There are, obviously, challenges to the authorship of the book. However, the book ascribes the words to Moses in its first verse. Numerous Old Testament passages ascribe the writings of the books of Moses to Moses, and – more importantly – Jesus cites the words of Deuteronomy and attributes them to Moses. For example, Jesus cites Deuteronomy 24 in this manner –

They said to Him, “Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?”

⁸ He said to them, “Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. ⁹ And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.”

ˆMatthew 19:7-9

One must dismiss the words of the Lord Jesus in order to state that Moses was not the author. In doing so, then, all of His words become suspect. The same is true with Paul, who attributes Deuteronomy to Moses in Romans 10:19, and in 1 Corinthians 9:9. Rather, Moses is unquestionably the author of all five books attributed to him.

The location of the writing of the book is outside of the Land of Promise, in the plains of Moab, just across from Jericho – right where the book of Numbers left off. Here, in that location, Moses makes his heartfelt appeal to the people concerning the law he had received and passed on to them.

Rather than statements of law coming directly from the Lord, the words here are generally commandments and admonitions from Moses concerning that same law. For example, in Leviticus 26, a passage which details the blessings and curses which Israel could expect for adherence to the law, the words are in the first person, from the Lord Himself, “I will.”

However, in the parallel passage found in Deuteronomy 28, they are spoken by Moses in the third person, “The Lord will.” Moses is confirming that what the Lord said will, in fact, come to pass. All of the blessings and joy, and all of the curses and horror, that were spoken out to their fathers still apply, even after they had all perished.

Concerning a redemptive context, Deuteronomy is a part of the Law of Moses. It is a law which has, thus far, been filled with pictures of Christ, including His cross. Malachi 4 will state –

“Remember the Law of Moses, My servant,
Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel,
With the statutes and judgments.

⁵ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet
Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

⁶ And he will turn

The hearts of the fathers to the children,
And the hearts of the children to their fathers,
Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.” Malachi 4:4-6

The important thing to remember is that the law of Moses anticipated the coming of Messiah. The prophets continued to call out this fact, and through Jeremiah came the promise of a New Covenant. In the call of Malachi to “Remember the Law of Moses,” it was a call to remember what Moses himself anticipated – Messiah. Deuteronomy is no different.

In Deuteronomy 18, Moses anticipated Another who would come in a manner similar to himself, meaning a Prophet who would also be the instrument through which a covenant would be enacted –

“I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. ¹⁹ And it shall be *that* whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require *it* of him.” Deuteronomy 18:18, 19

This is not an unreasonable analysis. Rather, it is exactly what the people of Israel anticipated as they cited the substance of these words when questioning John the Baptist, “Are you the Prophet?” (John 1:21). In other words, Deuteronomy, and the laws contained in it, were anticipatory of Christ.

Paul explains this in Galatians where he notes that the law was a tutor to lead the people of Israel to Christ, the embodiment and fulfillment of this law. The impossibility of the people of Israel to live by the words of Moses is highlighted time and again in Scripture. They – based on the words of Moses – became an object lesson to the people of the world of our desperate need for the righteousness of Christ.

But the Law of Moses itself, and indeed that which is highlighted in Deuteronomy, includes the doctrine of eternal salvation. Corporate Israel, being used as a template for individuals in Christ, is promised to endure despite their infractions of the law. The punishments and curses are inevitable, but the promise of faithfully being kept as a people is highlighted. God will never forsake those whom He has covenanted with.

Although there are several key thoughts and verses in the book, probably the main thought upon which all others hinge is found in Chapter 30 where it says –

“I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; ²⁰ that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He *is* your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.” Deuteronomy 30:19, 20

The failure of the people to do what is said there set the tone for all of Israel’s history, and it defines the mercy of the Lord in both preserving Israel, and in sending the Messiah to accomplish that which they could not do.

The first book of Moses, Genesis, looked to the work of God the Father through Christ in creation – directing that creation in the initial process of redemption.

The second book of Moses, Exodus, then looked to the work of God the Son in Christ in the actual redemptive process, mirroring His own work countless times.

The third book of Moses, Leviticus, highlighted the work of the Holy Spirit applying the purification and sanctification of Christ to the people of God.

The fourth book of Moses, Numbers, highlighted the crucified Savior who rose to lead His people in the wilderness of their lives, ever faithful to bring them along the path of life, difficult as it may be, and despite their faithlessness along the way.

This fifth and final book of Moses, will highlight the deeds of the Savior who fulfilled the laws which the people will be unable to meet. The infection is too deep, the sin is too prevalent in them, and without Messiah, there is simply no hope. But five is the number of grace.

Deuteronomy, though being a book of law, something which excludes grace – if taken in the context of Christ Jesus – is a book which literally exudes it. The grace of God is found in the thought that, “I have revealed to you My standard. Your history will bear out the fact that you cannot meet it. And so, I will meet it for you. I offer you the grace of the fulfillment of it in My Son.”

In all five books of Moses, it is Christ, the anticipated Son of God, who is on prominent display. Nothing is more obvious, and in a thousand different ways this should be evident. When the book of Deuteronomy is complete, the Person and work of Jesus

Christ will stand as a testimony to God's healing of His people through this law. Not in their accomplishment of it, but in His.

If we were to sum up the book of Deuteronomy with a single thought which carries us from Numbers and then into the continued life of Israel, it would be that "The Lord has given His standard to His people, and despite our failure to meet that standard, the grace of God found in Jesus Christ meets it for us."

And that thought brings us to our final words of this introduction. Though a Prophet was promised by God and anticipated by the people, this is not the highest Christological anticipation and expression to be found in Deuteronomy. Rather, that is found in these words –

"If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, ²³ his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you *as* an inheritance; for he who is hanged *is* accursed of God." Deuteronomy 21:22, 23

Paul cites those words in Galatians and ascribes them to Jesus –

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree'), ¹⁴ that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Galatians 3:13, 14

The law brings a curse, and Christ fulfilled that law, even becoming a curse for His people. The grace of God is the performance of this law by His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

*A new book to study, seeking out its veins of gold
A new adventure as we seek the Lord's face
Thirty-four chapters set before us, ready to unfold
Lessons for all people, in every generation and every place*

*What is in store for us as we begin our trek?
Deuteronomy seems so vast and complicated at this time
Will we have a headache even down to our neck?
Or will the book come to seem glorious and sublime?*

*Open our eyes, O Lord, to what lies ahead
Direct the understanding of our eyes and our heart
This is what we petition; looking to be fed
This is what we ask for, today as we start*

*Show us the riches of Christ in this new book
Be with us as we open it, and for its treasures we look*

II. And Moses Spoke (verses 1-4)

The first four verses of Deuteronomy are a form of introduction, giving information concerning the author, the intended recipient, the location, a detailed record of how they came to be here, a note concerning the state of the recipient – meaning an indictment upon Israel – the dating, and the events which immediately preceded the now-to-be introduced account.

¹These *are* the words which Moses spoke

elleh ha'devarim asher dibber Moshe – “These the words which spoke Moses.” As we saw in the introduction, the second word, *devarim*, or “words,” is the Hebrew name of the book of Deuteronomy.

What is explicit is that the book claims to contain the very words of Moses, not something penned hundreds of years, or even a millennium later – as is claimed by revisionist “scholars.” Moses spoke out these words, and they were recorded at the time he spoke them out.

Also, the statement, “These *are* the words,” are used to make an attachment of this book to the previous books. It is a continuation of the narrative which began in Genesis and now moves forward in time.

Moses, or “He who draws out,” pictures Christ who draws out the words of the Father, as He said in John 14:24, “He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.”

¹ (con’t) to all Israel

el kal Yisrael – “to all Israel.” The recipient is Israel collectively. Though they may have only been spoken to a scribe who penned them, or to a group of leaders who sat as he

spoke, the intent is that they are meant for the ears, understanding, and action of the collective whole.

The importance of this is that despite the punishment of the fathers, all who died in the wilderness with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, the collective whole remained as one and was gathered together before their lawgiver.

As the wilderness wanderings clearly reflected the years of punishment and exile that Israel faced after the coming of Messiah, this is a note of the faithfulness of the Lord to keep Israel collectively united as a people, and to bring them to the point where they will, in fact, collectively enter into God's promised rest.

1 (con't) on this side of the Jordan

b'ever ha'yarden– “in side the Jordan.” The reference, as always, is from Canaan. Therefore, it should read, “on the other side of the Jordan,” or at best “on the side of the Jordan.”

ha'yarden, or “the Descender,” is a picture of Christ who descended from heaven to the lowest parts of the earth – just as the Jordan descends from the snowy heights of Hermon to the salted water of the Dead Sea. In the first verse of the book, there are already anticipatory pictures of Christ for us to taste and appreciate.

1 (con't) in the wilderness,

bamidbar – in the wilderness. Here begins a parenthetical thought. This is not speaking of the area where Moses and Israel now are. Rather, it is speaking of where they have been before getting here. In the Bible, the wilderness signifies an uncultivated area, not specifically a barren desert. It is a place of God's grace and of closeness to God, but it is also a place of testing.

For some, such as Israel, the testing resulted in disobedience. For others, such as when Christ was tested, it is a place of fellowship through obedience. The wilderness and the law are closely connected because it is by law that testing is accomplished.

1 (con't) in the plain opposite Suph,

ba'aravah mol suph – in plain opposite Suph. The names which are now mentioned are indeed perplexing. Israel is in the same location where Numbers ended, and yet the

description is entirely different. Further, Deuteronomy 4 provides a completely different description of this same spot, saying –

“Now this *is* the law which Moses set before the children of Israel. ⁴⁵ These *are* the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which Moses spoke to the children of Israel after they came out of Egypt, ⁴⁶ on this side of the Jordan, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon, whom Moses and the children of Israel defeated after they came out of Egypt.” Deuteronomy 4:44-46

Therefore, the names which are given have two possibilities. The first is that they are unknown locations in the area Israel is now at. Or, they are a summary of what has occurred over the past 38 years.

The latter is certainly correct. As with the term “in the wilderness,” everything here mentioned does not tie in with the location where Moses and Israel are now. Rather, it ties in with where they have been. Thus, it forms a map which is then explained in verse 3.

This may be confusing, but it is showing the results of Israel’s rejection of Christ. The names ask for us to consider them. The word “plain” is *aravah*, coming from *arav*, to darken. It is identical with *arav*, meaning a pledge or surety. The name Suph means, “reed.” However, it comes from the verb *suph*, signifying to come to an end, or cease. This an abbreviated form which is referring to *yam suph*, or the Red Sea.

^{1 (con’t)} **between Paran, Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab.**

ben paran u-ben tophel, v’lavan, v’khatseroth, v’di zahav – There are two things being said, not one. It reads, “1) between Paran, and 2) between Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Di-Zahav.”

Paran was the first main stop after leaving Sinai, as was recorded in Numbers 10:12. Paran comes from the same root as *porah*, meaning a branch. But the idea from which it comes is that of ornamentation. That is found in the root of both words, *paar*, signifying to beautify or glorify. Thus, it means “Glorious.”

It was there, back in that area, that the Lord had deposited His covenant law, a law which Paul calls “glorious” in 2 Corinthians 3. Paran was named in anticipation of

Messiah where the Lord would once again deposit a New Covenant in human form in the Person of Jesus Christ.

Tophel is found only here in Scripture. It comes from *taphel*, meaning whitewash, and thus it conveys the sense of being foolish. In Matthew, Jesus equated the scribes and Pharisees as whitewashed tombs, and in Acts, Paul called the high priest a whitewashed wall. Both give the sense of the law being used as a pretense.

Laban comes from *lavan*, meaning white, but that comes from a word which signifies a brick, because bricks whiten as they are fired. The word has consistently pictured works.

Hazereth means villages, and it implies a place of many people. It was seen in Numbers 11:35. And finally, Di-Zahab is actually two words which signify "Abounding in Gold." It is only seen this one time in the Bible. Gold usually gives the imagery of the divine, of the eternal nature of things, and holiness. However, here it carries another signification.

And so, we have six named places which are given to draw a map of the plain which Israel trekked on their way to Canaan, but which is recorded in reverse. Paran, or Glorious, is on one side to their right, and the other locations are on the other side, to their left. All of this is said to be opposite Suph, meaning opposite the Red Sea.

The Red Sea of this verse, and Mount Seir of the next verse, are both stated together in verse 2:1. Therefore, there must be a picture being given.

Before Israel enters the recounting of the law, a recounting of what occurred before they arrived at their current location will take place. "In the wilderness" is speaking of their time after leaving Sinai. The wilderness signifies a place of God's grace and yet of testing. It is in the plain, a place of pledge or surety. They will reach their goal, even if there is an extended delay before it comes.

It is opposite Suph, the place of ceasing, or the end, which speaks of the end of their bondage in Egypt. Mentioning this was to call to mind recollections of the bondage from which they had been redeemed. And, it is between Paran, or "glorious," and between "whitewash," "works," "villages," and "abounding in gold."

Everything looks to the nature of the law and how it is contrasted. On one side is the glory of Christ, who fulfilled the law – signified by entrance into Canaan, and on the other side is the futility of returning to the law instead of towards Christ.

Either one can use the law in a negative way, or in a positive way. If one uses the law as a personal means to an end, as Israel did, then there is only futility. But if one uses the law as a means of learning and having it lead to Christ – who embodies the law – then there will be reward. The law doesn't change either way, but the destiny of the person does, based on how he uses it.

In other words, what the specificity of all of the locations and geographical descriptions is pointing to is the need for Christ, the only One who was able to do the works of the law. It is trust in Him and His works – and only that – which can satisfy.

The final place mentioned, Di-Zahab, or “Abounding in Gold,” is actually the starting point. The locations to the left of Israel work backward in direction, as if Israel is turning from the Lord and back to the law. It takes the reader back to Sinai where the people worshipped the golden calf.

At that time, Moses took the calf, crushed it to powder and threw it into the brook that came down from the mountain. There he made the people drink of the water which bore the sin of their idolatry. Hence, the place was “abounding in gold,” as the name implies.

As one can see, Paran to the right looks to the promise of Christ. While Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab to the left look to life under the law and apart from Christ. The indictment for rejecting Christ is next seen...

² *It is eleven days' journey from Horeb by way of Mount Seir to Kadesh Barnea.*

Distances are computed based on how long they take to travel. Here, following the path – which was just described by Moses – under normal conditions, Moses shows that it would take eleven days to go from Horeb, meaning Mt. Sinai, to Kadesh Barnea.

Horeb means “Arid” or “Desert” which, interestingly, is similar to Zion, the mountain of God, which in one sense means “Dry Place.” It is the main name that will be used throughout the book of Deuteronomy. Horeb will be used 9 times, while “Mount Sinai” will be used only once.

The words of this verse may indeed mean that Israel actually only traveled for eleven days in the stops that are recorded in the Numbers account. Kadesh Barnea is the last stop before entering into the Land of Promise on that route.

It is the very spot where the spies returned and gave a bad report, and it is the place where Israel rejected the Lord and they were sentenced to wander until all that generation was dead.

A journey which would normally take eleven days, after which one would step into the Land of Promise, thus, turned into thirty-eight years. The words are recorded by Moses as a caustic indictment upon Israel for their faithlessness in rejecting the Lord. As for the number 11, Bullinger defines it saying –

“If ten is the number which marks the perfection of Divine order, then eleven is an addition to it, subversive of and undoing that order. If twelve is the number which marks the perfection of Divine government, then eleven falls short of it. So that whether we regard it as being $10 + 1$, or $12 - 1$, it is the number which marks, disorder, disorganization, imperfection, and disintegration.” EW Bullinger

If Israel had simply believed the Lord and trusted His word, on the twelfth day, they would have walked into the land and begun to subdue it. And such is true with Israel when they rejected Christ. If they had simply believed the word and received their Savior, they would have entered the promise. Instead, they found 2000 years of disorder, disorganization, imperfection, and disintegration.

As far as the term, *derek har Seir*, or “way of Mount Seir,” that doesn’t mean they traveled via “Mount Seir,” but rather, “which leads to Mount Seir.” I note that to avoid any confusion because, otherwise, the map of travels would make no sense.

Seir comes from *sear*, or hair. Hair represents awareness. Man is a cognitive being and Israel should have been aware of both the presence and the power of the Lord, but they rejected both and suffered because of it.

Here, the name Sinai is changed to Horeb, or Khorev. It means “Arid” or “Desert.” Kadesh Barnea is given its full name here. It means “Holy purifying wanderings.”

The people could have been purified and ready for entrance into Canaan, but in their rejection of the Lord, they entered into thirty-eight years of holy purifying wanderings. And all of that time, they were within only a few miles of the inheritance.

One can see that despite the past two thousand years of Israel’s rejection of Christ, they have been, literally, within a step of Him. All that any Jew needed to do was turn and call out and He would have heard.

For Israel by the Jordan, now that those years of wandering were ended, they were to be schooled, once again, in the law which was to be their guide in Canaan.

³ Now it came to pass in the fortieth year,

These words go back to before the parenthetical thought which began in verse 1. Moses is said to have spoken to Israel on the side of the Jordan. After that, came that parenthesis, and now the narrative resumes.

This is an especially notable year for the people, because it was explained to them in advance how long they would be under punishment. That was recorded in Numbers 14:34, 35 –

“According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, *namely* forty years, and you shall know My rejection. ³⁵ I the LORD have spoken this. I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.”

The Lord graciously counted the first year and two months – from the Exodus and the time at Sinai – into the total. This is also the year that Aaron died, on the 1st day of the 5th month. And, it will be the year of Moses’ death.

^{3 (con’t)} in the eleventh month, on the first *day* of the month,

This is the Hebrew month Shevet which is in the January/February timeframe. As Israel left Egypt on the 15th day of the first month, the expectation, if Israel is to take the Lord literally – as they should – is that they should pass into Canaan, the Land of Promise, in just about two months from this date. For now, it is said...

^{3 (con’t)} *that* Moses spoke to the children of Israel according to all that the LORD had given him as commandments to them,

This then begins the formal words which explain the purpose of Deuteronomy, even if those words have not yet begun. Moses will restate and expand upon what was previously instructed.

The words, though from Moses, are divinely inspired, and they both complement what has been received, and they bear the full weight and authority of what was directly

spoken by the Lord. Jesus, Paul, and the author of Hebrews all show that the Law of Moses is a unified whole and is to be taken as such. Before entering into that discourse, however, one more point of detail is given. It is that...

⁴ after he had killed Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon,

The “he” here is debated as to whether it is speaking of Moses or the Lord. Either way, the Lord led Moses, Moses led Israel, and Israel was the Lord’s instrument of battle. Therefore, ultimately, it is the Lord who accomplished the feat. This is noted elsewhere as such in Deuteronomy.

It is also repeated by the Gibeonites in Joshua 11, by Nehemiah in Nehemiah 9, and it is stated by the psalmist in Psalm 135 and again in Psalm 136. It is the Lord who provides the victory.

The battle against Sihon is recorded in Numbers 21:21-31. Here, like Numbers 21, it explicitly says that Sihon dwelt in Heshbon. This is important to note because of what it also says there –

“For Heshbon *was* the city of Sihon king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab, and had taken all his land from his hand as far as the Arnon.” Numbers 21:26

As noted, when we were in that chapter, Heshbon once belonged to Moab, but it was acquired by Sihon during a battle with them. This included all of the land up to the Arnon itself. Thus, it was not improper for Israel to take possession of that land.

The rule of war is that land lost in a battle which one has initiated is no longer theirs. Instead, it transferred to Sihon, and from Sihon it transferred to Israel. Neither Moab nor Ammon require explanation or payment for this transfer. But this land will become a point of contention at the time of the Judges, and Jephthah will recount what occurred here to defend Israel’s rights to it.

***⁴ (fin) and Og king of Bashan, who dwelt at Ashtaroth in Edrei.**

The battle against Og is recorded in Numbers 21 as well. The name Edrei refers to the place where Og was slain, not where he lived. That is recorded in Numbers 21 –

“And they turned and went up by the way to Bashan. So Og king of Bashan went out against them, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. ³⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Do not fear him, for I have delivered him into your hand, with all his people and his land; and you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon.” ³⁵ So they defeated him, his sons, and all his people, until there was no survivor left him; and they took possession of his land.”

-Numbers 21:33-35

The reason for including these two battles is to show that the Lord, not Moses, is the true leader of Israel. Though Moses will soon be dead, the instructions he is now to give are from the Lord, and the battles which brought them safely to this place were also won by the Lord. These battles will be recounted in the first two chapters.

The Lord led Israel all the way through their time of punishment, preserving them despite their rejection of Him. He then defeated any enemies that could have potentially stopped them from entry into the promise.

No obstacles at all remained, and all they have to do is to listen to the words of the Lord, accept them in light of Christ’s fulfillment of them, and then put the law behind them, signified by the coming death of Moses. From there, they will be prepared to advance through the Descender, meaning Christ, and receive their inheritance.

Though these things are yet future for Israel, they are sure to come about. The book is written, and it shall come to pass. Until then, God has been working out salvation on an individual basis for both Jew and Gentile.

It is offered through what these many types and pictures look forward to – Jesus Christ. It is He who can bring the weary soul to its place of rest, and it is offered through a simple act of faith. In faith we receive His accomplished work, and in faith we will be carried through to our meeting with Him some wonderful day.

As this is so, have faith. Call on Christ and be reconciled to God through Him.

Closing Verse: *“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.’ ¹¹ But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for ‘the just shall live by faith.’ ¹² Yet the law is not of faith, but ‘the man who does them shall live by them.’” Galatians 3:10-12*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 1:5-8 *Something they were to do, but which they rejected out of hand...* (Go in and Possess the Land) (2nd Deuteronomy sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

An Eleven Days' Journey

These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel
On this side of the Jordan (in the wilderness
In the plain opposite Suph
Between Paran, Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab)
-----is where he made his address

It is eleven days journey from Horeb, as we now know
By way of Mount Seir to Kadesh Barnea, is how to go

Now it came to pass in the fortieth year
In the eleventh month, on the month's first day
That Moses spoke to the children of Israel
According to all that the LORD had given him
-----as commandments to them, as to them He did say

After he had killed Sihon king of the Amorites
Who dwelt in Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, as well
Who dwelt at Ashtaroth in Edrei
On this side of the Jordan in the land of Moab, east of Israel

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 1:5-8 (Go in and Possess the Land)

Today, Moses will begin his words to Israel concerning what lies ahead. He will repeat the words of the Lord saying, “See, I have set the land before you; go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to your fathers—to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—to give to them and their descendants after them.”

The promise lies ahead, but what exactly is the promise? Is it the land of Canaan? Surely, the Lord promised the land, and He swore to them on oath that they would receive it. However, is that the sum of the promise? Or is there more? The land of Canaan is a small piece of land in the middle of a big world filled with land and people. If that was all there was to the promise, it would be a bit lacking.

Rather, other things are promised in Scripture which extend beyond the borders of Canaan. The New Jerusalem, for example, is rather large. My friend Kathleen emailed me a joke concerning it some time ago –

“A man who lives in the New Jerusalem comes home from work and says to his wife, “I had to go to a meeting across town today. Boy am I beat!”

Overlooking any theological errors in that, it still gets the point across. Canaan is about the size of a very small postage stamp on a very large box in comparison to New Jerusalem.

Text Verse: *“Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, With the statutes and judgments.” Malachi 4:4*

Moses is sitting on one side of the Jordan, and he is compiling words which are to become a part of the Law of Moses. But they are only a part of that law. Malachi speaks of Horeb. That is not where Moses is now. Thus, the words here are an extension of that law, but not the whole law.

Israel was admonished to “Remember the Law of Moses.” What does that mean? Were they expected to exactly follow every precept without fail? Well, yes. But there is more to the Law of Moses than rote observance of the laws, statutes, and judgments contained within it.

We will see this, and we will continue to see this, as we progress through this marvelous book of Law and of Anticipation. Great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let's turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Turn and Take Your Journey (verses 5-7)

⁵ On this side of the Jordan in the land of Moab,

Beginning our verses, the immediate thought is given to specify where the narrative is taking place. It is in the same place where the book of Numbers ended, *b'ever ha'yarden b'erez moav* – “in side the Jordan in land Moab.”

The Christological picture must be presented. Moses is the lawgiver, the land of promise anticipates the place of God's rest – meaning a restored paradise, or – as we say – heaven. The Jordan, or the Descender, pictures Christ who descended from heaven to earth. Moab means “From Father.”

As the lawgiver, representing the law, is outside of the Land of Promise, and as he will remain there, it signifies that the law can only bring one to the Lord Jesus, but one must go through the Lord, who is From Father – meaning He is the Son of God – in order to enter into God's promised rest.

The law, as Paul says in Galatians, is a tool which is given to lead man to Christ –

“Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. ²² But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. ²³ But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”

-Galatians 3:21-25

With this understanding...

⁵ (con't) **Moses began**

hoil moshe – “ventured Moses.” It is a rather rare word, *yaal*, having been used only three times so far. When Abraham was speaking to the Lord concerning the destruction of Sodom, knowing that Lot was there and desiring to save his life, he used this word twice. For example, in Genesis 18:27, it said –

“Then Abraham answered and said, ‘Indeed now, I who *am but* dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord:’” Genesis 18:27

This word, *yaal*, comes from a primitive root and gives the sense of undertaking something as an act of volition. Moses has voluntarily begun to speak out his words to the people of Israel. In this, it is specifically...

^{5 (con’t)} **to explain this law, saying,**

beer eth ha’torah ha’zot lemor – “Making distinct the law, the this, saying...” The words are very specific and direct, beginning with a new and rare word, *baar*. It is a verb meaning to make distinct or plain. It also comes from a primitive root which signifies to dig, and so by analogy it means to engrave.

Figuratively then, it may mean to explain distinctly. However, it is only used two other times, in Deuteronomy 27:8, and in Habakkuk 2:2. Citing those two times will reveal the intent of the word –

“And you shall write very plainly on the stones all the words of this law.”

-Deuteronomy 27:8

“Then the LORD answered me and said:

‘Write the vision

And make *it* plain on tablets,

That he may run who reads it.’” Habakkuk 2:2

Though it may be that this is simply referring to audible words, distinctly spoken, it is more probable that whether speaking or not, he is very specifically annotating the words of the law. This is what Luke said he was doing in Luke 1:1-4, and it is what Peter said he was doing in 2 Peter 1:15 while writing out his second epistle.

The fact that Moses is making the words distinct indicates that the words already exist. When one inscribes a tablet with words, it is because the words are there already and are simply being transcribed from either another document or from the mind, or so on.

The common scholarly sentiment that is drawn from Moses' words are similar to that of the Pulpit Commentary –

“This exposition of the Law was designed specially for the sake of those who, at the time the Law was first promulgated, either were not born or were incapable of understanding it (Grotius). The expression used by Moses plainly indicates that this book was not intended to furnish a second code of laws different from the former, but simply to explain and enforce what had before been enjoined.” Pulpit Commentary

Though this may be correct to some extent, the fact is that there are many things in Deuteronomy which are not found in the first four books of Moses. Though this may not be a second law, it goes beyond the substance of what has thus far been given.

And further, it is apparent that the first books of Moses were recorded. There are several times where it explicitly says Moses wrote down certain things. Further, the fact that we have the first four books of Moses, and which Jesus and the apostles state are divinely inspired words, it is clear that what is presented in Deuteronomy is more than just an explanation and enforcement of that which had already been given.

Rather, it is both a reiteration and a continuation of the books of Moses. As noted with the use of the word *baar*, the words already existed, but this does not necessarily mean that they are a repetition of words that are already recorded. Nor can it mean that, merely because of the additions and variations of what will be presented.

Rather, there is an imposition of the will of the Lord upon Moses to write out the words of this book. Moses felt that will, and he ventured to write it out. In other words, this book is given as a true prophetic utterance by the Lord through Moses.

Unlike the countless other times where it says, “And the Lord spoke to Moses saying,” this is a word given not “to” Moses, but “through” Moses. It then may be similar to Genesis, which is clearly ascribed to Moses, but which does not contain the words, “And the Lord spoke to Moses saying.”

What will be presented is in the first person, and yet it is the word of the Lord. Therefore, it is a book of prophecy in its most profound sense as it continues the presentation of the mind of the Lord which began with the words, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” This continuation now says...

⁶“The LORD our God

Yehovah elohenu – “Yehovah our God.” The term speaks of the covenant which united Israel with Yehovah. Though they had been under covenant curses for the past many years for disobeying the Lord, they were still the Lord’s people.

The picture of those years, that of Israel’s second exile and the 2000 years of living under the covenant curses, is exactly the same. The Lord never rejected them, as replacement theologians arrogantly state.

Rather, they were, and they are, in union with Yehovah because of the unbreakable covenant promises He made to them. Their violation of the covenant in no way negates His faithfulness to it.

^{6 (con’t)} **spoke to us in Horeb, saying:**

As noted last week, Horeb means “Arid” or “Desert.” The importance of this change of the name from Mt. Sinai to Horeb takes us all the way back to a commentary from Exodus 3. In Deuteronomy 1:1, it mentioned the *midbar*, or wilderness. Here in this verse it mentions that God *dabar*, or spoke, to Israel in Horeb.

The word *midbar*, or desert, is related to the word *dabar*, or spoke. The term “Mt. Sinai” consistently spoke in picture of the cross of Christ. Israel had rejected Christ’s work and was driven into the *midbar*, or wilderness. Now, Moses relays what the Lord spoke, or *dabar*, to Israel all the way back at Horeb, or “Arid.”

With this understanding, we can return to the comments made in Exodus 3. There we noted that Abarim states the following concerning these words –

"These two root-verbs are really quite adjacent in Hebrew thought. Note that the word מדבר (*midbar*) means wilderness (or desert), and the related verb דבר (*dabar*) means to speak. When Paul augments Isaiah's spiritual armor, he adds the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God ... Words commonly protrude from one’s mouth, and the mouth is typically a wet place, not a dry place. But it should be noted that the Meribah incident occurred at Horeb (Exodus 17:6), “Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.” Abarim

As can be seen, Moses used the name Horeb, or “Arid,” in Exodus 17. It may seem curious that the place where God is would be defined this way, but what is it that gives life? Water.

The Word of God proceeds from the wet place, the mouth, and the Word of God is where the water of life issues from. Horeb, the Arid place, is where the water came from the rock. Paul in the New Testament says this about that account –

“...all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.”

-1 Corinthians 10:3, 4

The word points to Christ. Israel arrived at Sinai and they rejected Christ. They then went into the *midbar*, or wilderness, to wander until they would again come to the word. Moses is now relaying the word of the Lord, that very word which speaks of Christ. The instruction is given to lead them to Christ.

As noted by Paul, the law is only a tutor to lead the people to Christ. In finding Christ, they will pass over Jordan and into the inheritance, while Moses, representative of the law, will remain outside of the promise.

After all of this, in short, we can say that Deuteronomy is given to lead the people to what they had missed. The intent of the law is to reveal Jesus. It is not an end in and of itself, but a path to find Christ. Jesus said as much –

“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. ⁴⁰ But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.” John 5:39, 40

But Jesus was even more direct in His words a moment later. He makes it absolutely clear that not only the Scriptures in general, but Moses in particular, spoke of Him –

“Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is *one* who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. ⁴⁶ For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. ⁴⁷ But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?” John 5:44-47

This is exactly why Malachi 4:4, our text verse today, said that the people were to remember the law of Moses. They were to consider it, find Christ, and come to Christ. It is also why Malachi said “Horeb” instead of “Mt. Sinai.” They had rejected the cross, they needed to go back to the word which issues from the wet place, while in the dry place, and pay heed to the word which issues forth life.

Understanding this, the book of Deuteronomy is a book which is to be searched out with Christ in mind. If it is, then it will make all the sense in the world. For those who cling to the law as a means to an end, they provide their own path to condemnation. For those who pursue it in light of Christ, they will find salvation.

The words which the Lord told them at Horeb, meaning Mount Sinai were...

⁶ (con't) **'You have dwelt long enough at this mountain.**

rav lakem shevet ba'har ha'zeh – “Long enough you have dwelt at the mountain the this.” The words have not been previously seen in Scripture. The Lord said them, but until now, they have not been recorded. Israel arrived in the Wilderness of Sinai at the beginning of the third month of the first year after leaving Egypt. They departed on the 20th day of the 2nd month of the second year. Thus, they were at Sinai a period of 350 days.

Christ had been presented to them in a thousand different ways – in the tabernacle, the sacrificial system, the Feasts of the Lord, and in so many other types and shadows. They had been numbered, ordered, and arranged – prepared as a people for the Lord's purposes. They had been provided with everything necessary which was needed for the fulfillment of the covenant and it was now time to go forward and enter the Land of Promise.

Israel could have left Horeb and entered Canaan, thus entering their rest. And 1500 years later, Israel could have accepted Christ and entered His rest. They were to depart from there and head toward Mount Zion, leaving the law and finding Christ.

This is what the author of Hebrews says. In Hebrews 12, he tells them that believers have not come “to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, ¹⁹ and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard *it* begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore” (vss. 18, 19)

Rather, they had come to Mount Zion. This is what Israel was told to do. It was time to leave the cross and enter the glory...

⁷ **Turn and take your journey, and go to the mountains of the Amorites, to all the neighboring *places* in the plain, in the mountains and in the lowland, in the South and**

on the seacoast, to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the River Euphrates.

Most translations do not adequately translate this verse. It says, “Turn you, and take your journey, and go you mount (it is singular) the Amorite (it is singular), and to all the neighboring (meaning either places or peoples, probably peoples) in the plain, in the mount (it is singular), and in the lowland, and in the South, and on coast the sea, land the Canaanite (it is singular.)”

This is all one thought, explaining the land of Canaan. From there, it then continues with “And the ‘Lebanon,’ as far as the river, the great, the River Euphrates.” In other words, it is the land of Canaan, plus what is beyond it.

The specificity explains the land. The Amorite is used as a catchall name for all of the inhabitants of Canaan. Amorite comes from *amar*, meaning to utter or say. Therefore, the name signifies being spoken of, and thus “Renowned.”

The various areas include the Aravah, or the plain, the mount signifies the mountainous area, there is the Shephelah or lowland (a place and a word which is new to Scripture), the Negev, or southern area, and the seacoast. It is an overall description of the layout of the land with its varied types of geography.

The additional words which include Lebanon and the Euphrates are given to confirm the promise first made to Abraham in Genesis 15:18 and which was repeated in Exodus 23:31. This is the first use of the name Lebanon in the Bible.

The land of Canaan was meticulously described in Numbers 34, and it did not include this additional designation, nor that of the Euphrates. However, these areas that extend beyond the land itself have been promised and Moses now reconfirms that to the people.

Lebanon means, “Place of Whiteness,” or “White One,” signifying its perpetual snow. It comes from *lavan*, meaning “white” but which itself comes from *levenah*, or brick, because bricks turn white when fired. That concept has consistently been used as a picture of works, because bricks are manmade, unlike stones.

Perath, or the Euphrates, means “Fruitfulness,” or “That which makes Fruitful.” Both of these are extensions to what one should expect after coming to Christ. The Land of Promise, Canaan, is obtained by coming to God through Christ.

One is expected to work after coming to Christ, not before. The works are to be an extension of what is received. That is seen, for example, in Colossians 1 –

“For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” Colossians 1:9, 10

One can see that Moses is anticipating Christ, and then that which stems from life in Christ. Again, the law is not an end in and of itself. This is why these descriptions, along with these additional locations, are now named.

*By faith you will receive the Promise and by faith you will stand
It is by grace through faith that this comes about
In this, you will enter the heavenly promised land
And without it, you will forever be kept out*

*The Lord is pleased with your faith, small as a mustard seed
Yes, He lets us know that a little bit will do
That simple act is a powerful, mighty creed
With a little bit of faith, God will then see you through*

*Have faith and believe the message you have heard
Believe what God has said and He will accept you
And then cling fastly to His wonderful, precious word
Have faith in God, rest in Him, for He is ever faithful and true*

II. A Heavenly Inheritance (verse 8)

⁸ See, I have set the land before you;

This is immediately speaking of the land of Canaan. The promise was made, and it was for a tract of physical land. However, the promise actually anticipates the true land, meaning the heavenly promise. This will be explained in a minute.

^{8 (con't)} go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to your fathers—

Israel is a people under the Lord, or in a covenant relationship with the Lord, with Moses as their head. They are instructed to go in and possess the land Yehovah swore to their fathers. This means Canaan.

However, it more assuredly speaks of the heavenly inheritance where the Lord will give rest and dwell with His people. This is the purpose of all that has been seen since Genesis 3 when Adam fell, but restoration was promised.

This promise began to take on specificity with Israel's fathers, meaning the following men...

8 (con't) to Abraham,

l'avraham – “to Abraham.” This was first promised to Abraham in Genesis 12:7, and it was repeated to him several times after that –

“Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land.” And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.”

-Genesis 12:7

8 (con't) Isaac,

l'yitskhaq – “to Isaac.” This was explicitly stated to Isaac in Genesis 26 –

“Then the LORD appeared to him and said: ‘Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. ³ Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. ⁴ And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; ⁵ because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.’” Genesis 26:1-5

8 (con't) and Jacob—

u-l'yaakov – “and to Jacob.” This was first explicitly said to Jacob in Genesis 28 –

“Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder *was* set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

¹³ And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: ‘I *am* the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. ¹⁴ Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. ¹⁵ Behold, I *am* with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.’” Genesis 28:12-15

Each of these three fathers of the people of Israel was given this promise. It then extended to all the sons of Jacob, as Moses next explains...

⁸ (con’t) **to give to them and their descendants after them.’**

The promise was made, and because it is the word of the Lord, it must come to pass. And so, despite departing the land of Canaan and spending the next 215 years in the land of Egypt, the promise remained. The time finally came when it was to be fulfilled, and the words were spoken out to a man named Moses.

On the sacred mountain, Moses beheld a burning bush, and a voice called forth to Him. When he responded, “Here I am,” the voice then spoke forth what is now being repeated by Moses –

“Then He said, ‘Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand *is* holy ground.’ ⁶ Moreover He said, ‘I *am* the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

⁷ And the LORD said: ‘I have surely seen the oppression of My people who *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. ⁸ So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.’” Exodus 3:5-8

The promise was then renewed to Moses in Exodus 6 –

“And God spoke to Moses and said to him: ‘I *am* the LORD. ³ I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but *by* My name LORD I was not known to them. ⁴ I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers.’”

-Exodus 6:2-4

From there, the Lord continued to promise this, time and again, in Exodus and Leviticus. In Numbers, the people were prepared for entrance based on those repeated promises, but in Numbers 14, the first note of the giving of the land to Israel isn't by the Lord. Rather it is by Joshua and Caleb, pleading with the people to not accept the bad report which they had heard from the other ten spies.

The people did reject the promise though, and the Lord thus rejected them. In their rejection, they were punished. These things will be seen and reviewed in the verses ahead in Deuteronomy. However, before we get to them, it must be understood that though this is immediately and literally speaking of Canaan the land, there is more to it than that.

The promise extends beyond the physical and into the spiritual. The land of Canaan was, and it is, only a steppingstone on the way to true glory.

We know this because of what is said first of Abraham in Hebrews 11. There the author explains that the physical land in which Abraham dwelt, and which was promised to him and his seed, was only a picture of something better; something permanent –

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; ¹⁰ for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.”

-Hebrews 11:8-10

This, however, could be taken as a form of hyperbole, speaking of the promise of the actual land of Canaan in a superlative way. After all, the land was promised to be given actually to his descendants after him, but not to him personally.

However, this would be an incorrect assumption. After those words, it continues to speak of Sarah for two verses, relating that she who was barren had finally bore a child through an act of faith. From there, Hebrews then says –

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. ¹⁴ For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. ¹⁵ And truly if they had called to mind that *country* from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly *country*. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.” Hebrews 11:13-16

The author of Hebrews, while speaking of Abraham and Sarah, then backs up to those mentioned before them in his letter – to Abel, Enoch, and Noah – including them in this as well. But to them, nothing was said of the land of Canaan.

There was only the remembrance of Eden, the hope of the promise after the fall, and the anticipation of restoration and rest, of which Canaan was to be a type. These people could not have been seeking Canaan as a homeland because Canaan, as a land, did not even yet exist.

Abel and Enoch were before the Flood of Noah, but more importantly, Canaan is the grandson of Noah. The land which bears his name only bore his name sometime after he was born and after he settled it. Therefore, the promise of Canaan is more than just the promise of a piece of land.

To further explain this, the author of Hebrews then returns to Abraham and speaks of his offering up Isaac, the very son through whom the promise was to continue. But in his words, the author then explains the importance of this –

“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son*, ¹⁸ of whom it was said, “In Isaac your seed shall be called,” ¹⁹ concluding that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.” Hebrews 11:17-19

From there, the author continues with the stream of human existence, specially marked out by the Lord, as people of faith who believed the promises of the Lord.

He speaks of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Concerning Joseph, it is in regard to his bones – having faith that God would give the land to Israel, and so he – knowing this would be

true – gave instructions concerning his bones. They were to be taken back to the land when the promise was realized.

However, it was an act of faith which anticipated more than just the act of carrying his bones back. Faith in the word of the Lord means faith in *all* of the word of the Lord. Joseph's faith in the promise for Israel is inclusive of the promise of Messiah.

The Lord spoke of Messiah long before He spoke of the land of Canaan. It was, then, to be understood that the promise of Canaan was to be a promise of Messiah to come. The land, as well as the line, are intricately united in the thought put forth in Scripture in relation to Messiah.

The promise of Messiah is made. The line of Messiah is named and refined throughout the generations. The land is then promised to the line from which Messiah would come. Therefore, obtaining the land by this people of Messiah is as weighty as is the naming and continuance of the line from which Messiah would come.

However, because of these things, and as deflating it may be for Israel the people, who are now back in the land of Israel, neither they, nor the land is the center of attention. Abraham is said to have looked forward to the promise of a city in a heavenly country. That is not the land of Canaan, and it is not obtainable apart from the coming of Messiah.

The same is true with the others mentioned – Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, and even of Moses who is next named and discussed in detail. And who is then further mentioned collectively with all of Israel when it says, “By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry *land*, *whereas* the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned” (Hebrews 11:29).

The whole congregation demonstrated faith, and by faith they were collectively saved. From there, and as we will see in the coming verses of Deuteronomy, they will collectively lack faith, and they will collectively be punished.

However, individually two had faith and they were kept through that time of punishment – Joshua and Caleb. They will enter the land of Messiah along with the collective people of Messiah.

But even then, there is a lack for Israel. The author goes on to speak of the walls of Jericho collapsing, the faith of a Gentile harlot named Rahab, and then of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, and of David and Samuel and the prophets.

Indeed, he goes on to speak in generalities because the list was getting too long. As he says, “time would fail me to tell.” Of all of these people, he notes that even though they had entered Canaan and been people of faith while in Canaan, Canaan was not the end of the story, nor were they the end of the story.

Instead, he speaks of them – all of these multitudes who had lived in Canaan and who had lived lives of faith in Canaan – as understanding that the land was not the goal, nor was it the true promise. In his final words of this magnificent passage of Scripture, he sums up his thoughts by saying –

“And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, ⁴⁰ God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.” Hebrews 11:39, 40

Canaan cannot be the promise, because they neither entered their rest – as he noted in earlier chapters of Hebrews – nor did they receive the promise, despite having lived in the land which has been, and continues to be, promised in the ongoing narrative.

If they lived in Canaan, the land promised to them, and yet they did not receive the promise, then the promise is not Canaan. As this is so, then Canaan is simply a promised step towards the promise. And therefore, the promise is restoration of that which was lost, and that promise is found in the One who can restore man to that promise.

The Garden of Eden was a place. Likewise, heaven is a place. A place, however, is defined by what is in that place. In both, Eden and Heaven, the place is defined by the presence of the Lord. That is the promise, and the promise is only realized by coming to God through Christ.

He is the Hope of what is ahead, He is the Way upon which one travels to arrive at that Hope. He is the Door through which one obtains access to that place. And He is the Presence which fills that long-anticipated place.

In understanding this, we will be able to understand the book of Deuteronomy. It is a book filled with laws, commandments, statutes, and judgments. It is a book filled with

blessings and curses. But it is a book which is not an end in and of itself, nor is the law of Moses a book of restoration, except in its fulfillment as found in Christ.

Where will you hang your hat as we continue through this book? Will it be on observance of the laws, or will it be by resting in Christ? Moses will not enter the promise because the law must die outside of the promise.

Only through the death of Christ will we die to the law. And that will only happen if we are in Christ who fulfilled, and then died under, that law. He died for us outside of the Promise so that He can then bring us into that same Promise when He brings us back to Himself.

Closing Verse: *“For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” Romans 4:3, 4*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 1:9-25 *Will they go through, or will Israel be the great dissenter?...* (At the Door, Ready to Enter) (3rd Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Go in and Possess the Land

Moses began to explain this law, saying
The LORD our God spoke to us in Horeb, saying:
‘You have dwelt long enough at this mountain
To them He was so relaying

Turn and take your journey
And go to the mountains of the Amorites, so do understand
To all the neighboring places in the plain
In the mountains and in the lowland

In the South and on the seacoast
To the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, so shall it be

As far as the great river, the River Euphrates
Pay heed now to these words from Me

See, I have set the land before you
Go in and possess the land which swore to your fathers the LORD
To Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
To give to them and their descendants after them
----- according to His word

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 1:9-25 **(At the Door, Ready to Enter)**

Deuteronomy 1 has thus far been a marvelous presentation of Christ and what God would do through Him. This continues to be true in the verses ahead today.

God has selected various words, through Moses, to convey to us a panorama of what has previously been much more minutely detailed. And yet, there are obvious changes from the original narrative, some insertions, and many exclusions.

In this, it becomes an obvious point of theological doom for the small-minded people who willingly look to identify the books of Moses, and indeed even various portions, verses, or words, as having come from one source or another, rather than from Moses.

This is an easy way out of doing the hard work of trying to determine why God made those changes, and of what significance they are. But the funny thing is that as easy as it is to take this path, scholars then go and spend countless hours, even entire careers, working on not pursuing the original God-centered path.

In fact, many of them have spent a lot more effort on this futile endeavor than they ever would have if they had simply taken the word at face value and searched it out from that perspective.

Text Verse: *“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul;
The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.” Psalm 19:7*

The psalmist says, “The testimony of the Lord is sure.” He said this because he was sure concerning the testimony of the Lord. One will either be sure of the Lord’s word and pursue it from that perspective, or he will have no faith in the word of the Lord and pursue it from that perspective.

The changes in the accounts previously seen and of those in Deuteronomy, rather than showing that they are later additions, clearly demonstrate that they are original. Nobody who would later write another narrative would have made such obviously varied details, nor would they have left out so much of the already provided detail.

The stories mesh harmoniously, and yet they simply give different information that was needed or is now needed, and nothing else. This is the same situation that arises

between the three synoptic gospels. They provide exactly what is needed and nothing else.

But such as this will never satisfy the naysayer. If the accounts in those gospels were identical, they would be called forgeries because of that. If there is any perceived difference between them, they will be called forgeries because of that.

One must come to this word looking for truth, and he must do so looking for Christ. When these two thoughts unite, then a right understanding of why things are the way they are becomes evident.

And so, let us do this, as we do each week. Let us search for God's truth in the passage before us, and let us search for God's Messiah there as well. Such wonderful treasures are to be found in His superior word. And so, let's turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. How Can I Alone Bear Your Problems? (verses 9-18)

⁹“And I spoke to you at that time, saying:

Moses uses the word *amar*, or said, rather than the more common *dabar*, or spoke. The use of this word implies the need for cooperation rather than a direct word for something to be carried out. With this thought in mind, the next words make more sense...

^{9 (con't)} ‘I alone am not able to bear you.

This is as much an appeal for help as it is a statement of fact. If a person is walking on a long hike, and he says to those with him, “I am not able to carry this load anymore,” he is implying to the others that he wants their help in carrying it.

It is important to note that Moses' words here bring about the recollection of two distinct events in his time of leading Israel. The reason this is important is that his words now are actually only recorded after their time at Horeb, as they marched from Sinai to Canaan.

However, the words are not necessarily chronological but in an arrangement of thought. And that thought began while at Horeb. The first event was actually a suggestion from Jethro which occurred at Horeb in Exodus 18 –

“And so it was, on the next day, that Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood before Moses from morning until evening. ¹⁴ So when Moses’ father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, ‘What *is* this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?’” Exodus 18:13, 14

After saying this, he gave advice to Moses concerning sharing the responsibility of decisions of lesser importance with selected men in a top-down pyramid fashion. Moses took his advice and a great burden was taken off of his shoulders.

Although not specifically stated in Exodus 18, it is certain that Moses spoke to the elders at that time of his intentions because of what was suggested by Jethro and which was then approved by the Lord. As it came to be according to the Lord’s will, Moses then conveyed that to the people.

Secondly, and more directly recorded, however, was Moses’ appeal to the Lord while at Taberah. It is a continuation of the relieving of the burden on Moses which began at Horeb –

“Then Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, everyone at the door of his tent; and the anger of the LORD was greatly aroused; Moses also was displeased. ¹¹ So Moses said to the LORD, ‘Why have You afflicted Your servant? And why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You have laid the burden of all these people on me? ¹² Did I conceive all these people? Did I beget them, that You should say to me, “Carry them in your bosom, as a guardian carries a nursing child,” to the land which You swore to their fathers? ¹³ Where am I to get meat to give to all these people? For they weep all over me, saying, “Give us meat, that we may eat.” ¹⁴ I am not able to bear all these people alone, because the burden *is* too heavy for me. ¹⁵ If You treat me like this, please kill me here and now—if I have found favor in Your sight—and do not let me see my wretchedness!” Numbers 11:10-15

At that time, the Lord had Moses gather together seventy elders of Israel, and He took of the Spirit that was on Moses and put the same upon them. In this, they were able to share the overall burden of leadership in a different way.

Rather than a top-down structure, it was one which consisted more in mutual cooperation, and which extended laterally at the top. This was conveyed to these chosen men, and they were given a sign that what was proposed had come to pass because, as is recorded –

“Then the LORD came down in the cloud, and spoke to him, and took of the Spirit that *was* upon him, and placed *the same* upon the seventy elders; and it happened, when the Spirit rested upon them, that they prophesied, although they never did so again.” Numbers 11:25

Before going on, let us consider what is being presented. Verse 2 showed what a short journey Israel had to make in order to enter into the Land of Promise – just eleven days. However, it then noted that they are now in their fortieth year since leaving Egypt.

In verses 5-8, the instructions for leaving Horeb and entering into the Land are given, including a brief description of the land. With that came the promise that the land stood before them, the land sworn to their fathers. All they needed to do was go up and receive what was promised.

In verse 9, authority was given to the people. It was not Moses alone who bore it, but people at all levels, meaning tens of thousands of people who were in authority over thousands, hundreds, and tens.

And further, there were seventy at the very top who also possessed the same Spirit that was on Moses. Understanding this, and keeping it at the forefront of our minds, Moses next says to them...

¹⁰ The LORD your God has multiplied you, and here you *are* today, as the stars of heaven in multitude.

This verse recalls the promises of the Lord that were stated all the way back in Genesis. First, he made this promise twice to Abraham. He first did so in Genesis 15 –

“Then He brought him outside and said, ‘Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be.’” Genesis 15:5

He restated the promise when Abraham obediently took Isaac up Mt. Moriah to offer him as a burnt offering –

“Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, ¹⁶ and said: ‘By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only *son*— ¹⁷ blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which *is* on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.’” Genesis 22:15-17

The Lord then confirmed the promise to Isaac –

“Then the LORD appeared to him and said: ‘Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. ³ Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. ⁴ And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; ⁵ because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.’” Genesis 26:2-5

Finally, using a similar expression, the sand on the seashore, it is seen that the promise continued through Jacob –

“Then Jacob said, ‘O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the LORD who said to me, “Return to your country and to your family, and I will deal well with you”: ¹⁰ I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies. ¹¹ Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me *and* the mother with the children. ¹² For You said, “I will surely treat you well, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.’”” Genesis 32:9-12

Despite their time of bondage in Egypt, the Lord had faithfully remembered His covenant promises to the patriarchs, and He had fulfilled His words to them through maintaining Israel, increasing them, and then bringing them out of Egypt and towards the Land of Promise.

Moses’ words say, *kekokve ha’shemayim larov* – “as the stars *in* the heavens in multitude.” He chose this expression because it cannot be considered hyperbole. At any

given time, the human eye cannot see more than three to five thousand stars. But Israel numbered over six hundred thousand fighting men, plus many others.

Moses is reminding the people that the Lord had not only been faithful, but that he had given them both the leadership necessary to take them into the land, and He had given them the numbers to make this possible. With that thought in mind, he next says...

¹¹ May the LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times more numerous than you are,

After noting that the Lord had accomplished what He said He would do, Moses next calls for an even greater blessing upon the people. This is not something that was previously said. Rather, it is a parenthetical thought inserted by Moses into his ongoing narrative before he continues with his discourse.

The reason he is saying this now is because of what he has already said in verse 9, and what he will repeat again in verse 12. He acknowledges that he cannot bear the people, and thus such a magnificent increase in the people of Israel would be because they had a true leader, the God of their fathers, Yehovah. It is a spoken prayer for great multiplication – even beyond the promises already fulfilled in the people who sat before him. And further...

¹¹ (con't) and bless you as He has promised you!

The words are in the same order as were spoken to Abraham in Genesis 12:2. There the Lord said –

“Get out of your country,
From your family
And from your father’s house,
To a land that I will show you.
² I will make you a great nation;
I will bless you
And make your name great;
And you shall be a blessing.
³ I will bless those who bless you,
And I will curse him who curses you;
And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” Genesis 12:1-3

In other words, the blessing is not limited to numbers in physical increase, but it transcends that. The blessing is spiritual in nature. There are many nations which have become great in number, but they lack the blessing of the Lord.

Abraham would become great in number, but he – meaning his descendants – would also possess the spiritual blessing. This is what Moses now again petitions the same Lord, Yehovah, for.

They had the numbers, but they had also been under punishment for rejecting the Lord. He is preparing them for entry into the land and he is calling for their physical increase to be accompanied by the promised spiritual increase. With that parenthetical thought now uttered, he continues with the narrative of what brought them to this point...

¹² How can I alone bear your problems and your burdens and your complaints?

Moses now continues with his narrative, recalling the words of verse 9 where he said he alone was not able to bear the people. It wasn't just that there was a great multitude that he could not handle, but that the people put their difficulties upon him.

He describes these difficulties as problems, burdens, and complaints. The word translated as "problems" here is a new and rare word, *torakh*. It is found only here and in Isaiah 1:14, coming from a verb, *tarakh* which is only found in Job 37:11. There it speaks of the clouds being saturated with water. One can think of being filled to a maximum capacity, and thus under a weight which cannot be physically tolerated.

And so, what we have here are the three things which were weighing down on Moses. The word *torakh* describes the people themselves. They are of a capacity that Moses cannot physically bear himself.

The *massa*, or burdens, speaks of the people's own burdens which they heaped upon Moses. And the *riv*, or complaints are the people's quarrels between themselves, between themselves and Moses, and the between themselves and the Lord.

Moses felt these various negative aspects of the people and their lives in himself. And so, a remedy was spoken out...

¹³ Choose wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men

The word “choose” is acceptable. The Hebrew says, “Give to you.” The people were to give themselves men who would lead from among themselves. One would be expected to only give himself something which is good, and that is what Moses intended for them to do as a collective group.

As we saw earlier, in Exodus 18, Jethro made his recommendation to Moses. There he also highlighted various aspects of the men to be selected. He said that they should, “select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness.”

Jethro looked more to the moral aspects of the men to be selected. Moses speaks here of the administrative or technical aspects of the men. They are to be *khakam*, or wise. That is a person who already possesses knowledge and then takes that knowledge and applies it in an appropriate manner.

They are to be *bin*, or understanding, meaning that they can discern a matter, perceive what is appropriate to the situation, and then apply the wisdom they possess to ensure the proper goal is met. And they are to be *yada*, or knowing. This is experiential knowledge of a matter in order to be able to relay that knowledge on to others as each situation calls for. These men were to be...

13 (con’t) from among your tribes,

There are two particular words which are most often translated as “tribes” in the books of Moses. One is *matteh*. The other is *shevet*. They both signify a type of staff or rod, and both come from roots signifying to branch off.

Though very similar in intent, *matteh* looks more to a genealogical stem and branch, whereas *shevet* looks to a political one. The first is never used in Deuteronomy, while the latter, *shevet*, is seen eighteen times.

Moses understands that the genealogical records of Israel have been set. The people have been counted, and the families have been identified and detailed. What he is concerned about is preparing the people for entrance into Canaan, and so his words focus on the political aspect of tribal division. In providing him with a list of such people for these political bodies, Moses says...

13 (con’t) and I will make them heads over you.’

In giving to themselves such people, Moses would then appoint them to be leaders. It would be self-defeating to choose men who were unqualified, and so Moses trusted that those selected would meet the qualifications. Obviously, the idea went over well...

¹⁴ And you answered me and said, ‘The thing which you have told us to do is good.’

This has never been stated before in the ongoing narrative, and so the reason for including the words may not seem apparent, but it is the same reason for everything that has been said, and everything that will be said, all the way through the rest of the chapter.

Nothing was forced upon the people, they agreed to everything that was said, and the blame for all that occurred which brought them under punishment rests solely with them. Here, they agreed with their own mouths to the structure which would govern them.

When the people rebelled against the Lord, it was *their* leaders, who *they* agreed to and appointed, who failed to step in and lead the people as they should have. We are, as at all times, being shown typological pictures of Israel’s rejection of Jesus.

It is the leaders who are focused on throughout the gospels and into the epistles. In the leader’s rejection of their responsibilities, all of the people collectively suffered. This is because all of Israel agreed to the very structure of government under which they lived.

¹⁵ So I took the heads of your tribes, wise and knowledgeable men, and made them heads over you, leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, leaders of tens, and officers for your tribes.

This corresponds to Exodus 18:25. As suggested by Moses, as authorized by the Lord, and as accepted by the people, Moses made the appointments. In this, two designations are made – *sare* and *shoterim* – rulers and officers. The word *shoter* comes from a root signifying “to write,” and thus it would be a scribe. By implication, it speaks of a type of magistrate. Why is this important?

It is because the same types of people were still leading Israel at the time of Jesus, the scribes and Pharisees fill the same type of offices that had been filled at the beginning.

Though the Pharisees were more to be considered a religious sect they, along with the Sadducees, were considered as leaders to the people. But they failed to submit to the Lord, just as these now-appointed leaders failed to do so.

¹⁶ “Then I commanded your judges at that time, saying, ‘Hear *the cases* between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the stranger who is with him.

Moses now speaks out his words of command which begin with “Hear.” One must listen before he can judge. It is as important for the judge to open his ear to hear a case as it is for him to keep his hand closed from any bribe which may affect his judgment.

And their judgment was to be fairly made between a man and his brother – without partiality, even to a man and a stranger, meaning anyone who dwelt among Israel, but who was not of Israel. Justice was to be blind to the man, or the state of the man. Further...

¹⁷ You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great;

The Hebrew essentially reads, “You shall not recognize faces.” When two come forward to present their cases, it was to be as if they had masks on so that neither could be recognized.

The precept is substantially repeated in Exodus 23:2 and Leviticus 19:15. Whether poor or wealthy, whether unknown or well-known, or for any other such reason, the judges were to remain impartial. But this is one of the reasons that Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23. They devoured the houses of the lowly widows simply because they could.

^{17 (con’t)} you shall not be afraid in any man’s presence,

Here it basically says, “you shall not be afraid from the face of any man.” It doesn’t matter how important he is, how influential he is, how big and scary he is, or for any other reason. The judgment was to be made without fear...

^{17 (con’t)} for the judgment is God’s.

The idea here is that of complete surrender of one's judgment in such matters because the one judging is answerable to God. The general idea of this thought, though under a different context, is well expressed by the words found in Hebrews 13:6 –

“The Lord *is* my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?”

The failing of the rulers at Jesus' time concerning this very idea is expressed in John 12:42, 43 –

“Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”

There was a greater fear of what man could do than what God was sure to do. In this, the rulers failed the people, and the people came under the collective punishment promised in the word.

¹⁷ (con't) **The case that is too hard for you, bring to me, and I will hear it.'**

This is what Jesus said to the people. They brought matters up which were difficult. Even the leaders challenged Jesus. And when this occurred, he would lead them right back to Moses, such as in Mark 10:3 when the subject of divorce came about. His first response was, “What did Moses command you?”

Also, in His parable of the rich man and Lazarus, he said that those whom Lazarus appealed for should hear Moses and the prophets, further telling him that “if they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.”

Moses was to be the ultimate authority for the decisions to be rendered. When something from the law needed clarification, even at the time of Jesus, they were to go to those who were responsible for the law. This is recorded in Matthew 23 –

“The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. ³ Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, *that* observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.” Matthew 23:2, 3

¹⁸ **And I commanded you at that time all the things which you should do.**

This encompasses everything passed on to the people after the initial giving of the Ten Commandments. After that awesome display, it then said –

“Then they said to Moses, ‘You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.’” Exodus 20:19

His words now cover from that time, all the way through their almost year-long stay at the mountain. After this comes our next thought...

*We are on our way to the Promised Land
Taking our leave and heading out
It is a place of beauty and glory, so we understand
To the Lord our God, we shall raise a shout*

*Here we are at the Door, ready to enter in
We are ready to take possession of what is promised to us
Restoration and paradise are about to begin
But what is this? Who is this Jesus?*

*He claims that He is the Way
How can that be? We demand a sign!
If He will do for us the thing that we say
Only then will we our faith towards Him align*

*Here we are at the Door, ready to enter in
But is there some other way for our restoration to begin?...*

II. The LORD Your God Has Set the Land Before You (verses 19-25)

¹⁹ “So we departed from Horeb,

This was recorded in Numbers 10 –

“Now it came to pass on the twentieth *day* of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle of the Testimony.”

-Numbers 10:11

It is from this point that the thought of verse 2 is to be remembered. Israel was led by the Lord, they had leaders chosen from among themselves, and Kadesh Barnea was an

eleven-day journey away. In just eleven days, they were set to begin their entrance into the Land of Promise. That means they should have arrived at that point on the first day of the third month of the second year. Until then...

19 (con't) and went through all that great and terrible wilderness which you saw on the way to the mountains of the Amorites,

The term *ha'gadol*, or "the great," speaks of the vastness of the area. It stretches so far that it is an eleven-day journey. The term *ha'nora*, or "the terrible," speaks of that which is fearful or awesome. The location is so barren and dry that it cannot be plowed and planted. It is a vast wasteland leading to a land of abundance and promise.

One can imagine it comparable to the span of human existence, apart from Christ. There is a vastness to it which extends from the fall until the millennium. And is a terrible existence when compared to that which lies ahead for those of promise.

As we saw in the first Deuteronomy sermon, eleven is the number which marks disorder, disorganization, imperfection, and disintegration. The description given by Moses now beautifully expresses that state for humanity in life apart from Christ.

It is horrible, even to the thought of death, to which this place extended – both before their arrival at Kadesh at several key points where they complained against the Lord – and to after their rejection of the Lord when they were turned back into it to die apart from the promise.

19 (con't) as the LORD our God had commanded us.

As a people, they had been redeemed from Egypt. Despite the horrid state of what lay ahead, He would be with them, and He would deliver them. And so, He commanded their departure as is recorded in Numbers 10 –

"So they started out for the first time according to the command of the LORD by the hand of Moses." Numbers 10:13

19 (con't) Then we came to Kadesh Barnea.

The name Kadesh Barnea, or "Holy Purifying Wanderings," was not used until Numbers 32, when there was a possible second turning of the people. Before that, it was only

known as Kadesh, or “Holy.” Moses uses the full name now to remind them that their disobedience is what brought about their punishment.

The wanderings they had to go through came after, not before, their arrival at the doorstep of Canaan. It is they, because of their own rejection of the Lord, who were not purified to enter the promise, and so they were turned away.

Moses’ words have been, and continue to be, carefully selected to show Israel that what had befallen them was solely their own fault. As this entire account pictures Israel’s rejection of Christ, it is – whether it sounds cold or not – showing them that the misery of the past two thousand years has been a self-inflicted wound. They had been led throughout their history to the Promise, meaning Christ...

²⁰ And I said to you, ‘You have come to the mountains of the Amorites, which the LORD our God is giving us.

Moses presented to Israel the Land of Promise – “Here it is! You have come to the land which the Lord our God is giving us!” And Moses also presented to Israel the Man of Promise – “Here He is! You have come to the One which the Lord our God gave to us.”

As has been the case each time they are mentioned in this chapter, the name “Amorite” is singular in the Hebrew. It is also prefixed by an article – “The Amorite.” The name signifies, “The Renowned,” and so one can see that it is a typological reference to the Lord. “You have been brought to the Mount of the Renowned,” the One spoken of and who possesses the land.

It is this which is promised to Israel. A dwelling with the Lord. And it is this which Israel turned away from, even though Moses implored them to enter...

²¹ Look, the LORD your God has set the land before you;

The Lord led Israel to the doorstep of Canaan. He set it before them as a gracious offering. And the Lord led Israel to the Door, which is Christ. They were at the threshold, given as a gracious Offering. Moses spoke to them, imploring them to enter Canaan, and Moses, through the law, implored them to enter... “Go!”

²¹ (con’t) go up *and* possess it, as the LORD God of your fathers has spoken to you;

Here Moses recalls the word of the Lord God. This was stated many times between Exodus and Numbers. One example is –

“So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.” Exodus 3:8

Likewise, the Lord God of their fathers spoke many times of possessing the promise, meaning Christ and His kingdom. Jesus confirms this in John 5 –

“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.” John 5:39

The Scriptures are literally filled with hints of the coming Messiah. His manifestation to the people of Israel was as obvious as Israel’s arrival at the threshold of Canaan. “Go, take possession!” ...

²¹ (con’t) **do not fear or be discouraged.’**

al tira v’al tekhat – “not do fear, and not be discouraged.” The words are a close reflection of John 14:27 –

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

The themes repeat because the Lord is trying to wake His people up to His word, His promises, and the reliability of who He is in relation to them. In trusting in the Lord, there is to be no fear, and there is to be nothing which can allow one to be discouraged. Israel, however, took another path, starting with the next words...

²² **“And every one of you came near to me**

Moses is speaking to those of the congregation sitting on the side of the Jordan, waiting to enter. All of the those who came before him at that time are now dead, and yet, he says, *va’tigrevun elay kulekhem* – “and came near to me all of you.”

The leaders speak for the people, and the nation is a collective whole. Thus, the idea conveyed to Moses represents the desire of the collective, and it speaks of all at any time. What the leaders did is as if the people now have done.

22 (con't) and said, 'Let us send men before us, and let them search out the land for us,

Taking the original account together with this one, there is an order to what occurred. The idea was given by the people to Moses. From there, he took it to the Lord for the Lord's approval. The Lord gave them what they wanted, meaning He allowed them free will to choose their own path.

The only reason for such a request is personal fear and trepidation. It is a display of unbelief. The Lord had proven Himself countless times up to this point. He had promised what the land would be like and that the land would be delivered to Israel. Upon entry, their satisfaction would be assured.

But again, a parallel is seen in the leaders of Israel. The Lord, through the law, had led Israel directly to Messiah, and Messiah held the promises which lay ahead. But instead of accepting Him at face value, they asked for more. They directly challenged Him in this, just as Israel is directly challenging the Lord now –

“Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven.” Matthew 16:1

The Land of Promise lay ahead, and Israel asked for proofs. The Messiah stood before them, and Israel asked for proofs. But heaven is received by faith, not by demand. Christ's answer to them was, “A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah” (16:4). And the sign of Jonah was given to them – a year for a day.

Jonah prophesied that Nineveh would be destroyed in forty days, and Jerusalem was destroyed forty years later. Israel failed to believe, and they were under punishment for forty years in the wilderness – a year for each day the spies were gone.

22 (con't) and bring back word to us of the way by which we should go up, and of the cities into which we shall come.'

The spies, instead of bringing these things back as requested, brought back a bad report. The way is given –

“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” John 14:6

And the city which is promised is described. The New Testament tells us what the spies should have provided. The gospel and its promises, however, must be accepted, by faith.

²³ **“The plan pleased me well;**

The Hebrew reads, *va'yitav b'enyay ha'davar* – “And was good in my eyes the word.” Moses had no problem showing them what delights lay ahead because he knew that the Lord could deliver.

And, in fact, the law does tell of what lies ahead. Interspersed throughout the Old Testament are descriptions of what God promises in glory. Those who came to Jesus asked for more though. He was unwilling because they already had the word of the Lord which told them all they needed to know, and they had the further miracles that He had already accomplished throughout Israel. They simply failed to accept what their eyes saw and what the Lord promised to them.

²³ (con't) **so I took twelve of your men, one man from *each* tribe.**

Just as Jesus designated twelve apostles. The twelve spies were selected to provide details for the people to understand the nature of the glory which lay ahead. The twelve apostles were selected for the same reason. Did Israel accept the positive words of the spies? Did Israel accept the positive words of the apostles?

²⁴ **And they departed and went up into the mountains,**

It more literally reads, “And they turned and went up into the mountain.” “Mountain” is singular. In understanding the typology, one cannot help but see a hint of what the author of Hebrews says –

“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, ²³ to the general assembly and church of the firstborn *who are* registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, ²⁴ to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than *that of Abel.*” Hebrews 12:22-25

The spies were to see the Land of Promise and describe it to the people. The apostles say that those who come to Christ, the true Promise have come to Mount Zion. They have come to JESUS.

²⁴ (con't) **and came to the Valley of Eshcol, and spied it out.**

Here, almost all of the details and locations of the journey of Numbers 13 are ignored. The account focuses solely on the Valley of Eschol, the last place noted in the Numbers 13 account. He could have chosen any point among the journeys, but his words single out the Valley of Eshcol. And so, *nakhal eshkol*, or the Valley of Eshcol, must be again explained.

The word *nakhal* signifies a wadi where water would flow through during the seasons of rain. That word comes from *nakhal* meaning, "to take possession," or "inherit." Eshcol means "cluster." But that comes from the word *eshek*, meaning testicle.

As we learned then, this pictured Christ's work. Once having been accepted, He took possession of that which proceeds from the spot where man is generated from. In other words, it is a picture of the overriding of original sin in man.

Sin transfers from father to child. The semen, which is generated in man, is what transfers that sin. Christ has, through His work, taken possession of that in all who move from Adam to Him. It is the realization of the kingdom for His people through this act.

This, however, as we will see again, was rejected by Israel, just as Israel, at the word of the spies who went into the Valley of Eshcol, had rejected the promises of the Lord. Moses is giving us a recounting of what brought them to the disaster that followed. That, in turn, is given to show Israel today what brought about their own punishment when they rejected Christ and His work.

^{*25} (fin) **They also took *some* of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought *it* down to us; and they brought back word to us, saying, '*It is a good land which the LORD our God is giving us.*'**

This final verse leaves out many of the details from Numbers 13. It is given as a sufficient contrast between the attitude of the people and of the location that they had just trudged through. The land was a great and terrible wilderness, and yet the Lord led them through it. Canaan is a good land with abundant fruit, and it is certain that the Lord could bring them into it.

Further, they acknowledge now that it is not just a good land, but one which *Yehovah Elohenu* or, Yehovah our God, was giving to them. Thus, to enter is completely and solely, based on an act of faith in the capability, reliability, and grace of the Lord.

If one cannot see that as reflected in the gospel of Christ Jesus, he is not looking very hard. The Lord has already led us through the great and terrible wilderness of our lives. He has promised that He will conduct us into the Promise. And, He has offered it to us by grace. It is not something we can earn apart from Him. It is His, and therefore it must be received as a gift, based on faith.

The Lord our God, Yehovah Elohenu, has done everything necessary to bring us to Himself through the Person and work of Christ. It is now up to each one of us, individually, to accept what He has done, and to enter into the inheritance. It is that simple, and it is waiting for you to do so.

Closing Verse: *“Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer,
The Holy One of Israel:
“I am the LORD your God,
Who teaches you to profit,
Who leads you by the way you should go.” Isaiah 48:17*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 1:26-33 *Shall we trust Him? I say, “Yes, certainly!”* (The Goer Before You – HE) (4th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

At the Door, Ready to Enter

And I spoke to you at that time, saying:
‘I alone am not able to bear you, so I did conclude
The LORD your God has multiplied you, and here you are today
As the stars of heaven in multitude

May the LORD God of your fathers
Make you a thousand times more numerous than you are
----- you, His saints

And bless you as He has promised you
How can I alone bear your problems and your burdens
----- and your complaints?

Choose wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men
From among your tribes, and I will make them heads over you
And you answered me and said,
'The thing is good which you have told us to do

So I took the heads of your tribes
Wise and knowledgeable men, and made them heads over you
Leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties
Leaders of tens, and officers for your tribes too

"Then I commanded your judges at that time, saying
Hear the cases between your brethren, so you are to do
And judge righteously, as I am relaying
Between a man and his brother or the stranger who is with him too

You shall not show partiality in judgment
You shall hear the small as well as the great
You shall not be afraid in any man's presence
For the judgment is God's, so to you I state

The case that is too hard for you, bring to me
And I will hear it and judge accordingly

And at that time I commanded you
All the things which you should do

"So we departed from Horeb, and went through
All that great and terrible wilderness which you saw on the way
To the mountains of the Amorites, as the LORD our God
----- had commanded us
Then we came to Kadesh Barnea, on that fateful day

And I said to you, 'You have come
----- to the mountains of the Amorites
Which the LORD our God is giving us

----- that land is now in our sights

Look, the LORD your God has set the land before you
Go up and possess it; yes, be encouraged
As the LORD God of your fathers has spoken to you
Do not fear or be discouraged

“And every one of you came near to me and said
‘Let us send men before us, and let them for us search out the land
And bring back word to us of the way by which we should go up
And of the cities into which we shall come
----- so it shall be properly planned

“The plan pleased me well
So I took twelve of your men, one man from each tribe
----- was made a scout
And they departed and went up into the mountains
And came to the Valley of Eshcol, and spied it out

They also took some of the fruit of the land in their hands
And brought it down to us, that was a tasty plus
And they brought back word to us, saying
‘It is a good land which the LORD our God is giving us

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 1:26-33 **(The Goer Before You – HE)**

When we come to a passage like the one before us, there are certainly several things we might think, “Well, yeah, that would upset the Lord.” There is rebellion, there is impudence, there is accusation, there is cowardice, and there is unbelief.

All in all, in eight verses, Israel could be accused of quite a few offenses against the Lord. The psalmist goes further though. In recounting this very incident, he adds in contempt, complaint, and willful ignorance. Further, he also acknowledges their unbelief.

For which of these should Israel receive their just punishment? There is one which is more offensive to Him than any other because it is a sin which simply cannot be overcome by God who does not force His will upon His people.

Text Verse: *Then they despised the pleasant land;
They did not believe His word,
²⁵ But complained in their tents,
And did not heed the voice of the LORD.
²⁶ Therefore He raised His hand in an oath against them,
To overthrow them in the wilderness,
²⁷ To overthrow their descendants among the nations,
And to scatter them in the lands. Psalm 106:24-27*

It’s interesting that the psalmist ties the actions of this wicked generation in with the “overthrow of their descendants among the nations,” and that He would “scatter them in the lands.” Nothing of this occurred in the books of Moses.

Rather, after their time of punishment while wandering in the wilderness, He brought them across Jordan and into Canaan. They lived there for many hundreds of years before they were exiled. From there, he brought them back to the land for many more hundreds of years before they were exiled again.

And yet, He speaks of the actions of the people at this time in their history as a reason for the scattering of them those many hundreds of years later. What is this thing, this ongoing thing, which brought them such trouble and disaster throughout their history?

It is spoken of in our verses today. In fact, it is specifically mentioned by Moses by the use of a participle in verse 32. We’ll be there in a due time, but in short, of all of the sins

of Israel – both active and ongoing – there is one thing, above all else, which brought about their many woes.

Unfortunately, it is the same sin which permeates their society today, and because Israel is a corporate entity, Israel is corporately affected by it. That will continue into the tribulation period, and it will only be resolved when they are so broken as a people that they have nowhere else to turn.

In their stubborn obstinacy throughout the years, their greatest sin – and the sin which has brought about many, many terrible woes – is the seemingly minor (and yet immensely huge) sin of... unbelief. As Joseph Benson says of this sin –

“...no sin will ruin us but unbelief, which is a sin against the remedy, and therefore without remedy.” Joseph Benson

One cannot obtain a remedy for an ill if he refuses to accept the remedy. It is the consistent, continuous, and ongoing problem for the people of Israel, and it is the same for much of the world’s population to this day – unbelief. This is a truth which is to be found in His superior word. And so, let’s turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Where Can We Go Up? (verses 26-28)

²⁶ **“Nevertheless you would not go up,**

v’lo avitem laalot – “And no you would go up.” The spies had gone out, they had acknowledged that the land was good which the Lord had promised, and they had all of the previous experiential knowledge of the capabilities of the Lord – from the signs, to the plagues upon Egypt, to the parting of the Red Sea. They had been given manna and quail.

On and on, He had proven Himself to them. There was no good or reasonable excuse for not simply going in and possessing the land which lay before them. And, as we have seen since Moses came to the burning bush on Sinai, all of these signs and wonders pointed to Christ.

Everything that has been recorded was there to alert the people to the fact that Messiah was coming, and that who He is and what He would do was already revealed to

them through these types and pictures. This is no stretch of the intent of the passage. Rather, it is exactly what Jesus Himself said, using the same words –

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets, and stones those who are sent to her! How often I would have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you would not!” Matthew 23:37 (WEB)

The people failed to “go up” and receive Him. They had all the necessary information...

²⁶ (con’t) **but rebelled against the command of the LORD your God;**

va’tamru eth pi Yehovah elohekem – “and rebelled against *the* mouth of Yehovah your God.” The Lord did not “command” the people to go up. Instead, He promised to go before them. The implication is that they would believe Him and His promises and willingly follow His lead.

The action of the people was a direct attack against the spoken word, or mouth, of Yehovah. He had promised the people a land of milk and honey, and He had promised that His Angel would go before them and cut off their enemies.

This was explicitly repeated by Moses in verse 21 where He said, “Look, the LORD your God has set the land before you; go up *and* possess *it*, as the LORD God of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged.” That then follows after the words of Joshua and Caleb in Numbers 14 where they said –

“Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land, for they *are* our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the LORD *is* with us. Do not fear them.” Numbers 14:9

There is a difference in words translated as “rebel” between here and that of Numbers 14. There, Joshua and Caleb used the word *marad*, but here Moses uses the word *marah*. The second word, *marah*, signifies “to make bitter.”

The difference is that the word used by Joshua and Caleb is in the context of breaking a covenant. In essence, “Do not break covenant faithfulness with the Lord.” However, Moses now essentially says, “You brought a state of bitterness to the mouth of the Lord.”

These minute and often almost imperceptible changes of carefully chosen wording open up the narrative so that we can see the full import of what is being relayed. The covenant was broken by the people, it was bitter to the mouth of the Lord, and the resulting covenant punishments would come upon the people. For now, Moses continues the narrative...

²⁷ and you complained in your tents,

Here is a new and rare word, *ragan*. It signifies “to grumble.” It is only used three times. The second use is in Psalm 106:25 (our text verse), and it refers to this same account. The last time it will be seen, in Isaiah 29:24, it refers to a time when the people will finally gain wisdom and learn proper doctrine.

For now, Moses lays the fault directly on the people there before him. “You complained.” He doesn’t say, “Your fathers complained.” They are the same group of people with the same propensities as their fathers. The complaining in their tents refers back to Numbers 14:1, where the people held a pity party –

“So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night.” Numbers 14:1

If you close your eyes, you can almost hear the moaning throughout the camp. The tents’ walls would resonate with the sound of an entire camp of people whining about how bad their existence had suddenly become. But worse is the content of their words...

²⁷ (con’t) and said, ‘Because the LORD hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.

It is the strongest expression found concerning the attitude of the people, expanding upon what was said in Numbers 14. They actually brought an indictment against the Lord, accusing Him of hating them, and because of this He purposely brought them out of Egypt, so that He could have the Amorite destroy them.

It is almost a play on words. The name Amorite essentially means “Renowned.” Here, they accuse the Lord of using these renowned people to wipe out their name so that nothing is left of it. Further, Egypt signifies “Double Distress.”

In this, they are saying they were taken from a place of great distress just to be destroyed in a worse place. The accusations against the Lord are the highest marks of contempt.

²⁸ Where can we go up?

To go up implies entry into the Promised Land. It is always considered an ascension to a higher place when entering Canaan, then Jerusalem, and then the temple, and even into the rooms of the temple, culminating in arrival at the Most Holy place.

The picture of failing to accept Jesus, the way of restoration to God in heaven, is obvious. The words are chosen to show hints of the rejection of Christ by Israel after He accomplished His work, granting them access to restoration with God.

²⁸ (con't) Our brethren have discouraged our hearts,

Here they use the word *masas*, signifying “to melt.” Further, the word “heart” is singular *akhenu hemasu eth l’vavenu* – “our brothers have melted our heart.” It is a collective heart of the people which is referred to. The contrast to the state of Christ on the cross is then seen. From Psalm 22 –

“I am poured out like water,
And all My bones are out of joint;
My heart is like wax;
It has melted within Me.” Psalm 22:14

The people’s collective heart melted from fear, not trusting in the Lord. Whereas Christ’s heart melted from full trust in the Lord, not fearing the ordeal He faced, but rather petitioning the Lord for deliverance. Israel on the other hand only saw the state of the foe...

²⁸ (con't) saying, “The people *are* greater and taller than we;

There is no article before the word. It is an exclamation of awe – “People greater and taller than we.” The word greater speaks of the number of them. But the spies had also told the people of the immense size of some of the inhabitants using the term *anshe midot*, or “men of measures.”

It is a way of saying they were twice as tall as normal men. Even if it is true that there were men of great size living in the land, the implication is that this is the state of all of them. It is a great exaggeration.

The people were just like any others, but with some exceptions. However, in their cowardice, they magnified the lie in order to stop the heart of even the most trusting soul in regard to the word of the Lord. And more...

28 (con't) the cities *are* great and fortified up to heaven;

Again, there is no article before “cities,” and the word “heavens” is plural – “the heavens.” The words are of awe and fear – “...cities, great and fortified, up to the heavens.” It is a hyperbolic statement that goes all the way back to Genesis 11 where the people determined to build a tower “whose top is in the heavens.”

The idea is that those in Canaan were like gods, dwelling in inaccessible strongholds which cannot be defeated. It is undoubtedly the Lord’s intent, as revealed through the author of Hebrews, to show that the work of Christ is contrasted, directly, to this statement of the people here in Numbers and Deuteronomy.

In Hebrews 7, speaking of the priesthood of Christ, and in His mediatorial role which grants His people access to God in heaven, he says, “For such a High Priest was fitting for us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens” (Hebrews 7:26). Paul then uses this notion of Christ’s capabilities, now accessible to God’s people, to explain our abilities now in Christ –

“For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, ⁶ and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.” 2 Corinthians 10:4-6

What Israel was to face in a physical realm is equated directly to what the church faces in a spiritual realm. Where Israel failed to trust the Lord, we are asked to be resolute in trusting Him. The foes we face are far greater, but through Christ, we can indeed prevail.

28 (con't) moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakim there.”

Again, the article is left off and the clause begins with a superlative, *v'gam bene anaqim rainu sham* – “And moreover, sons Anakim we have seen there.” It is as if this is the epitome of the dangers. “Yes, there are many and huge people. And yes, there are great and fortified cities reaching to the heavens. But even more, this! These fellows are to be feared even more than the rest!”

Anakim comes from *anaq*, meaning “neck.” Thus, the Anakim are a clan of people known for their unusual long or thick necks, or the adornments on their necks. In stating the name, it shows that their reputation went ahead of them.

There was no need for further explanation. The name itself drew fear from those who heard it spoken. In this, their reputation is elevated to a position greater than even that of the giant, fortified cities already described.

In Numbers 13:22, it was seen that they were associated with the Egyptians. In this, they presented a fearful challenge to Israel. They had left Egypt and the Egyptians behind, but these people are probably a force allied with Egypt through their ancestry, and they will be eager to destroy the people who had destroyed their families at the Red Sea.

But the thinking is confused, because it was the Lord who had destroyed all of the Egyptians at the Red Sea. To fear a group of people such as this, when the Lord had already proven His capabilities, was dismissive of the greatness He had already displayed. What is ironic, is that Moses takes these words of cowardice, and he appropriates them in chapter 9, saying –

“Hear, O Israel: You *are* to cross over the Jordan today, and go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourself, cities great and fortified up to heaven, ²a people great and tall, the descendants of the Anakim, whom you know, and *of whom* you heard *it said*, ‘Who can stand before the descendants of Anak?’” Deuteronomy 9:1, 2

Moses takes their words and turns them around to make the point to the people who are about to enter Canaan that even if it seems like the obstacles are so great, the Lord is far greater. But he was consistent in this, even when they first were set to enter...

*Woe to us, for we shall die
And woe to us that it shall come to pass
There is no hope in the Lord; no need to try
Through this great chasm, we cannot pass*

*We might as well go back from where we came
Living there was better than we have it now
We are going to die, either way, just the same
We might as well live it up there; some way, somehow*

*Oh! My people, if you know already that you are going to die
Then why not trust Me and take the path that I provide
Is it not better to simply believe? Give it a try!
Just have faith, and I will be your Guide*

II. Yet, For All That! (verses 29-33)

²⁹ **“Then I said to you, ‘Do not be terrified, or afraid of them.**

Here is a new word, *arats*. It signifies being in fearful awe, and thus terrified. Moses supplements that with another word with a similar meaning showing how truly terrified the people were.

What Moses now says, through the next few verses, was not recorded in Numbers 14. All it says is that Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before the assembly. Putting the two accounts together shows that what is now stated was while they were there humbling themselves in that way.

However, the words now are a repeat of what was said to the people before they had sent out the spies. In verse 21, which we looked at last week, he had already told them to go possess the land and to not fear or be discouraged.

However, in verse 22, they asked first for men to go before them. These men, meaning the spies, had gone before them. Based on their report, it is obvious what would be the outcome. Despite this, Moses’ words were of confident assurance. There was no need to be in any type of fear because of...

³⁰ **The LORD your God, who goes before you,**

In the Hebrew there is a strong emphatic form used by Moses, *Yehovah elohekem ha’holek liphnekem hu* – “Yehovah your God the Goer before you, HE.” It was Moses’ way of recalling to their minds what He had already done.

HE had gone before them. HE had taken them through the Red Sea. HE had brought water out of the rock, provided manna each morning, gave quail when desired, and so on. This same God who tended to them before, was THE GOER before them and He would continue to do so...

³⁰ (con't) **He will fight for you,**

As background to these words, Moses called to their memory the events which came about after they departed from Egypt. At that time, Israel found themselves in a fearful position. As it said in Exodus 14:10-12 –

“And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. ¹¹ Then they said to Moses, “Because *there were* no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? ¹² *Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, ‘Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For *it would have been* better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness.”*

After their cries of terror, it then said –

“And Moses said to the people, ‘Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. ¹⁴ The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.’” Exodus 14:13, 14

This is the same thing that Moses now again conveys to them. The Lord is their God, He is the One who goes before them, and it is He would will fight for them. The battle is decided, and the victory is already attained, if they will simply believe and act. Just as when He redeemed them, so He will follow through and deliver them...

³⁰ (con't) **according to all He did for you in Egypt**

Egypt was the enemy, they were in hot pursuit, and the people had nowhere to flee to. And yet, the Lord acted, and He delivered. The event was just a year earlier, and it ended more than two hundred years of waiting, many of them in hard bondage and labor. Of that affliction, they had been personally freed by the Lord.

Now this same group of people stood at the door of Canaan. It was they who had been hemmed in on the shores of the Red Sea. The warriors were coming, the battle would be engaged, but the people of the Lord did not have to lift a finger in the process.

All they had to do was, by faith, step between the walls of water on the dry ground and pass through the sea. In doing so, the Lord would be at their head, guiding them, and the Lord would be their rearguard, protecting them. They did, and – by faith – they passed through the sea and to safety on the other shore.

But Moses adds in another note for them to consider. They were not blind and needing to be led by the hand from a foe they could not see or perceive. Rather, the events which occurred did so, as Moses says...

³⁰ (con't) **before your eyes,**

The events occurred, they were accomplished solely by the Lord, and He had done it right before their eyes. It wasn't a story that had been passed down from one generation to the next, embellishing the account as the years passed.

Their eyes beheld the events, and they personally participated in them through a simple act of faith. Moses said this as an appeal. The people were to favor their past experiences, in regard to the power of the Lord, over the current dismal report of the spies about a matter which had not even been beheld by their same eyes.

“You have seen what came about! And this... this is nothing in comparison to what has been. Have faith! Trust in the Lord! It is He who will deliver!” But even that was not the end of the Lord's tender care for them – by a longshot. Rather, Moses continued to remind the people, as he humbled himself on his face before them, of the other tender acts of the Lord...

³¹ **and in the wilderness where you saw how the LORD your God carried you,**

This is not speaking of the time of the wilderness wanderings after turning from Canaan. This is speaking of the journey from the Red Sea to Mt. Sinai. It is a general repeat of the words of the Lord in Exodus 19, after the people had arrived at the sacred mountain –

“And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, ‘Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of

Israel: ⁴ ‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself.’” Exodus 19:4

Moses is remembering that and reminding the people of it. They had been without water, and the Lord provided water. They had been without rest, and the Lord gave them the Sabbath. They had been without food, and the Lord gave them manna. They had been attacked by Amalek, and the Lord defeated them before Israel.

On and on, every step of the way, the Lord tended to Israel, carrying them upon Himself as they approached the sacred mountain that He had promised they would come to.

One can look at the entire history of Israel. They had been redeemed from Egypt. They had been brought out of the nations and into their own land. Throughout all of their years, they complained and moaned and turned away from the Lord, and yet the Lord kept them as a unique possession.

And eventually, He brought them to the Promise. Christ came, they saw Him, and they interacted with Him. He promised them Himself, the true Manna. He offered of Himself, the true Rock from which the water flowed.

He said that He would give them rest from their weary labors if they only came to Him. He even called the law up to the sacred mountain where He reminded the people of these things when that same law was nailed to the cross. He bore Israel through the wilderness of their years...

³¹ (con’t) **as a man carries his son,**

In Isaiah 46, the Lord makes a contrast between His care for Israel and how a man cares for his dead idols. Speaking to them about His care for them, He says –

“Listen to Me, O house of Jacob,
And all the remnant of the house of Israel,
Who have been upheld *by Me* from birth,
Who have been carried from the womb:
⁴ Even to *your* old age, I *am* He,
And *even* to gray hairs I will carry *you!*
I have made, and I will bear;
Even I will carry, and will deliver *you.*” Isaiah 46:3, 4

And of how man treats his dead idols, He then says –

“To whom will you liken Me, and make *Me* equal
And compare Me, that we should be alike?

⁶They lavish gold out of the bag,
And weigh silver on the scales;
They hire a goldsmith, and he makes it a god;
They prostrate themselves, yes, they worship.

⁷They bear it on the shoulder, they carry it
And set it in its place, and it stands;
From its place it shall not move.
Though *one* cries out to it, yet it cannot answer
Nor save him out of his trouble.” Isaiah 46:5-7

This is the same thought, though less refined in some ways, that Moses presented to the people. Moses is asking the people to remember His care for them, how He carried them, even as a Father carries His son, bearing them upon Himself.

But in not trusting the Lord who had carried them, they were placing their trust either in themselves, or in something, or someone, who had no power to deliver them.

The Lord had proven Himself reliable throughout their walk to Sinai. He had proven Himself reliable at Sinai. And, further, he had brought them right to the doorstep of promise...

³¹ (con't) **in all the way that you went until you came to this place.'**

The words, “until you came to this place,” mean Kadesh in the Wilderness of Paran, where they camped and waited for, and received, the report from the spies. From Egypt to Canaan, the Lord had carried them.

Now, even after the bad report, they were petitioned to trust the Lord, have faith in His abilities, capabilities, and promises, and to step – by faith – into the promised possession.

Here is Israel, sitting on the banks of the Jordan in Moab, and being given a recounting of what occurred, and what brought them to 38 years of disaster and death in the wilderness. In preparation for them to trust the Lord and to enter the promise, Moses

will give them the most comforting of words to hold fast to. It is a word similar to what he had spoken to their fathers there in Kadesh –

“The eternal God *is your* refuge,
And underneath *are* the everlasting arms;
He will thrust out the enemy from before you,
And will say, ‘Destroy!’” Deuteronomy 33:27

Again, and after having gone through the Numbers sermons, we don’t need to go back and review all the details of how what occurred was given to point to Israel’s rejection of Christ. We know this and we know the consequences of it.

Suffice it to say that God brought Israel out for Himself. He brought them through the wilderness of the years leading up to Christ. He gave them every hint of who He would be, what He would do, and how He would do it – even if only in type and shadow.

From there, He brought them through the cross and directly to the promised inheritance. All they needed to do was to believe, nothing more. If so, entry into the true Land of Promise would be theirs...

³² **Yet, for all that,**

u-vadavar hazeh – “And in the word, the this.” The structure of the words, and the inclusion of a strong pause mark, known as an *athnakh*, calls for a paraphrase to grasp the meaning, “And yet, despite all that, and as incredible as it may seem...”

There is a note of utter astonishment at what he is about to say. It is as if Moses has laid the entire presentation out before them from his first appearance to the people in Egypt, through the plagues, through the Exodus, through the wilderness, through almost a year at Sinai – never without the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night – through the giving of the law, the construction of the tabernacle, the ordination of the priesthood, the acceptance of the priesthood in a display of fire from heaven, in the organization of the people around the sanctuary, in the march to Canaan, and in ten thousand details which came about in between these magnificent events, and which were accompanied by the daily giving of enough manna to feed a company of well over a million people... “And yet, despite all of that, and as incredible as it may seem...”

^{32 (con’t)} **you did not believe the LORD your God,**

The sin of unbelief is laid at the feet of the people there listening to Moses. And his words contain a participle which indicates ongoing, even permanent, unbelief, “You still were not believing.”

It doesn't matter that his audience was underage at that time and that it was actually their fathers before them – all of whom had now died, minus Moses, Joshua, and Caleb. Moses tells those before him that they did not believe, and the condition persisted. Israel is a collective whole, and the guilt of the congregation is imputed to the whole, even if believing individuals (such as Joshua and Caleb) are excepted from the overall program.

The typology is not to be missed. God had brought Israel out, He had brought them through the law, through the prophets, through the feasts, and through the types and pictures of the coming Messiah. He brought them through the birth of the King, through the confirmation of that by the Magi, through the young Boy who astonished those at the temple, through the miracle at Cana in Galilee, through the healing of lepers, through the restoration of sight to the blind, through the sinless Life which they beheld, through the raising of the widow's son, and the raising of Lazarus. He had brought them through the events of Palm Sunday, through the passion of His Christ, through the cross and burial, and through the resurrection and ascension of the Lord, and in ten thousand details which came about in between these magnificent events... “And yet, despite all of that, and as incredible as it may seem...”

“You still were not believing the Lord your God...”

³³ **who went in the way before you**

ha'holekh liphnekem ba'derek – “The Goer before you in the way.” What is Moses speaking of? The way to the promise – the inheritance. He is speaking of the way to the land where the Lord's people would dwell. In order to go to that place, the Lord went the way to that place first. One cannot reach the promise without first taking the way to it.

And if the Lord took that way, then that way is the same that His people would take. In other words, what Moses says here is repeated by Jesus in John 14:2, “I go to prepare a place for you.”

Christ spoke of the true Land of Promise – the inheritance. He was speaking of the way to the land where His people will dwell. In order to go to that place, He had to go the way to that place first. And in so going, He made the way clear.

This is because He is not only the GOER, but He is the WAY. Nothing about what lies ahead can be separated from who the Lord is. Understanding the connection, Moses continues by saying to them that the Lord went in the way before them...

33 (con't) to search out a place for you to pitch your tents,

The Lord led the way in order for the people to follow. The ultimate destination was Canaan, the Land of Promise. The people were led, every step of the way, even to the threshold of the land, by the Lord. The path was clear, the steps forward were set, and all the people had to do was simply believe and press on.

This is an obvious statement reminding the people that they had asked for the spies to be sent. This was not the Lord's decision, but rather He approved of their request. But it was an unnecessary part of what the Lord was doing. He was going to prepare a place for them. He had gone first, and He had provided the way. Again, "I go to prepare a place for you."

33 (con't) to show you the way you should go,

The Lord went first so that His people would know how to arrive at the location He had determined for them. They need do nothing but follow the way which He determined in advance. The march of Israel, and the Lord's going forth before them was not because the Lord needed to discover something unknown to Him, but to provide a picture of what He was going to do in Christ –

"Thomas said to Him, 'Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?'"

⁶Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'" John 14:5, 6

The way was to be set, it was to be fixed, and the inheritance was not to be obtained in any other way than at the determination of the Lord. But the way was marked out in such a way that for any who desired to take it, it could be taken...

***33 (fin) in the fire by night and in the cloud by day.**

The fire and the cloud were visible manifestations of the invisible God. The Lord made His presence known so that the people would know He was among them. All they had to do was to accept the Lord's word at face value, believe that same word, and enter into the promise by following the visible manifestation He provided.

But even with all of those evidences, Israel failed to simply believe. They didn't believe the Lord at Kadesh in the Wilderness of Paran, and they didn't believe the Lord Jesus as He revealed His glory to them when He came to dwell among them – He, the visible manifestation of the invisible God.

As Joseph Benson says, and as we partially cited in our opening, "...their disbelief of that promise which was typical of gospel grace; to signify that no sin will ruin us but unbelief, which is a sin against the remedy, and therefore without remedy."

This is confirmed in Scripture by the author of Hebrews who refers to this very passage while making his case for the people to let go of their unbelief and to come to Christ for the true rest which these types and shadows only anticipated, as seen in Hebrews 3:16-19 –

"For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, *was it* not all who came out of Egypt, *led* by Moses? ¹⁷ Now with whom was He angry forty years? *Was it* not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸ And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? ¹⁹ So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."

Moses, through this discourse, diligently set about to impress upon the minds of the people that the fault of not entering the promise, not obtaining the inheritance, and not receiving the promised rest was entirely their own fault, and the guilt of their actions rested solely upon them.

The author of Hebrews then shows that the fault of the people, and of every evil that has come upon them for the past two thousand years, is entirely of their own making, and the guilt of their actions rests solely upon them.

The Lord provided everything necessary for them to enter, and yet they did not enter in because of unbelief. May that not be said of us here today.

Rather, through a simple act of faith, for Jew or for Gentile, the author of Hebrews clearly and unambiguously states the result with the words, "For we who have believed

do enter that rest.” Look to the cross, understand what it means to you as a person, and by a simple act of faith receive the good news of Jesus Christ. Be reconciled to God and enter into the promised rest.

Closing Verse: *“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴ And where I go you know, and the way you know.”*

⁵ Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?”

⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” John 14:1-6

Next Week: *It is Christ who for us, the victory He did win... (He Brought Us out From There That He Might Bring Us In) (Resurrection Day Sermon)*

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Goer Before You – HE

“Nevertheless you would not go up
But rebelled against the command of the LORD your God
And you complained in your tents, and said
Words which were tragically flawed

“Because the LORD hates us, He has brought us out of the land
Of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us
Where can we go up?
That day you all made a terrible fuss

Our brethren have discouraged our hearts, saying
“The people are greater and taller than we, so we are aware
The cities are great and fortified up to heaven
Moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakim there

“Then I said to you, ‘Do not be terrified, or afraid of them
The LORD your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you
According to all He did for you in Egypt before your eyes
And in the wilderness, so also He did do

Where you saw how the LORD your God carried you
As a man carries his son, in all the way that you went
Until you came to this place
Upon you all that care He lovingly spent

Yet, for all that, you did not believe the LORD your God
Who before you to search out a place went in the way
For you to pitch your tents, to show you the way you should go
In the fire by night and in the cloud by day

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 1:34-46 (Many Days in Kadesh)

Deuteronomy opened just where Numbers left off, right on the banks of the Jordan, opposite Jericho, while still in Moab. In relation to prophetic events which that pictures, it looks to Israel – the people Israel – finally ready to enter into their long-withheld inheritance.

Thus, it is a book which is perfectly suited for the day and age in which we live. The recounting of the events from Israel's previous time on the doorstep of entry is to remind them of what got them into the pickle they were in. That comes down to one key thought – a lack of faith in what the Lord promised, and in His provision for obtaining that promise.

Israel, the people, are again united and back in the land, but despite this, they have not entered into their rest. Only a fool would look at the world and think they had. Therefore, they are being prepared for entry into it, just as Israel was being prepared for entry into it with Moses' final words to them.

But even though Moses' words are words of law, it is not the law which will allow them to enter that precious and blessed Rest of God...

Text Verse: *“What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith;³¹ but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness.³² Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone.³³ As it is written:
‘Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense,
And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.’” Romans 9:30-33*

Today, as with the last passage we looked at, we are seeing a review of what occurred in Numbers 14. Israel failed to have faith in the Lord, and Israel went about seeking to obtain their inheritance under their own power. This is a futile endeavor indeed.

And yet, it is a common theme found among many denominations. The question is, “What thing must I do to be pleasing to God.” Seventh Day Adventists say you must observe the Sabbath, and they observe various dietary restrictions, and so on.

Hebrew Roots adherents go with the Sabbath and dietary restrictions, and they add in the Feasts of the Lord and a host of other pick and choose laws from the Law of Moses.

The Church of Christ mandates water baptism... but it has to be done in the Church of Christ. We could go on and on with the man-made laws and or pick and choose precepts from the Bible for numerous other cults and sects. But in the end, only one thing is needed.

That one thing is so simple, so seemingly insignificant, that Paul calls it a stumbling block. A stumbling block is something that you don't even notice. You just trip right over it. All that God asks of you to be right with Him is to accept His simple gospel of peace. Nothing more. Israel missed it, and it cost them greatly.

Let us hold fast to this precious gospel, and let us never deviate from it. It is the central point of theology when it comes to the salvation of the human soul, and it is found right in His superior word. And so, let's turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. He Shall Cause Israel to Inherit It (verses 34-40)

³⁴ **“And the LORD heard the sound of your words,**

v'yishma Yehovah eth qol divrekem – “And heard Yehovah the voice of your words.” It is an interesting phrase which is only seen again in this manner in Deuteronomy 5:28. As this is so, one should stop and look at why it is spoken in this way. This verse is an obvious reference to Numbers 14:1 –

“So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night.” Numbers 14:1

This was speaking of the faithless people who heard the report of the spies, failed to have a trust in or fear of God, and who turned their hearts away from Him and back toward Egypt. However, Deuteronomy 5:28 is speaking of an entirely different account. There it says –

“Then the LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me: ‘I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They are right *in* all that they have spoken.’”

-Deuteronomy 5:28

This event was just after the giving of the Ten Commandments. At that time, the people said –

“Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw *it*, they trembled and stood afar off. ¹⁹ Then they said to Moses, ‘You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.’” Exodus 20:18, 19

One can see the complete contrast between the two accounts. In Exodus, the people had a fear of the Lord, they understood His power and majesty, and they asked Moses to be the one to stand between them and the Lord, knowing that His glory was too great for them as a people to interact with.

Despite this, just a year later, the people had lifted up their voices and wept, fearing the miniscule inhabitants of Canaan more than the great and awesome Lord who led them. The pillar and the cloud were still there – right there – with them. The manna came daily. The rock brought forth water for them. The promises had been given, and yet the people failed to simply believe and trust. Thus, Yehovah heard the voice of their words...

³⁴ (con’t) **and was angry,**

v’yiqsoph – “And was angry.” The word *qatsaph* comes from a primitive root meaning “to crack off.” Thus, it figuratively means to burst forth in rage. The Lord was furious at them. They had spoken what was right concerning His majestic power while at Sinai, and yet from that time on, they had constantly needled Him, rejecting His presence every step of the way.

Now, while literally one step away from Canaan, they needled Him again, failing to trust that the same power which was able to part the Red Sea, and the same power that spoke in thundering majesty from the top of Sinai, was able to uphold His promises for them to subdue the enemies which were like fleas before Him in Canaan. Surely He was furious...

³⁴ (con’t) **and took an oath, saying,**

v’yishava lemor – “And swore, saying.” The word is *shava*, coming from a primitive root signifying “to be complete.” It is used as a denominative from the word *sheva*, or seven. Thus, when swearing, a person is said to seven himself. In other words, it is as if he has made his declaration seven times.

The Lord's word is its own oath, and so when He spoke, it was a firm and decided declaration that would certainly come to pass...

³⁵ 'Surely not one of these men of this evil generation shall see

Most translations miss the poignant nature of the words. They are very direct. A literal translation would be, "If! Shall see one of the men, the these, the generation, the evil, the this." A suitable paraphrase would be, "Surely *not* one of these men – this evil generation – shall see."

The entire body of people is collectively lumped together as one evil generation. Only later will exceptions be noted, thus demonstrating the horrendous nature of the collective body.

^{35 (con't)} that good land

ha'arets ha'tovah – "the land, the good." Whereas the people are one giant body of evil, the land which they are now to be denied is purposefully contrasted to them. They are the evil; it is the good. None of them shall partake of that which was set aside for them.

One can, quite clearly, see Jesus' parable of the great supper in Luke 14 reflected here. When speaking of the kingdom, one of those with Jesus said to Him, "Blessed *is* he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!"

In response, Jesus spoke a parable about a man who gave a great supper and invited many to join him. All of the people made excuses as to why they couldn't come to the banquet. In response, Jesus exclaimed, "For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper" (Luke 14:24).

The types and shadows of the past hauntingly called out for the people at Jesus' time to pay heed. The land was prepared for Israel, and later the kingdom was prepared for them. But they failed to accept the Lord's provision for the things...

^{35 (con't)} of which I swore to give to your fathers,

Here, the word *shava*, or swear, is again used. Thus, a contrast is set forth. The oath had been made, and thus it must come about. However, Moses said in verse 34 that the Lord made an oath against these people. That also must come about. But the later oath cannot negate the previous oath.

This is a point that must not be missed. The oath was made, and it must be performed. This oath is made, and it will be performed. But what was previously spoken will still surely come about. The land will come to Israel, and the kingdom will come to Israel. But there will be a delay in both.

For now, the oath which Moses refers to was spoken in Numbers 14:28, 29 –

“Say to them, ‘As I live,’ says the LORD, ‘just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: ²⁹ The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above.’”

This is later referred to by the psalmist –

“Then they despised the pleasant land;
They did not believe His word,
²⁵ But complained in their tents,
And did not heed the voice of the LORD.
²⁶ Therefore He raised His hand *in an oath* against them,
To overthrow them in the wilderness.” Psalm 106:24-26

It is also referred to in Psalm 95, a psalm which is then referred to and minutely analyzed in the book of Hebrews –

“For He *is* our God,
And we *are* the people of His pasture,
And the sheep of His hand.
Today, if you will hear His voice:
⁸ “Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion,
As *in* the day of trial in the wilderness,
⁹ When your fathers tested Me;
They tried Me, though they saw My work.
¹⁰ For forty years I was grieved with *that* generation,
And said, ‘It *is* a people who go astray in their hearts,
And they do not know My ways.’
¹¹ So I swore in My wrath,
‘They shall not enter My rest.’” Psalm 95:7-11

In Hebrews, the author – speaking to the collective body of Israel – refers to their having been denied entry, but that it would someday come to pass. But he also notes that those individuals who had believed in the Lord Jesus had, in fact, entered their rest. Even before the cross, there was this separation of views about Jesus. This is reflected in the gospel of John –

“Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. ⁴⁶ But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. ⁴⁷ Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, ‘What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. ⁴⁸ If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.’” John 11:45-48

There were those who feared the Romans, and there were those who believed. And at Moses’ time, there were those who feared the Canaanites, and there were those who believed the Lord and His promises. That is reflected in what Moses will next say –

³⁶ **except Caleb the son of Jephunneh;**

Here, as in Numbers 14:24, Caleb is singled out, being named first and apart from Joshua. Moses uses a new word, *zulah*, to identify him. It signifies “except,” or “besides.” Caleb, if you remember, means “Dog.” In Numbers, he was identified as the Kennizite.

Though of the tribe of Judah, his Gentile ancestry was thus highlighted to make a picture. Dogs are unclean animals. With his name and his ancestry taken together, he forms a picture of the Gentile people who demonstrated faith in the Lord while the Jews collectively rejected Him.

His father’s name, Yephunneh, or “He will be beheld,” anticipated the fact that Christ would be beheld by the Gentiles even when He was rejected by the Jews. Of Caleb in relation to the promise, it then says...

³⁶ (con’t) **he shall see it,**

Caleb, picturing the Gentile believer, is set in total contrast to those of verse 35. The entire congregation is an evil generation, but Caleb is set apart from them because of His belief and faith in the Lord.

He is singled out first because he fills the typology of what would come during the Gentile-led church age. It is those who the Jews consider “dogs,” meaning Gentiles, that would inherit the lead role in this dispensation. While Israel was under punishment for not heeding the Lord, Caleb obtained the promise.

Caleb is promised entry into Canaan; Gentile Christians are promised entrance into the heavenly kingdom. It must be remembered that Caleb remained in the wilderness for the forty years, but his time was one of promise leading to entry into Canaan – something which will now occur.

Israel collectively retained the promise as well, as will be seen in the coming verses. The collective group, made up of individuals, was cursed, leading to their deaths. Understanding the typology leads to understanding what has happened and continues to happen with Israel, even today.

For individual Israelites, some bear the promise and some do not. For those who do, the time here is simply in anticipation of entering what God promised. Caleb possessed that promise; all who trust in Christ do so as well.

³⁶ (con't) **and to him and his children I am giving the land on which he walked,**

Caleb anticipates the Gentiles who believed in Christ. But it was not just a group who believed and then the generation ended. Rather, the Gentiles fully followed after the Lord, and they assumed the lead role in the church age – one generation to the next. Each received the promise of inheriting the land on which their father walked.

This was spoken of by Paul, right at the end of Acts –

“Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!” Acts 28:28

Paul then further explains this in Romans 11:25 –

“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.”

While Israel was set aside due to unbelief, the Gentiles were brought in and have continued filling the typology of Caleb...

36 (con't) **because he wholly followed the LORD.'**

yaan asher mille akhare Yehovah – “because which he fully followed Yehovah.” Though nobody translates it as such, this should be an independent clause, not part of the quote of the Lord. The quote should end with, “I am giving the land on which he walked.”

The reason for this is that the words are a close repeat of Numbers 14:24 where the Lord is speaking. There, it said *v'male akhare* – “and has fully followed after.” Here, it says, *mile akhare Yehovah* – “fully followed after Yehovah.” It is now Moses repeating the thought that the Lord had spoken in Numbers, and so he adds in the name of the Lord to show this.

Being certain of this, and not wanting to simply pass over it without really seeing if it is an independent clause or not, I asked Sergio in Israel to tell me his thoughts. They are long and detailed, but I am going to include them in their entirety so that you can see how thorough he is when considering the Word of God and, thus, how carefully and thoroughly we should evaluate it –

~~~~~

“The Hebrew text does not have quotation marks, so to be able to know where the quote begins and where it ends one would use context, cantillation marks, or the space gaps in the ancient manuscripts.

It seems like your proposition makes the most sense from a contextual perspective. However, to see if such interpretation is possible from a technical perspective, I went “digging” into the Qumran scrolls. (notice Sergio’s pun!)

The most ancient manuscripts we have of Deuteronomy are the Dead Sea scrolls. There are over 70 fragments of the book of Deuteronomy, found in 11 different caves, and dating back to the 1st century BC. However, despite having such a vast number of partial fragments of the book of Deuteronomy, they are mostly copies that were discarded by the scribes because they had at least one small defect.

And so, we have all these copies but almost all of them are missing the first chapter. In my opinion, it is because in the first chapter they must have still had great focus and attention to details, and so only a few mistakes were made as they were copying the first chapter. As a result, only a handful of scrolls were discarded. This isn’t looking good for our quest.

But the situation gets even tougher. There is only ONE scroll that has the verse you are looking for, verse 36. This scroll is coded as 4Q35 (4 stands for the 4th Qumran cave, and the 35 stands for the 35th manuscript that was found in the cave). The scroll that was found there was in pretty bad shape as it dates back to the 1st century BC, so we only have partial fragments of this chapter (see attached images). After digging through 44 fragments, I was finally able to find Verse 36. But unfortunately, this fragment is incomplete. So, we can't really see if there's a space gap. All this hard work and we're still left with a mystery!

So, I moved on to the more modern manuscript, the Masoretic text which dates back to the 9th century, to see if we can find any clues there. And Wallah! In the Masoretic Text, the sentence "because he wholly followed the Lord," has a Hebrew cantillation mark, called Zakef Gadol, on the word "because." This mark functions as a separator between two segments of a verse. So, it appears that the Masoretic Text possibly agrees with this interpretation. It is quite possible that the words "because he wholly followed the Lord" were not part of the words which the Lord spoke but part of Moses' explanation.

~~~~~

Hopefully, you can now partially appreciate how much work it can be to evaluate a single portion of a single sentence that not a single scholar or translation seemed to care about, but which I and Sergio were determined to see through for your better understanding of God's precious word.

Caleb pursued the Lord, and the Lord's ways, step by step, in faith. He simply trusted the Lord's promise and defended his position by saying, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it" (13:30). He did not waiver in his resolve even when the rest of the people turned against the Lord.

³⁷ The LORD was also angry with me for your sakes, saying, 'Even you shall not go in there.

Verses 37 & 38 are stated here to relay why there needs to be a change in the leadership before the people can enter the promise. In it is a new word, *anaph*, translated as "angry." It comes from a primitive root signifying "to breath hard," and thus it signifies being enraged. At first, it seems highly curious that Moses would add this note in here.

The people were sentenced to die in the wilderness based on their disbelief in Numbers 14. However, the event which brought about the downfall of Moses and Aaron didn't

occur until Numbers 20, where it was in the first month of either the third year of their travels, or the first month of the 40th year. We logically defended why it was the 3rd year at that time.

Regardless of that, though, it was a considerable time after the events of Numbers 14 – either many months or many years. And yet Moses seems to place it in conjunction with the people’s faithless turning from the Lord.

Further, it was Moses’ own fault that this punishment was laid upon him. He and Aaron were told to speak to the rock before the eyes of the people and water would flow out. But the word was disobeyed, Moses struck the rock twice, and he failed to believe the Lord and hallow Him in the eyes of the people.

So why is Moses stating this in conjunction with the people’s rebellion and as if he is passing the buck to them concerning his own faults? It is because it *was* the fault of the people, indirectly.

The word Moses uses here, which is translated as “for your sakes,” is *galal*. It signifies “on account of.” It comes from the verb *galal* which means to roll. Thus, this speaks of a circumstance as if rolled around.

In other words, if the people simply trusted the Lord, obeyed His word, and went into the land, the entire congregation would have been in Canaan, not at Kadesh. There would have been no need for Moses to lose his temper with them and strike the rock.

But the circumstances rolled around, bringing him to the point where those events occurred. The fault was immediately his, but the blame still rested upon Israel because of what occurred at this time. This is why he includes this circumstance here now. It is also seen in the words of Psalm 106 –

“They angered *Him* also at the waters of strife,
So that it went ill with Moses on account of them;
³³ Because they rebelled against His Spirit,
So that he spoke rashly with his lips.” Psalm 106:32, 33

³⁸ **Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall go in there.**

Just as the people could not enter except Caleb, so the leader could not enter. But the people would not be left without leadership. Joshua also demonstrated faith, and he too would enter – assuming the mantle of responsibility from Moses before that occurred.

Joshua means “The Lord is Salvation.” He is identified as the son of Nun, or “To propagate” or “Increase.” He pictures those faithful Jews who would receive the inheritance in Christ. Naming his father, Nun, shows that the Lord, would propagate, or increase His offspring. Moses, representing the law, would die outside of the promise. Joshua, then anticipates faith in Christ who then would bring the people into the promise. Through the death of the law comes entry into the inheritance, pictured by Joshua.

³⁸ (con’t) **Encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.**

khazeq ki hu yankhilenah eth Yisrael – “Strengthen, for he shall cause to inherit it Israel.” One can see Jesus all over this. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:56 that “The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.”

Moses sinned and had to die outside of the promise, but Joshua, or “The Lord is Salvation,” will be strengthened by Moses, the law. In Christ’s death under the law, the inheritance is obtained for those who die to the law through Christ.

³⁹ **Moreover your little ones and your children, who you say will be victims, who today have no knowledge of good and evil, they shall go in there; to them I will give it, and they shall possess it.**

The Lord continues the thought. The people were held accountable for their failure to believe, but another generation will be brought in, and they will possess the inheritance. For Israel in the wilderness, he says that their children would do so.

However, the typology calls for more than just little ones and children. The reason for this is that the sentence was on all twenty and above. Though the term “no knowledge of good and evil” is given as a general statement in contrast to the adults, it cannot actually be said that those nineteen and younger have no knowledge of good and evil. That is an inherited knowledge of all people.

It is the same term, *tov va’rah*, that goes back to the early Genesis account. Paul says that by the law is the knowledge of sin. Thus, in type, those who will enter are those

who are not under law. In other words, in type, this speaks of those who have come to God through Christ and who are thus – as Paul says – “not under law but under grace.”

It is such a generation as this who will be given the inheritance, and they will possess it. The typology is clearly evident. Only after the law has died can the promised inheritance be possessed, and that can only come through faith. For those who fail to believe...

⁴⁰ But *as for you, turn and take your journey into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea.*

This is found in the second half of Numbers 14:25. The people were warned that the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwelt in the valley which lay before them. It was a warning because the Lord had determined to not lead them into the land.

Therefore, if they went, they would go alone and face the enemy alone. Instead, they were told to move out into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea.

As there are fingers of the Red Sea on both sides of Sinai, it could mean either direction, if the intent was west, it would have been ironic that they were being told to go in the general direction they had wanted to go when they rebelled, meaning back to Egypt.

Either way, it was away from Canaan and toward the sea. But in another ironic turn, they rebelled against this command in order to do on their own what they had just failed to do with the Lord leading them...

*It is an evil generation that has rejected Me
They failed to simply take Me at My word
They are as stubborn as the mule. How can it be?
If only they would pay heed to what they have heard*

*But their ears are closed, and their eyes are made dim
They will not pay heed to the thing that I say
“Who is the Lord? What care do we have for Him?”
Oh, Israel! Why must it be this way?*

*If you will just come to Me, I would heal you
Here I am with my arms open wide
My hands and feet have been pierced through
And the spear has gone deep into my side*

Come to Me, Oh Israel
When you do, from then on, all things will go well

II. From Seir to Hormah (verses 41-46)

⁴¹ “Then you answered and said to me,

Moses emphatically states his words to them, *vataanu vatomeru elay* – “and you answered, and you said to me. He is showing that they were the initiators of another rebellion, and that he had nothing to do with what occurred.

^{41 (con’t)} ‘We have sinned against the LORD;

khatanu l’Yehovah – “We have sinned against Yehovah.” It is a true statement. The people had sinned through cowardly unbelief. That will next be complemented with the sin of disobedient presumption...

^{41 (con’t)} we will go up and fight,

anakhnu naaleh v’nilkhamnu – “we will go up and we will fight.” There is no inclusion of the Lord in these words. To them, it is a battle that they alone will fight and prove themselves worthy of claiming the promise. It is a classic picture of those who attempt to earn salvation, and thus heaven, through their own efforts.

This is especially so for those who do so under the guise of obedience to the Law of Moses. They rejected God’s offer of Christ, and they then fall back on the commands of the law in an attempt to prove their own merit. This is exactly seen in the next words...

^{41 (con’t)} just as the LORD our God commanded us.’

No! The land is an inheritance. An inheritance cannot be earned. Further, the Lord consistently said to the people that He would give them the land. It is He who would lead the battles. He never commanded them to fight apart from His presence.

The picture of Israel attempting to merit God’s inheritance through the law is perfectly seen here. And this is no different than any others who do the same today – Jew or Gentile – relying on the commands of the law to obtain what God offers apart from the law.

⁴¹ (con't) **And when everyone of you had girded on his weapons of war, you were ready to go up into the mountain.**

Here is a word found only here in Scripture, *hun*. It signifies, “to be easy.” Rather than “you were ready to go up,” it should say something akin to, “and you thought it would be easy to go up.” This is certain because of what will come in the next verse. But it is also evident from the typology.

People who pursue the law think it is easy to earn God’s favor through the law. They look at their own actions, with their own weapons of war, as the assured ticket to obtaining the promise. This is exactly taught by Paul in Ephesians 6 –

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”

-Ephesians 6:12, 13

Only through the Lord and the weapons He has provided can man stand in the battle, and only through Him can man prevail. For Israel, their actions provided us with these typological truths.

⁴² **“And the LORD said to me, ‘Tell them, “Do not go up nor fight, for I *am* not among you; lest you be defeated before your enemies.””**

This verse corresponds directly to Numbers 14:42. The Lord would not go with them into battle. If the Lord was among them, their victory in battle would be guaranteed. Without Him, their own defeat was certain. Such is true with salvation. With the Lord, heaven is guaranteed, but without Him, only death and destruction await.

⁴³ **So I spoke to you; yet you would not listen,**

Moses conveyed the word of the Lord to the people. It is the sin of willful disobedience. The Lord spoke, Moses conveyed the word, and the people ignored the word. It is just what Paul speaks of in Galatians and elsewhere. He rebuked those of the circumcision for attempting to merit God’s favor through the law. But they refused to listen...

⁴³ (con't) **but rebelled against the command of the LORD,**

Here, as in verse 26, it says, *va'tamru eth pi Yehovah*, "and rebelled against the mouth of Yehovah." The Lord spoke forth his word, and yet the people rebelled against it. However, as in verse 26, the word is *marah*, or rebelled.

The word *marah* comes from a root meaning, "to make bitter." Thus, we can get the mental picture of, "You brought a state of bitterness to the mouth of the Lord." That is then highlighted by the next clause...

43 (con't) and presumptuously went up into the mountain.

The word translated as presumptuously is *zud*. It signifies to boil or seethe. The people didn't just bitterly rebel, but they did so in a boil. One can almost see a pot of bitter herbs being brought to a boil which is then presented to the Lord. The taste would be nauseous and revolting.

This is exactly the type of attitude those who pursue the law bring to God's presence. It is precisely what Paul speaks of in Romans 8 concerning those who attempt to walk according to the flesh, meaning who use the law as a means of justification –

"For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁵ For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. ⁷ Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. ⁸ So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God." Romans 8:4-8

44 And the Amorites who dwelt in that mountain came out against you

The word says, "the Amorite." It is speaking of the people group as a whole. In Numbers 14, however, it said, "Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that mountain came down and attacked them."

Here, the general term for all of the dwellers of Canaan is used. Amorite comes from *amar*, meaning to utter or say. Therefore, the name signifies being spoken of, and thus "Renowned." Next, interestingly, it says...

44 (con't) and chased you as bees do,

Here, the *devorah*, or bee, is introduced. It is the same as the name Deborah. The word comes from the verb *davar*, or “to speak,” and it is the root of the noun “speech,” or “word.” Just as words are spoken in an orderly motion, so are the movements of bees.

What is interesting, is that the word Amorite comes from “to utter,” or “to say,” and bee comes from “to speak.” The picture should be clear. The Lord is using this to form a picture of His word. For example, bees produce honey, something that is equated to the words of the Lord.

Those who convey the word, and the word itself, speak against those who attempt to find justification for themselves apart from the Lord. The result of such is...

⁴⁴ (con't) **and drove you back from Seir to Hormah.**

This is also something not recorded in Numbers 14. There it says, “and drove them back as far as Hormah.” Seir was never mentioned. The word Seir comes from *sear*, or hair, which signifies awareness. Man is a sentient being, he has awareness, in particular, an awareness of sin due to the law.

Hormah, or Kharemah, comes from the word *kharam*, it means to make accursed, or utterly destroy. Thus, it means “Destruction.” Again, the picture follows logically. Man, with an awareness of sin, but who attempts to be justified apart from the righteousness of Christ, is accursed and is to be destroyed.

Paul speaks of this in Galatians 1 in regard to those who attempt to pervert the gospel of Christ, particularly by reinserting the law –

“But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.” Galatians 1:8, 9

⁴⁵ **Then you returned and wept before the LORD, but the LORD would not listen to your voice nor give ear to you.**

The people of Israel rejected the Lord’s promise and provision concerning entrance into Canaan, and they were banished to the wilderness. In this, they wept before the Lord, but He paid no attention.

Likewise, and sadly, the people of Israel rejected the Lord's promise and provision concerning entry into His promised rest through the Person and work of Christ. They were banished among the nations and have wept consistently for a return to the promise.

For 2000 years, the proclamation has been, "Next year in Jerusalem." But the Lord would not listen to their voice, nor would He give ear to them. The pattern was given so that the people would see, open their eyes and their hearts to Christ, and be healed. But the healing would not come...

⁴⁶ **"So you remained in Kadesh many days, according to the days that you spent *there*."**

Here, a statement of fact is made. The people of Israel remained in Kadesh "many days." The amount of speculation on how long they were in Kadesh is long, and the commentaries vary immensely. But what needs to be understood is that Kadesh is where the spies went out from and returned to.

It is also the last place that Israel was before beginning their trek back towards Canaan. Despite all the places that they are recorded as having trekked to during their time in the wilderness, the location of Kadesh is thus given to sum up the entire period of living in the wilderness.

The meaning of Kadesh is simply, "Holy." As much as being a central point of reference for all of their time in the wilderness, then, it is also given to make a theological point concerning Israel. Despite being under punishment, despite being banned from entry into the promise, and despite the death of all of the people who rebelled, Israel was still set apart as "holy."

The Lord made a covenant with Israel, and their faithlessness in no way negates His faithfulness. Though they were, in and of themselves, unholy the Lord maintained them as "holy" for His own sovereign redemptive purposes.

Their trek back to Canaan, as we previously saw, and as we will see again in the review of their historical events in the chapters to come, anticipates their trek back to the Lord and to being brought into the covenant promises found in Jesus Christ.

The lesson of what we have seen – for Israel and for us – is that we cannot come to God apart from the merits which are found in Jesus Christ. No obtaining of the inheritance is

to be found in the Law of Moses, or in our futile attempts to be justified under that law through our own efforts.

This is the purpose of the story we have seen, and it is a truth which continues on throughout all of the Old Testament and even into the New. God has presented us with His final, full, and finished plan of salvation, and it is one which is solely dependent on the merits of Jesus Christ, and Him alone, for our justification before Him. Let us hold fast to this truth, and let us rest in the grace of God which comes through Him.

Closing Verse: *“But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.”*

-Galatians 6:14, 15

Next Week: Deuteronomy 2:1-12 *It’s been a long walk and the times have been rough...* (You Have Skirted This Mountain Long Enough) (6th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Many Days in Kadesh

And the LORD heard the sound of your words
And was angry, and took an oath, saying
‘Surely not one of these men of this evil generation
Shall see that good land of which I swore to give to your fathers
-----so to you I am relaying

Except Caleb the son of Jephunneh
He shall see it, and to him and his children, so stands my word
I am giving the land on which he walked
Because he wholly followed the LORD

The LORD was also angry with me for your sakes, saying
‘Even you shall not go in there, so to you I submit
Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall go in there
Encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it

'Moreover your little ones and your children
Who you say will be victims, when you disbelieved and quit
Who today have no knowledge of good and evil
They shall go in there; to them I will give it
-----and they shall possess it

But as for you, turn and take your journey
Into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea

"Then you answered and said to me
'We have sinned against the LORD; we will go up and fight
Just as the LORD our God commanded us
We will show those folks our strength and might

And when everyone of you had girded on his weapons of war
You were ready to go up into the mountain
----- the Lord's word you did ignore

"And the LORD said to me, 'Tell them, "Do not go up nor fight
For I am not among you; lest you be defeated before your enemies
-----yes, in their very sight

So I spoke to you; yet you would not listen
But rebelled against the command of the LORD
And presumptuously went up into the mountain
Not paying heed to His word

And the Amorites who dwelt in that mountain
Came out against you and chased you as bees do
And drove you back from Seir to Hormah
Then you returned and wept before the LORD, but the LORD
-----would not listen to your voice nor give ear to you

So you remained many days in Kadesh is where
According to the days that you spent there

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard

Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 2:1-12 **(You Have Skirted This Mountain Long Enough)**

As Moses continues to recount the events of Israel's past, since leaving Mount Horeb, he turns now to the ending of their time of punishment. In this, other than a single verse which speaks of "many days," he skips over all of the events of the past thirty-eight years of Israel's existence.

They were simply wasted years of waiting for a promise that was sure to come, but not for any of those who were under the sentence. They had to be taken out of the way while the years passed by in unrecorded silence.

The memory of the events would live on with the people, but the importance of them to the greater plan of redemption is not worth mentioning. And yet, within the words of today's verses is the simply stated note that during all of that time, the Lord had continued to bless the people and look over them.

It is a note of grace that should not have been unexpected. The Lord promised that even in their punishment, He would preserve them. And He was faithful to do so.

Text Verse: *"Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." ⁶ So we may boldly say:*

'The LORD is my helper; I will not fear.

What can man do to me?" Hebrews 13:5, 6

One of the most common communications I get is that of people who wonder if the Lord has forgotten them. I'm talking about saved believers. If those same people would heed the story of Israel's history, they might not feel any less troubled in their affliction, but they would certainly feel less troubled in their convictions.

In other words, things may be so tough that they truly consume your joy, but they should never be so tough that you question if the Lord is there with you in your trials. The lesson of Israel is the lesson of the believer. They are a template for us to look at and see the faithfulness of God in all situations.

Here we are, adopted sons and daughters of God because of the giving of His Son for us. If God continued to tend to Israel, even when they have turned their back on that, do you honestly believe He has, or He even could, neglect you? May we never consider it!

Have faith, and trust in the Lord, even when the whole world has collapsed around you. He is there, and your situation is not out of His control. He has allowed it in your life for His own reasons, and I assure you, they are good reasons. Be sure of this. It is another truthful lesson that we can find in His superior word. And so, let's turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Descendants of Esau (verses 1-7)

¹“Then we turned and journeyed

This is exactly what the Lord had told Israel to do before their willful act of disobedience of turning to fight those in Canaan. They were told this in Numbers 14:25. Moses repeated that in Deuteronomy 1:40 –

“But *as for* you, turn and take your journey into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea.” Deuteronomy 1:40

They had failed to trust that the Lord could deliver them, but when they came under sentence for that sin, they then added the sin of presumption and went to accomplish the deed themselves. The pattern was set, and it followed in the coming of Christ.

The people had failed to believe God's provision as found in Christ, and they came under the sentence of God's punishment. However, instead of accepting this, they added in their own attempt to obtain the promise apart from Christ.

They codified Jewish law through the Talmud, and they relied on their own deeds known as *teshuvah* and *mitsvot* – repentance and supposed obedience to their law – in a futile attempt to restore themselves to God.

However, that system can never restore man to God. The law was incapable of doing so. Adding in their own deeds could only make it worse. The people were, and are, defeated. They were turned away from the promise...

¹ (con't) into the wilderness

As was explained in Chapter 1, in the Bible the wilderness signifies an uncultivated area, not specifically a barren desert. It is a place of God's grace and of closeness to God, but it is also a place of testing.

For some, such as Israel, the testing resulted in disobedience. For others, such as when Christ was tested, it is a place of fellowship through obedience. The wilderness and the law are closely connected because it is by law that testing is accomplished.

Israel, under Moses, turned into the wilderness in exile and for the execution of their punishment based on their disobedience. Israel after Christ's work, and still under the law, were turned into the wilderness in exile for the execution of their punishment based on the very law that Christ had fulfilled.

They rejected Him, and so the punishments of the law (Leviticus 26) were the stated remedy to someday lead them back to Him. This turning into the wilderness was...

^{1 (con't)} **of the Way of the Red Sea,**

In being told to take their leave of the Land of Promise, by turning into the wilderness in the Way of the Red Sea, an ominous hint of doom can be seen. In Hebrew, the Red Sea is *yam suph*, or "Sea of the Ending." The sea is a place of confusion and turmoil. It is, as in Daniel, a picture of the confusion of the nations of the world –

"I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea." Daniel 7:2

In Revelation, this is said of such things –

"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea." Revelation 21:1

The word *suph*, comes from a verb meaning to cease, or end. That comes from a primitive root which means to end or perish. The people were sentenced to perish, and the path which they were to take signified exactly that.

The people of Israel were told they were to perish and here they are on the Way to the Red Sea. The people of Israel rejected Christ, and they were set to perish among the chaotic nations of the world. The exile would not be short, and the people would suffer because of their failure to simply believe the Lord. In Numbers 14:35, the Lord said, "In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die."

And in John 8:24, the Lord said –

“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins.”

1 (con't) as the LORD spoke to me,

Israel was given the choice of believing the Lord – who is the fulfillment of the law – and live, or failing to believe and die by the curse of the law. They unwisely chose the latter, and so the Lord spoke to them of exile, punishment, and perishing in death. Thus...

1 (con't) and we skirted Mount Seir for many days.

va'nasav eth har seir yamim rabim – “And we went around Mount Seir days many.” This is the first time this statement is made. However, it is given as a statement of fact. The implication is that they simply compassed about the mountain for the entire time they were dying off in the wilderness.

The term “many days” is indefinite. It simply means “all of the time that we were in this particular situation.” This then encompassed a period of thirty-eight years – from the time that they departed the border of Canaan, until the time they began their trek, once again, toward Canaan.

These words here beg us to revisit the symbolism. Mountains in the Bible have various meanings, but ultimately, they picture forms of government. There is, in Isaiah, the mountain of the Lord. Babylon, in Jeremiah 51, is called the “destroying mountain.”

Here we have Mount Seir, which has been what Israel has circled for an extended period during her exile. The meaning of the name Seir comes from the same as *sear*, or hair. Thus, it is Mount Hairy, or Mount Shaggy.

The appearance of Seir is that of a hairy mountain because of the many low bushes that cover it. But, as has been seen many times, hair in the Bible pictures awareness, particularly awareness of sin. For example, the *sa'iyir* or hairy goat is that which was given for sin in Leviticus.

Hair was first seen in Genesis 25:25 where it noted the birth of Esau. There it said, “*He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau.*” He was given as a picture of Adam, the man that was made, and who had an awareness.

This is particularly so because of sin. In his sin the Lord said of the man, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil” (Genesis 3:22). Jacob, on the other hand, was specifically noted as being smooth, implying not hairy. That was seen later in Genesis 27:11 saying, “Look, Esau my brother *is* a hairy man, and I *am* a smooth-skinned man.”

Jacob pictured Christ, the man without sin. Thus, encircling *har seir*, or Mount Seir – meaning “Mount Hairy” – is the fulfillment of Jesus’ words to Israel, exactly as He had spoken in John 8:24, “Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins.”

Israel’s exile was not under the government of Christ, which they had rejected, but under the government of man under sin – the law. Moses is recounting a true narrative of Israel’s wanderings, but he is also prophetically laying out the future of Israel after the coming of Christ.

The introduction of this note now concerning the wilderness, the Way of the Red Sea, and Mount Seir is astonishingly and sadly seen in the history of Israel since Christ’s coming.

²“And the LORD spoke to me, saying:

v’yomer Yehovah elay lemor – “And Yehovah said to me, saying.” As has been explained before, the word *davar*, or spoke is similar to, but not the same as, *amar*, or said. The first conveys the idea of instruction to be followed. The second includes a broader thought of participation by the one being instructed. That is the case here...

³‘You have skirted this mountain long enough;

The words are similar to Deuteronomy 1:6 – “The Lord our God spoke to us in Horeb, saying: ‘You have dwelt long enough at this mountain.’” Mount Horeb is Mount Sinai. It was where the law was given. In Galatians 4, Paul explicitly shows that Sinai pictures the law and the place of the law which is the earthly Jerusalem –

“Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? ²² For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. ²³ But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, ²⁴ which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to

bondage, which is Hagar— ²⁵ for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children— ²⁶ but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.”
Galatians 4:21-26

The idea we can get from these statements of Deuteronomy 1 and 2 is first, “You have been under the law long enough. Turn and head towards the promise in Christ.” And then after they rejected Him, “You have been under punishment for rejecting the Lord long enough. Therefore...”

³ (con’t) **turn northward.**

penu lakem tsaphonah – “turn you northward.” The noun *tsaphon*, or north, comes from the verb *tsaphan*, meaning to hide by covering over, treasure up, conceal, and so on. That which has been hidden away and treasured up for Israel is now to be pursued.

It is an event which has, in its truest sense, begun for them in recent years. Israel is gaining an awareness of Christ, even if the number of them is small at this point. However, they, as a whole, will come to know Him in His fullness when He is finally revealed to them. The words here anticipate that day.

⁴ And command the people, saying, “You are about to pass through the territory of your brethren, the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir;

The narrative here seems confusing when put side by side with the same account in Numbers 20. In fact, it seems like there is a standing contradiction. There it said –

Please let us pass through your country. We will not pass through fields or vineyards, nor will we drink water from wells; we will go along the King’s Highway; we will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left until we have passed through your territory.”

¹⁸ Then Edom said to him, “You shall not pass through my *land*, lest I come out against you with the sword.”

¹⁹ So the children of Israel said to him, “We will go by the Highway, and if I or my livestock drink any of your water, then I will pay for it; let me only pass through on foot, nothing *more*.”

²⁰ Then he said, “You shall not pass through.” So Edom came out against them with many men and with a strong hand. ²¹ Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his territory; so Israel turned away from him. -Numbers 20:17-21

It says, they weren't allowed to go through Edom, but here it at first seems that this wasn't so. However, in the account from Numbers, Moses said in verse 17, "Let us pass through your country." In that, he first used the term *b'artsekha*, or "your land."

Edom refused that request. Later, in that verse, he uses the word *gebulekha*, or "your border." However, Edom told them to take a hike. And so, they did. The words here in Deuteronomy are after the fact. The Lord says, *atem oberim bigbul akhekem* – "You are about to pass over the border of your brothers."

It says nothing of the land, only the border. Thus, Israel – instead of continuing on through Edom – turned back and skirted the border of Edom, not attempting to breach the borders of the land. This is seen later in Judges 11 –

"And they went along through the wilderness and bypassed the land of Edom and the land of Moab, came to the east side of the land of Moab, and encamped on the other side of the Arnon. But they did not enter the border of Moab, for the Arnon was the border of Moab." Judges 11:18

The perceived difficulties of such passages are often because of translational errors, or because the narrative is so widely disbursed throughout the pages of Scripture. In the end, there is nothing contradictory here.

Rather, Israel while heading towards Canaan, first petitioned Edom to pass through, Edom refused, Israel turned back and the Lord told them they were going to skirt their land and not to pester them, and they did just that. The reason for the coming words of verse 5 is because...

^{4 (con't)} **and they will be afraid of you.**

This was prophesied in the Song of Moses from Exodus 15 –

"Then the chiefs of Edom will be dismayed;
The mighty men of Moab,
Trembling will take hold of them;
All the inhabitants of Canaan will melt away." Exodus 15:15

The people of Edom would have heard of the Lord's deliverance of Israel. Even though it was quite a few years earlier, that would still be a story frequently repeated by the people. The people who would encounter them later would be afraid of their coming

and act in a hostile manner towards them. This is exactly what occurred, and so the Lord said...

⁴ (con't) **Therefore watch yourselves carefully.**

v'nishmartem meod – “And watch yourselves exceedingly.” The slightest provocation was bound to turn into a very large problem, and so all of the people were told to conduct themselves accordingly. They had already been warned away. If they could not follow the eastern borders of Edom, they would be forced to return back into the wilderness. And so...

⁵ **Do not meddle with them,**

Here is a new word translated as “meddle,” *garah*. It signifies to stir up. It comes from a primitive root meaning to grate, and thus it figuratively means to anger. In Daniel, it is translated as “mobilize” or “wage war,” and that may be the sense here.

The verb is in the reflexive form, and so it means to excite oneself against another. Israel was not to provoke Esau, and they were not to make any threatening actions against them...

⁵ (con't) **for I will not give you *any* of their land,**

The division is to be complete. What has been given to Esau is to remain theirs. Israel is on a trek elsewhere and none of those who are going there will remain behind to occupy the land of Edom...

⁵ (con't) **no, not so much as one footstep,**

The Hebrew is more expressive, *ad midrakh kaph ragel* – “not as much as a tread of the sole of a foot.” This is another new word, found only here in Scripture, *midrakh*, or “foot place.” It comes from the verb *darakh*, to tread the foot.

The people of Israel were not to be given a single place for a foot to tread from Edom. Later, Edom and Israel will be back and forth in war, so it must be that the account here is given to fit certain typology.

⁵ (con't) **because I have given Mount Seir to Esau *as* a possession.**

Again, a new word is found here, translated as “possession.” It is *yerushshah*. The word comes from *yarash*, signifying to inherit or take possession. Thus, it speaks of an inheritance.

Mount Seir, standing as representative of the land of the Edomites, is given to them. It is their possession as a right. It is not Israel’s inheritance. Here in verses 4 and 5 are a picture of the land given to man. The name Esau is derived from the verb *asah*, to do, or make. It is the word used in Genesis 1:26 when God said –

“Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

-Genesis 1:26

Thus, Esau pictures the made man, Adam. The Lord said that He has given *har seir*, “Mount Hairy,” meaning the government of awareness – the world, to Esau, meaning Adam. The picture is accurately described in Psalm 115 –

“The heaven, *even* the heavens, *are* the LORD’s;
But the earth He has given to the children of men.” Psalm 115:16

Man has been given the earth to dwell on. However, there are certain men who are given more. Just as the heavens are the Lord’s, so the Lord’s redeemed are given a heavenly inheritance –

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 2:4-6

This is but one example of such references to the heavenly anticipation and of the heavenly inheritance spoken of as belonging to those in Christ. Israel has been under punishment, but the Lord promised that after that time, they would be brought into Canaan, the Land of Promise.

It would be contradictory to give the land of Adam, meaning the earth, to the redeemed of the Lord. The stress in the words of this verse are to note – without any doubt – that the inheritance of the Lord’s people is not a land of the consciousness of sin, but a land where sin is no longer imputed.

The whole thought of these verses is well summed up in these words from Hebrews 9 –

“...how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? ¹⁵ And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.” Hebrews 9:14, 15

The conscience of sin (dead works) is cleansed in Christ. Thus, Israel is being prepared in type here in Deuteronomy to be redeemed from the transgressions of the first covenant, meaning the Law of Moses, brought into the New Covenant – the Christ covenant – and in this, they will receive the eternal inheritance, heaven.

This is why the stress is seen concerning the possession of Esau. The ironic part is that while Israel was under punishment for rejecting Christ, the Gentiles were grafted into the commonwealth of Israel, but eventually Israel will be brought back into right standing with God through Christ, receiving the benefits of the commonwealth that they had missed for so long.

⁶You shall buy food from them with money, that you may eat;

There is something to be said for the life that God’s people now live, and it is reflected in this verse here. Though there is the promise of a heavenly inheritance, there is also the reality of the earthly life we live.

Jesus spoke of it in His high priestly prayer, noting that those who are His remain in this world but are not of this world. Paul speaks of such things, noting that we can use the things of this world, but they are temporary and passing away.

This is not a stretch of the analysis. The last time the word for “buy food” was used was back in Genesis where the brothers of Joseph were sent to Egypt to buy grain. The word is *shavar* and comes from *shever*, cracked grain, rather than *bar*, or purified grain.

Following the details of the use of the words in Genesis showed a spiritual application. What is bought here is temporary and only sustains the body temporarily. That a spiritual picture is being made is even more evident in the next words...

^{6 (con’t)} and you shall also buy water from them with money, that you may drink.

The word for “buy” here is a completely new, different, and rare word, *karah*. It is associated with the word *karah*, meaning to open or dig. In other words, it is probably saying that if a well is dug, silver would need to be paid for the water obtained from it.

The idea here is that in this life, there is work involved in what we obtain, and what we obtain is temporary. Israel is passing by the land of Edom, but along the way, they must purchase what they need and partake of what the land of Edom offers. Someday, they will enter the Promise and partake of what is everlasting. That is reflected in the words of Isaiah –

“Ho! Everyone who thirsts,
Come to the waters;
And you who have no money,
Come, buy and eat.
Yes, come, buy wine and milk
Without money and without price.” Isaiah 55:1

It’s also seen in its ultimate sense in Revelation, saying, “And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17).

⁷“For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hand.

Despite being in the wilderness, Israel was not without work. They had artisans and craftsmen who exquisitely built the sanctuary – wood crafters, goldsmiths, stoneworkers (gemstones), workers in linen, incense, and so on. None of these skills would be wasted, and even more, they would have been used, perfected, and passed on to the next generations.

These things could easily have been traded or sold on caravan routes. They also had livestock which would have multiplied abundantly over the previous years. With the Lord’s blessing, even though they didn’t deserve it for rejecting Him, their wealth would have increased notably, and that was after having plundered the Egyptians when they left.

Likewise, Israel in exile around the world has continued to receive the Lord’s blessing. Anywhere you go in the world, you will find well-established and wealthy Jews – whether they deserve it or not. They have the finest skills, and quite often, their names reflect that – Neil Diamond, Joel Goldsmith, Adam Silver, and so on.

The words here beautifully reflect the state of Israel as it is closing in on its meeting with destiny. It is Yehovah, despite their failure to acknowledge Him, who has so blessed them. Further...

7 (con't) He knows your trudging through this great wilderness.

The sense of the word *yada*, or “know,” here is that of tending to and watching. The Lord watched over Israel as they continued their walk through the long duration and the vast wilderness. His presence never left them, despite the sentence which lay over them for their rejection of Him.

Only one who isn't looking, or who isn't willing to look at Israel throughout the past two thousand years, can deny the parallel. The Lord has punished them, but he has also watched over them to preserve them, as He promised.

7 (con't) These forty years the LORD your God *has been* with you;

The number forty in Scripture signifies “a period of *probation, trial, and chastisement*” (Bullinger). Israel received all three of these – from Egypt all the way through until where they are, and where they are heading.

Forty “is the product of 5 and 8, and points to the action of *grace* (5), leading to and ending in *revival* and *renewal* (8).” This is exactly what is seen here in Deuteronomy, and what is pictured in Israel's return from their time of punishment and exile. Through all of it, the Lord acknowledges that it is He who has been with them, tending to them, and preserving them so that...

7 (con't) you have lacked nothing.”

lo khasarta davar – “No have you lacked *a* word.” The word *davar*, or word, by implication, means a thing, or a matter. This is true for Israel in the wilderness. The Lord kept them, and they had no lack.

However, I would suggest that for the typology of what this pictures, it asks for us to retain the original sense. Despite being in exile, Israel never lacked the word. Wherever they have gone, the word has been available to them. It is they who disregarded it, but the word has always been there with Israel waiting for them to return to it and find what they had missed.

*You have skirted this mountain long enough
Your time of testing has come to an end
Though the past has been difficult and rough
Into the Land of Promise, you I will send*

*And it is yours because the battle is already won
There is nothing for you to do but to trust and believe
All has been accomplished by My dear Son
Because of Him, you I will never forsake and never leave*

*Trust in Him and the promise is opened to you
The victory is assured, so do not fear at all
There is nothing more that you need to do
Only upon My Son, you must call*

II. The Descendants of Lot (verses 8-12)

⁸“And when we passed beyond our brethren, the descendants of Esau who dwell in Seir, away from the road of the plain, away from Elath and Ezion Geber, we turned and passed by way of the Wilderness of Moab.

Israel’s travels, after having been refused travel through Edom, took them south to Elath, the very tip of where Israel ends on the Red Sea today. They then went a few miles south and east to Ezion Geber which is in Jordan today. From there, they turned north, went around Edom’s land, and passed through by way of the wilderness of Moab.

The plain, or *aravah*, comes from *arav*, meaning to grow dark. That is the same as *arav*, meaning a pledge, as in a covering with a texture. In the giving of a pledge, there is – in a sense – an intermingling of two into one. Israel is being united again with the Lord and away from the sentence they have been under.

Elath comes from *ayil*, meaning a ram, and thus one thinks of a protrusion. Hence Elath means “Trees” because they protrude up. But *ayil* also comes from *ul*, meaning strength. One can think of the strength found in trees, leading to that idea. Without being dogmatic about this, does it signify that Israel is being strengthened for their final reconciliation with the Lord? Such may be the picture.

Ezion is derived from *atseh*, the backbone. Geber speaks of a man. Thus, Ezion Geber is literally “Backbone of a Man.” As the backbone is the foundation of man, one could logically assume that this means, “Foundation of a Man.”

The foundation of a man is what he was created from and for. When man gets away from contemplating those things, the Lord works to redirect him so that there will be reconciliation. This was the purpose of Israel’s exile.

Even though those in exile were destroyed along the way, the purpose of the exile was to bring the body of people back to Him in a restored relationship.

⁹Then the LORD said to me, ‘Do not harass Moab, nor contend with them in battle, for I will not give you *any* of their land as a possession, because I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot as a possession.’”

The word translated as “harass” comes from a root meaning to cramp. Thus, this is speaking of besieging Moab. Israel is instructed to not besiege them nor face them in war. Moab means “From Father.” Ar simply means “City.” It is used to speak of the entire land possessed by Moab. And Lot, who hasn’t been seen since Genesis 19, means “Covering,” as if enveloping something.

Without being dogmatic about this picture, my supposition is that this is speaking of Gentile believers. They are “From Father,” they are a gathering of people, as reflected in a city, and the naming of Lot would signify the covering they possess. It is a difficult verse, but this at least sounds correct. Especially because Paul speaks of the saved in Romans 4:7 as having their sins covered.

Despite this, one reason for sparing Moab is because, eventually, a family of Bethlehem would move to Moab during a famine. There, a woman named Ruth would marry into it. From there, and through circumstance, she came into the line of David which eventually leads to the Messiah, Jesus.

¹⁰(The Emim had dwelt there in times past, a people as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim.

Now is introduced a parenthetical thought which will take us to the end of our verses today. This land of Moab was once dwelt in by the Emim. The word is the plural of *emah*, or terror. Thus, these are “The Terrors.”

They are noted for their greatness, their numbers, and their height – thus they were terrifying to those who came into contact with them. They were noted at the time of Abraham in Genesis 14, but they were eventually destroyed, and the descendants of Lot filled their land.

They are further described as being as tall as the Anakim. As seen in Numbers, *anaq*, means “neck.” Thus, they were noted either for their necks – being very long or very thick – or for the adornments they wore on their necks.

I would assume that listing them here now is not without purpose. Israel, thirty-eight years earlier, had swooned at the thought of facing the inhabitants of Canaan –

“We are not able to go up against the people, for they *are* stronger than we.”³² And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, “The land through which we have gone as spies *is* a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it *are* men of *great* stature.”³³ There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.” Numbers 13:31-33

But if the Emim, who were so great, so numerous, and so tall – even as tall as those doods – could be defeated, then so could the Anakim. As Joshua and Caleb said of them, “...they are our bread.”

For Israel to find this out is a way of bolstering their confidence, in advance, to prepare them for their entry into Canaan. And so, the narrative continues...

¹¹ They were also regarded as giants, like the Anakim, but the Moabites call them Emim.

“Giants,” or Rephaim, comes from a word meaning to sink down or relax. This is similar to the Nephilim. That comes from *naphal*, meaning to fall. However, Rephaim could also come from a word meaning “to heal.” If so, then it indicates that their size came from being invigorated in some way, probably through special inbreeding.

What this is telling Israel is that the Emim were of the same origins as the Anakim. The Emim got wiped out and were no longer a threat. As this happened by non-whopping people, then Israel was fully capable of whooping up on the whopping ones – the Anakim. But as more encouragement, we continue on...

¹² The Horites formerly dwelt in Seir, but the descendants of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their place,

Here is another group seen in Genesis 14, and who are again seen later mentioned in Genesis 36, *ha'khorim*, or the Horites. The word comes from *chor*, meaning a hole or a cave. Thus, these people were troglodytes.

Whether these were large people or not is not stated. With this group being listed within the genealogy of Esau as living in the land, Esau went in and assimilated with them to some extent, but as a people they died out. The point, once again, is that cave dwellers would be hard to drive out, and yet Esau was able to dispossess and destroy them.

This knowledge was sure to strengthen Israel in their determination to follow suit and wipe out the inhabitants of Canaan. With that thought, we read...

***¹² (fin) just as Israel did to the land of their possession which the LORD gave them.)**

The words here are in the past tense. Three possibilities have been suggested.

- 1) It is spoken as an accomplished fact, even though it is future.
- 2) It is a later insertion by a scribe or,
- 3) this is speaking of the land east of the Jordan which had already been won in battle. This is explicitly stated in Deuteronomy 3.

The third option is certainly what is correct. The note would be pointless if it was a later insertion. Speaking of it in the future is unnecessary in relation to the names of the people who have just been mentioned, and so it is simply a note from Moses giving encouragement to the people to not lose heart as their fathers had.

Rather, they were to trust the Lord and receive their inheritance. And this is a noteworthy place to end the verses. It was the Lord who directed the events of these nations, as He Himself had said. "I have given the land to the descendants of Esau," and "I have given the land to the descendants of Lot."

He had further won the battles over Midian, Sihon, and Og for Israel. This parenthetical insert is prophetically given, then, to reassure Israel of today that He has already won the battles for them. He has sent Christ, Christ has defeated the foes, and all they need to do is – by faith – receive that, trusting in His provision.

The Land of Promise is not unobtainable, but it cannot come through works of the law. It must come by faith in the Lord. He has proven this is true. And so, like Israel of today, we also must simply trust in Him. The battle is not for us to win, nor can it be so.

Christ fulfilled the law for us. Christ lived the sinless life we simply cannot live. And, Christ has covered us with His covering. We must trust that, and keep trusting that, with each step – from salvation to glory – it is the Lord’s battle to win. We are merely temporarily passing through to a land already prepared for us.

Closing Verse: *“I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are on the ground, by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and have given it to whom it seemed proper to Me.” Jeremiah 27:5*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 2:13-23 *They marched until all the rebels were gone. This was the date stamp...* (From the Midst of the Camp) (7th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

You Have Skirted This Mountain Long Enough

Then we turned and journeyed
Into the wilderness of the Way of the Red Sea
And we skirted Mount Seir for many days
As the LORD spoke to me

And the LORD spoke to me, saying:
These words He was then relaying

“You have skirted this mountain long enough
Turn northward; time to see some new stuff

And command the people, saying
“You are about to pass through the territory of your brethren
-----the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir
And they will be afraid of you
Therefore watch yourselves carefully, so that they will not fear

Do not meddle with them
For I will not give you any of their land
No, not so much as one footstep
Because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession
-----please understand

You shall buy food from them with money
That you may eat, so you shall do
And you shall also buy water from them with money
That you may drink. Pay heed to what I am telling you

For the LORD your God has blessed you
-----in all the work of your hand
He knows your trudging through this great wilderness
These forty years the LORD your God has been with you
You have lacked nothing. What you needed you did possess

“And when we passed beyond our brethren
The descendants of Esau who dwell in Seir
Away from the road of the plain
Away from Elath and Ezion Geber...

We turned and passed by way
Of the Wilderness of Moab on that day

Then the LORD said to me
‘Do not harass Moab, nor contend with them in battle
-----against them make no aggression
For I will not give you as a possession any of their land
Because I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot as a possession

(The Emim had dwelt there in times past
A people as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim
They were also regarded as giants, like the Anakim
But the Moabites call them Emim

The Horites formerly dwelt in Seir, but the descendants
-----of Esau dispossessed them
And destroyed them from before them by the sword

And dwelt in their place, just as Israel did
To the land of their possession which gave them the LORD)

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 2:13-23 **(From the Midst of the Camp)**

Three times in just three verses, the narrative today notes that the generation of the men of war was consumed and had perished. And yet, in all three of these verses, it adds on a qualifier. Twice it says, “from the midst of the camp;” once “from among the people.”

What is the Lord conveying to us with that thought? I’ll let you wait until we get there to explain it, but maybe you can guess in advance simply by thinking of the typology of what is being pictured.

Or, maybe you can put it together based on what the rest of the verses say about the nations which are noted as being destroyed in the other verses of our passage. Or, maybe you can put it together by thinking of the fate of those nations which did the destroying.

What is the common denominator between them, and what is the contrast between them and Israel? As you read the word, think on such things. Compare them to the rest of the word, and to what occurs in redemptive history as well, and you can usually piece such things together.

Text Verse: *“Every word of God is pure;
He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.
⁶Do not add to His words,
Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar. Proverbs 30:5, 6*

It’s a good set of words for our text verse for several reasons, but particularly for the words “He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.” As long as Israel trusted the Lord, Israel was unstoppable. But as soon as they failed to trust Him, or when they trusted in another god, which is no god at all, they would quickly be crushed by their foes.

Israel is given to us as an example to live by and learn from. Sometimes, those lessons apply to us individually, and sometimes they apply to us in a more general sense, but they all have meaning. In following the history of Israel, and by comparing it to what Scripture says about them, one can form a plan for his own walk in this life, even if it is just one big broad plan – “The Lord has spoken, and I will obey the Lord.”

If you go no further than that, you will be far better off than most of the Christians in the world today. Just simply heed His word and obey it... in context of course. If you do these things, you will do well. But you cannot do those things unless you... Anyone? Yes, unless you know His word.

Pay heed to His word after you learn His word. God's directives for you are all to be found in His superior word. And so, let's turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Just As the Lord Had Sworn to Them (verses 13-16)

¹³ “Now rise and cross over the Valley of the Zered.’

Moses now recounts a momentous event in the life of Israel. In this, he begins with these words, *atah qumu v'ivru lakem eth nakhal zared* – “Now rise and cross over Valley Zared.” The word *nakhal* signifies a wadi where water would flow through during the seasons of rain. That word comes from *nakhal* meaning, “to take possession,” or “inherit.” Zared comes from an unused root meaning to be exuberant in growth of foliage.

This location was first mentioned in Numbers 21:12. Israel had gone from Oboth, to Ije Abarim which is in the wilderness east of Moab, and then they camped in this valley. After camping there, Moses was specifically told to rise and cross over the Valley of Zered. In obedience to that, it next says...

¹³ (con't) So we crossed over the Valley of the Zered.

va'naabor eth nakhal zered – “And crossed over Valley Zered.” It is obviously an important point in their travels. How rare it is to record the command of the Lord and then for the execution of that to be immediately and specifically stated again in this fashion.

The direct command, followed by the immediate obedience, is not unexpected. But the stress in the word of recording both, one right after the other, asks us to consider the event. It is either the beginning of something extremely important, or the ending of something of particular note, or it is both.

Based on the next words, at least the second option is certainly true. A milestone has been reached which is marked out for Israel to remember in the crossing of the Valley of Zered...

¹⁴ And the time we took to come from Kadesh Barnea until we crossed over the Valley of the Zered was thirty-eight years,

Deuteronomy 1:2 notes the arrival at Kadesh Barnea, saying, “*It is eleven days’ journey* from Horeb by way of Mount Seir to Kadesh Barnea.” This was the detail given to show that Israel had left Sinai (here called Horeb), and they had an 11-day walk to Kadesh Barnea. From that short walk, they had been offered Canaan, meaning the Land of Promise. All they had to do was go in and receive it.

The Lord promised to go before them, and He promised that it would be their possession. But, as we saw, this did not come about. Immediately after recording the fact that it was an 11-day journey, the next verse said –

“Now it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first *day* of the month, *that* Moses spoke to the children of Israel according to all that the LORD had given him as commandments to them,” Deuteronomy 1:3

Something had happened which caused an extended delay in Israel’s entering and receiving the promise. They failed to simply believe the Lord and trust His offer. From there, Deuteronomy 1 gave all of the details of that corporate failure of them to simply believe, trust, and receive. The chapter ended with these words –

“So you remained in Kadesh many days, according to the days that you spent *there*.” Deuteronomy 1:46

Without going on, one can do an approximate guess concerning the math based on what has been presented so far. Israel left Egypt and eventually arrived at Sinai (Horeb). Israel departed there, as it says in Numbers 10:11, “on the twentieth *day* of the second month, in the second year.” Moses spoke to Israel the words of Deuteronomy, as it says in Deuteronomy 1:3, “in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first *day* of the month.”

The fortieth year, minus the second year, would make 38 years, exactly as noted in this verse. The eleventh month, minus the second month, would make 9 months. Understanding this, the crossing of the Valley of Zered happened sometime before this

point – sometime before the passing of the 38 years and 9 months when Moses spoke out these words to the people. That specific timeframe was...

14 (con't) until all the generation of the men of war was consumed

This is exactly what the Lord has promised them, first in Numbers 14:26-30, and then as was repeated in an abbreviated form in Deuteronomy 1:34-38 –

“And the LORD heard the sound of your words, and was angry, and took an oath, saying, ³⁵ ‘Surely not one of these men of this evil generation shall see that good land of which I swore to give to your fathers, ³⁶ except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and his children I am giving the land on which he walked, because he wholly followed the LORD.’ ³⁷ The LORD was also angry with me for your sakes, saying, ‘Even you shall not go in there. ³⁸ Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall go in there. Encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.”

It cannot go without note at this time, that Peter uses the same terminology as is used here when speaking to Israel about their rejection of Christ in Acts 2 –

Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

⁴⁰ And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” Acts 2:38-40

Moses called them an evil generation; Peter called them a perverse generation. Both words speak of the moral state of the people of that generation.

Further, and more directly, the author of Hebrews uses this same account from their past, and he equates it directly to their rejection of Jesus their Messiah –

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says:

“Today, if you will hear His voice,

⁸ Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,

In the day of trial in the wilderness,

⁹ Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me,

And saw My works forty years.

¹⁰ Therefore I was angry with that generation,
And said, 'They always go astray in *their* heart,
And they have not known My ways.'

¹¹ So I swore in My wrath,
'They shall not enter My rest.'" Hebrews 3:7-11

The entire congregation of men of war was set to die outside of the Land of Promise with the exception of those few (meaning Joshua and Caleb) who simply believed.

The same was to be true for Israel at the coming of Jesus. None of those who failed to believe in the Messiah would be brought into the inheritance and God's rest. Rather it would only be those few who would, by faith, accept and believe. Think of this account of Israel's past as we continue the letter to the Hebrews –

Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; ¹³ but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴ For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, ¹⁵ while it is said:

"Today, if you will hear His voice,
Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."

¹⁶ For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, *was it* not all who came out of Egypt, *led* by Moses? ¹⁷ Now with whom was He angry forty years? *Was it* not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸ And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? ¹⁹ So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Hebrews 3:12-19

None who failed to believe entered the inheritance, not one. Only Joshua and Caleb, who trusted the Lord, could enter. This thought is then summed up in the first verses of Hebrews 4 –

"Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. ² For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard *it*. ³ For we who have believed do enter that rest..."

-Hebrews 4:1-3

The Bible is so abundantly clear on this. Israel's rejection of the Lord's provision was simply a lack of faith. In that rejection, they died outside of the promise. That was typologically given to us to see Israel's rejection of the Lord's provision in Christ.

Their rejection of Him means that they die outside of the promise. They shall never enter His rest, meaning what God has prepared for His people since man's expulsion from Eden. But for those who simply believed, they do enter that rest. It is in the present tense, indicative mood in the Greek – believe and enter, and it is real and certain.

Despite this rejection of the people, Israel, and despite their banishment from entry into the promise, there is a truth which is inescapable based on Moses' next words...

14 (con't) from the midst of the camp,

The people who rejected the Lord were consumed from the midst of the camp. What does that imply? Without even giving it a second worth of thought, it tells us that there is a camp, and that the camp continues on.

God did not destroy Israel completely. Rather, He maintained them as a people, carefully protecting them from either separating into individual clans and spreading out from one another into different people groups, or from being destroyed as a people, thus ending their nation and culture.

Rather, the camp continued through the wilderness, and Israel continued throughout the many generations since their rejection of Christ. The camp remained. These things happened to them. While the camp continued, those who rejected them were consumed...

14 (con't) just as the LORD had sworn to them.

This goes right back to the words of Deuteronomy 1:34, 35 which was cited earlier. As it said –

“And the LORD heard the sound of your words, and was angry, and took an oath, saying, ³⁵ ‘Surely not one of these men of this evil generation shall see that good land of which I swore to give to your fathers...’”

The Lord took an oath, and as He swore, so He fulfilled. And this fulfillment wasn't a passive waiting around for time to accomplish its work, as is seen in the next words...

¹⁵ For indeed the hand of the LORD was against them,

In the previous verse, the word *tamam* was used. It was translated as "consumed." It means to come to an end or to finish a matter. Here, it shows that this was actively accomplished by the Lord. His hand was against them as they wandered.

It could be that some tried to escape the camp, leaving the body and heading for some people group around them. If so, He may have sent a lion to destroy them. Or, the person may have come to a camp and been killed by those he came to seek refuge with. Further, he may have sent disease into the camp.

We can only speculate, but the deaths of this generation were complete in scope and number, and they served the purpose of bringing to an end those who had seen the Lord's glory and who failed to believe.

This is exactly what happened to those of Israel who were exiled after rejecting Christ. They may have tried to hide who they were, or they may have tried to leave their collective body, but the Lord searched them out and pursued them relentlessly, just as He promised He would in Leviticus 26.

What Israel faced can only be blamed on Israel. They were warned in advance, they were given the opportunity to believe the Lord. They failed to do so. And, the Lord pursued them, even to the ends of the earth. And yet, the same thought of God's sure punishment is mingled with His unending grace, as is seen in the next words...

^{15 (con't)} to destroy them from the midst of the camp until they were consumed.

Here, he says that the Lord was against them to *hamam*, or destroy them. The word signifies to put in commotion or throw into confusion. By implication then, it means to destroy. This is what the Lord did to Egypt as Israel crossed through the Red Sea. He threw them into confusion, resulting in their destruction.

Likewise, this was the active hand of the Lord against Israel, until they had come to their end. And yet, the camp remained. The grace of maintaining Israel, even as He destroyed Israel, served a purpose. It was to show Israel, and indeed all peoples of the earth – His holy character.

He had promised to forever keep Israel, and He kept them through the wilderness. Likewise, He had promised to keep Israel, and He has kept them throughout their exile –

“Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “I do not do *this* for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name’s sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. ²³ And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I *am* the LORD,” says the Lord GOD, “when I am hallowed in you before their eyes. ²⁴ For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. ²⁵ Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. ²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*. ²⁸ Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. ²⁹ I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. ³⁰ And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations. ³¹ Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that *were* not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations. ³² Not for your sake do I do *this*,” says the Lord GOD, “let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel!” Ezekiel 36:22-32

Replacement theology fails because it does not take into account the nature of God, the unconditional nature of His spoken word, or the surety of His covenantal promises.

Israel rejected the Lord Jesus, but God did not reject Israel collectively. Instead, He rejected them individually while maintaining them. The camp remains. And because it both remained and remains, there is a time for the punishment to end. For Israel in the wilderness, that time was to end in the crossing of the Valley of Zered.

As we saw, the word translated as “valley,” *nakhal*, comes from *nakhal* meaning, “to take possession,” or “inherit.” Zered comes from an unused root meaning to be exuberant in growth of foliage. The significance of the place is that for Israel, abundant life is once again ready to be possessed.

*A whole generation had perished along the way
But the journey brought them back to the land again
Before them lay the prospect of a new day
Behind them lay the bodies of that generation of men*

*In going forward they were to have faith in the Lord
They were to trust, unlike that generation of men
He would give them the land, according to His word
Because He had brought them back to the land again*

*Faithful and True is the God of Israel
Though He destroyed them to the last unfaithful of those men
He also preserved them for the story to tell
That He had faithfully brought them back to the land again*

II. Just as He Had Done (verses 16-23)

¹⁶ “So it was, when all the men of war had finally perished from among the people,

Maybe Moses was thinking of the events recorded in this verse when He penned these words of Psalm 90 –

“For we have been consumed by Your anger,
And by Your wrath we are terrified.

⁸You have set our iniquities before You,
Our secret *sins* in the light of Your countenance.

⁹For all our days have passed away in Your wrath;
We finish our years like a sigh.” Psalm 90:7-9

In the previous two verses, it said, the men of war were destroyed from the midst of the camp. Here it says they were destroyed from among the people. The word *ha’am*, or “the people,” is singular. It speaks of the collective whole.

The camp remained, because the people remained. The generation had perished, but the generations continue. Israel remains. Praise God for His faithfulness. Israel remains.

¹⁷ that the LORD spoke to me, saying:

The Lord set a time and a location, along with the event (meaning the final death of the disobedient generation) to speak out words of a new direction and purpose for Moses, and thus for Israel. He begins that new direction with...

¹⁸ ‘This day you are to cross over at Ar, the boundary of Moab.

The words are explaining the crossing of the Valley of Zered. It is the border of Moab, and the location is by Ar, the city of Moab. Or, it could be as in verse 9 where Ar, the city, is representative of the land of Moab. In that case, it is saying that by crossing the river, they are in the land of Moab, regardless of the actual location of the city.

The latter seems more likely, because it then skips over anymore mention of Moab and goes directly to Ammon. The Lord has already taken care of his words of warning concerning Moab in verse 2:9, and so there is no need to repeat that again. Thus, he next continues with...

¹⁹ And *when* you come near the people of Ammon,

Lot had a child through each of his own daughters. The account is found in Genesis 19:36-38 –

“Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father. ³⁷ The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab; he *is* the father of the Moabites to this day. ³⁸ And the younger, she also bore a son and called his name Ben-Ammi; he *is* the father of the people of Ammon to this day.”

The people of Ammon are descended from Ben-Ammi, or “Son of My People.” The name Ammon comes from *am*, meaning “people,” or *im*, meaning “with.” And so, it means either “A People” or maybe “Kinsmen.” The name is derived from this incestuous relationship, just as Moab, or “From Father,” is. Of them, like Moab, the Lord says...

¹⁹ (con’t) do not harass them or meddle with them,

Here, the Lord uses the same words as He did concerning Moab in verse 2:9. In essence, the words mean that they are not to besiege them in their cities or fortifications, and they are not to stir up trouble with them in order to provoke them to war...

¹⁹ (con’t) for I will not give you *any* of the land of the people of Ammon *as* a possession,

Again, this follows on in thought with the words of verse 2:9 which concerned Moab, which said, “for I will not give you any of their land as a possession.” And the same reason is then given for this command...

¹⁹ (con’t) **because I have given it to the descendants of Lot as a possession.”**

The land of Ammon is where the descendants of Ben-Ammi settled. It became their possession, and they dwelt in it. Israel was to leave this land alone, and to leave the inhabitants of the land alone as well. They were not allowed to cause any damage or harm to them, and this is for a specific, yet somewhat hidden reason.

As with verse 2:9, without being dogmatic about a typological picture, it again looks to what God would do in Gentile believers. Ammon descends from Ben-Ammi, or Son of My People. Citing Hosea, Paul speaks of the Lord’s people in Romans 9 –

“I will call them My people, who were not My people,
And her beloved, who was not beloved.”

²⁶ “And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them,

‘You *are* not My people,’

There they shall be called sons of the living God.” Romans 9:25, 26

Israel of the future is to accept God’s chosen Gentiles, and they are not to harm them, even when they are again God’s chosen instrument for revealing Himself to the world.

The picture fits, especially because of the naming of Lot which, as we saw then, means “Covering.” The Lord has called them His people and thus they are covered as such.

But despite this, and again like for that of Moab, there is a more immediate reason for sparing Ammon as a people. Like Moab, they too will come into the line of Christ Jesus. Moab did through Ruth. But some generations later, this is said of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon –

“And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam *was* forty-one years old when he became king. He reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put His name there. His mother’s name *was* Naamah, an Ammonitess.” 1 Kings 14:21

From that marriage came the next king of Israel, Abijam (Abijah), and through him, eventually came the Messiah, our Lord Jesus. Thus, the family of Lot – all of them – are in the genealogy of Jesus.

He, his wife, his two daughters, and their two sons are all in this perfectly structured genealogy which was to usher in the Messiah of the world. The story of Lot and his daughters in the cave is one of the most misunderstood of the Bible. It is there for a reason, but not the reason that most people ascribe to it.

Of this land, like that of the land of Moab, a parenthetical thought is now introduced...

²⁰ (That was also regarded as a land of giants;

Here, we have the same translational problem as verse 2:11. The word “giants” is misleading. The Hebrew says Rephaim. The fact that they may be large is irrelevant.

As we saw, Rephaim comes from a word meaning to sink down or relax. This is similar to the Nephilim. That comes from *naphal*, meaning to fall. However, Rephaim could also come from the word meaning “to heal.”

The land of Ammon was called a land of Rephaim. This would be akin to saying, the land of Florida is the land of the Seminoles. They are the original inhabitants of the land. The name isn't so much given based on their size, but on their clan, even if their size is part of the equation. The thought continues with...

²⁰ (con't) giants formerly dwelt there.

It should say, “Rephaim formerly dwelt there.” This is the same as “Seminoles Indians formerly dwelt there.” The thought goes on...

²⁰ (con't) But the Ammonites call them Zamzummim,

Rather than identifying them by their clan, the people of Ammon gave these people their own name. The name is believed to come from *zamam*, meaning to consider, purpose, or devise – often in a bad way, but not always. Thus, these are maybe “The Schemers.”

The inclusion of this clause is to identify the group based on their attributes rather than their clan. This would not be unlike calling the Seminoles, “The Unconquered People,” because they eluded capture by the US Army in the 19th century.

Again, as before, by bringing in this subject matter, it is to show Israel, even before entering into Canaan, that just as these tribes who were closely related to them – Edom, Moab, and Ammon – could subdue their enemies, so Israel should not fear that they too could subdue the inhabitants of Canaan.

This continues to be seen with the next words...

²¹ a people as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim.

Like what was said of the Emim in verse 2:11, they are noted for their greatness, their numbers, and their height – thus they were terrifying to those who came into contact with them. It is also possible that, like the Emim, they were noted at the time of Abraham in Genesis 14. There, a group known as the Zuzim is recorded. It may be an abbreviated form of their name.

If this is so, the Rephaim, the Emim, and the Zamzummim are all ethnically related. No matter what, they were eventually destroyed, and the descendants of Lot filled their land.

Bringing in their similarity to the Anakim is again a note intended to bolster Israel as they entered Canaan. The Anakim still dwelt there, and if the Ammonites could wipe out the Zamzummim, Israel could wipe out the Anakim. There should be complete confidence for them in the battle ahead. This is especially so because of the next words...

²¹ (con't) But the LORD destroyed them before them,

Here, it is specifically stated that it is the Lord, meaning Yehovah, who destroyed the people before them. It is not that the Edomites, Moabites, or the Ammonites were the principal force behind the destruction of these people, but that they were the weapon the Lord wielded to destroy them.

This thought is seen in the setting up of kings in Daniel 2, and of the building up and destroying of nations in Jeremiah 18 and elsewhere. In Jeremiah, it says –

“The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy *it*,⁸ if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it.⁹ And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant *it*,¹⁰ if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it. Jeremiah 18:7-10

This is the confidence-boosting thought that is now given to Israel. They will be the instrument of destruction against His enemies. The victory is assured, because the battle belongs to the Lord, just as for those in Ammon...

21 (con't) and they dispossessed them and dwelt in their place,

va'yirashum va'yeshevu takhtam – literally, “and disinherited them, and sat under them.” To sit is to dwell or reside and to come under another is to replace them. Ammon, because of the Lord’s destruction of these people, took possession of their land...

22 just as He had done for the descendants of Esau, who dwelt in Seir, when He destroyed the Horites from before them.

This has not been stated before. In verse 2:12, it said that “Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them” as in the coming clause. However, here it ascribes that to having been accomplished by the Lord, as is seen in the word *ka'asher*, or “just as.” The Lord was the principal cause, and Esau was the instrumental cause.

This could almost be inferred from the words of verse 2:12 which continue by saying that Esau dispossessed and destroyed them “just as Israel did to the land of their possession which the Lord gave them.” The Lord gave the land of their possession to Israel, but He also did so for the descendants of Esau and Ammon. For each...

22 (con't) They dispossessed them and dwelt in their place, even to this day.

There is a time when the Ammonites and Edomites were overthrown to the point where their names died out. From a biblical perspective, only the lands which they dwelt in still bear their names. The peoples were either killed or assimilated into other people groups.

For the Edomites, surprisingly, it was into the nation of Israel. That is recorded by the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus who says that about 129 BC John Hyrcanus –

“...subdued all the Idumeans; and permitted them to stay in that country, if they would circumcise their genitals, and make use of the laws of the Jews; and they were so desirous of living in the country of their forefathers, that they submitted to the use of circumcision, and of the rest of the Jewish ways of living; at which time therefore this befell them, that they were hereafter no other than Jews.” Antiquities, Book 13 Chapter 9 Section 1

At the time of the Deuteronomy narrative, however, Esau dwelt in the land of their possession because the Lord so determined it to be. Likewise, and to even further bolster Israel’s confidence that it is the Lord who establishes and destroys nations, the verses today speak of the destruction of another people group on the other side of the land of Canaan...

²³ And the Avim, who dwelt in villages as far as Gaza—

The meaning of Avim is hard to pin down. It is related to a word meaning to bend or twist, but also a distortion or ruin, or even perversity or moral evil. Because no definitive name is given, I will venture out on a limb and call them the Mischief-makers, but that shouldn’t be used as a definition to dogmatically pass on to others.

Whatever their name actually means, this group of people lived on the other side of Canaan, along the coast where Gaza is today. The name Gaza, or as it is said in Hebrew Azzah, comes from the word *az*, or strong, and that is its meaning, Strong.

It seems that nothing has changed in 3500 +/- years, because there are still mischief-makers in that stronghold. However, those known as the Avim were overthrown by, as it says...

***²³ (fin) the Capthorim, who came from Capthor, destroyed them and dwelt in their place.)**

This group of people is identified in Genesis 10:14. These people descended from Ham through Mitsraim, meaning the founder of Egypt. The meaning of Capthor is extremely hard to pin down. But, because these people will become very prominent in Scripture in the coming books, a short explanation of them from Abraim is worthy of note –

“Through the prophet Amos, YHWH declared that he brought up the Philistines from Caphtor, and through Jeremiah that the Philistines emerged as a separate derivative culture from a remnant of Caphtor.

At that time this remnant of Caphtor appears to have been concentrated on an island (the noun יֶרֶק, 'i refers to a coast region: coast, capes and islands off the coast). Most commentators seem to favor Crete as the last stronghold of the Caphtorim, which would make the Philistines displaced survivors of the Minoan culture. The Minoans had maintained a highly advanced civilization from the 4th millennium BCE, which had absorbed much of Egypt's culture and which in turn had radiated its own identity to the Greek and Canaan coasts. After a series of natural calamities and attacks by Hittites and probably others, the Minoan culture began to decline halfway the 2nd millennium BCE. Around 1200 BCE, the Minoan culture had been eradicated from the island.

It seems reasonable to expect that certain Minoan refugees began to seek refuge with their old business partners. Right around the time that the Minoan culture came to an end, Egyptian records begin to make mention of the Philistines in their realm, and the distinct Philistine identity may very well have come about when waves of late-Minoan refugees overwhelmed native Canaanite tribes.” Abarim

It is this group of people, probably from the Minoan culture, who came into the land of Canaan and destroyed the Avim. However, Joshua 13:3 records some of them still living in the land at that time, having been assimilated into what become known as the Philistines.

The point of this verse, like that of the others previously given, is that it was the Lord who directed the nations, and it is He who rules over the nations. Ultimately, it is He who decides when a nation, people group, or culture is to be expanded or ended.

As He had done this on both sides of the land of Canaan, He is the One who would ensure that the land of Canaan itself would be brought under Israel’s hand according to His promise. The only time this would not be the case is when Israel failed to obey Him.

If such should occur, He would redirect His purposes according to their behavior. This is seen, explicitly, in the book of Judges –

“Then the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He said, “Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not heeded My voice, ²¹ I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, ²² so that through them I may test Israel,

whether they will keep the ways of the LORD, to walk in them as their fathers kept *them*, or not.” Judges 2:20-22

But Israel had been warned of exactly this thing. Joshua, an old man and ready to die, warned them of this—

“Therefore take careful heed to yourselves, that you love the LORD your God. ¹² Or else, if indeed you do go back, and cling to the remnant of these nations—these that remain among you—and make marriages with them, and go in to them and they to you, ¹³ know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the LORD your God has given you.” Joshua 23:11-13

As we close, we must then consider what is going on in today’s verses. Israel had disobeyed the Lord. They had gone into exile in the wilderness, and they were destroyed – entirely – for having failed to believe the Lord. And yet, in their utter destruction – meaning those who had not believed – they were also preserved.

However, the nations that the Lord chose to destroy – and with whom He had made no covenant – were destroyed and not preserved. And those nations whom he had used to destroy those same nations, such as Edom, Moab, and Ammon, were eventually destroyed and not preserved.

What is the difference between them and Israel? It comes down to one thing alone. It is not Israel’s goodness. It is not Israel’s intelligence, wisdom, power, ability, or righteousness – they lacked all of these things in abundance.

It is because the Lord spoke, and in His speaking, He cannot lie. He further solidified His spoken word in a covenant, and in that covenant, He laid His honor on the line. The other nations were destroyed and perished, Israel was destroyed, and yet preserved. Israel stands and Israel shall stand – not because of their own goodness, but because of the faithful and tender mercies of the covenant-keeping Lord.

The same good and kind God who watches over Israel also watches over those who have come to Him through the giving of His Son. The covenant has been made, and God can no more betray those who come to Him than He could betray Israel.

The word is an everlasting surety that He is God, that He is faithful, and that His people are secure in Him. The lesson today is that in Christ you stand, and in Christ you shall stand – to the glory of God the Father.

Closing Verse: *“Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, ‘Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!’¹² Therefore prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.¹³ Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves.¹⁴ I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken it and performed it,” says the LORD.”* Ezekiel 37:13-16

Next Week: Deuteronomy 2:24-37 *The tales of valor could go on and on...* (The Defeat of Sihon, King of Heshbon) (8th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

From the Midst of the Camp

“Now rise and cross over the Valley of the Zered
So we crossed over the Valley of the Zered, as the LORD said

And the time we took to come from Kadesh Barnea
Until we crossed over the Valley of the Zered
Was thirty-eight years, until all the generation of the men of war
Was consumed from the midst of the camp
-----just as the LORD had sworn to them; just as He said

For indeed, was against them the hand of the LORD
To destroy them from the midst of the camp
-----until they were consumed, according to His word

“So it was, when all the men of war
Had finally perished from among the people; when it came to be
That the LORD spoke to me, saying:

This day you are to cross over at Ar, Moab's boundary

And when you come near the people of Ammon
Do not harass them or meddle with them; use no such aggression
For I will not give you as a possession any of the land
-----of the people of Ammon
Because I have given it to the descendants of Lot as a possession

(That was also regarded as a land of giants
Giants formerly dwelt there, with giants the place did teem
But the Ammonites call them Zamzummim
A people as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim

But the LORD destroyed them before their face
And they dispossessed them and dwelt in their place

Just as He had done for the descendants of Esau
Who dwelt in Seir; as the record does say
When He destroyed the Horites from before them
They dispossessed them and dwelt in their place, even to this day

And the Avim, who dwelt in villages as far as Gaza
-----such was the case
The Caphtorim, who came from Caphtor, destroyed them
-----and dwelt in their place

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 2:24-37 **(The Defeat of Sihon, King of Heshbon)**

The account here is parallel to that found in Numbers 21. The two really have to be taken together to get a full view of what is going on. And for the most part, that is what will be presented. When something needs to be compared to, or aligned with, the earlier story of Sihon, it will be laid out for you in that way.

Here we have a real battle that actually took place about 3400 years ago. And yet, it anticipates another actual battle that hasn't even happened yet in human history. But along with that is the fact that these stories have parallels to our own battles in life.

I'm not one to make extended moral applications out of these passages, but it just cannot be overlooked that there are spiritual and moral parallels to what occurs in our own lives. For example, Israel is going to battle against a foe. It is a foe who is on the offensive in this particular battle, and Israel will respond to his aggression as it comes.

Once attacked though, we are not only assured the victory, as Israel was, but we are also able to go on out on our own offensive engagements, just as Israel was. We are the Lord's people, and we have been provided both defensive and offensive weapons, and we have the ability to destroy what the enemy has built...

Text Verse: *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, ⁶ and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.*

-2 Corinthians 10:4-6

Paul speaks of pulling down strongholds. That is an offensive type of warfare. He also speaks of casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself. Those, likewise, are offensive maneuvers.

What Israel does in these verses in a physical realm very well mirrors the things we are to do as outlined by Paul. As I said, moral and spiritual applications of such things aren't my main focus, but they do have their place.

In any given passage from the Old Testament, one can often find one of four main uses for it: a literal and historical account, a moral application, a prophetic application, and a pictorial application – meaning something that pictures something else.

As you read the Bible, it is always interesting to think on how these all fit into whatever you are reading, but you also have to be careful to not over-spiritualize things in the process. Unless what you are looking at is actually and accurately revealed in another way, it is best to not simply make stuff up. That is counter-productive and can lead people down unhealthy paths very quickly.

In all things, be sure the word is carefully handled, and you will do well. For today, we have some rather interesting prophetic and pictorial things that we will be looking into. Such interesting things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let's turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. This Day I Will Begin (verses 24-26)

The words here are the continued words of the Lord which began in verse 18. Moses has been quoting Him since then.

²⁴ “Rise, take your journey, and cross over the River Arnon.

As noted in Numbers 21, the Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites. Upon entering this area, the final trek before leading into Canaan is seen.

The name Arnon comes from *ranan*. It signifies to give a jubilant, ringing cry, and thus rejoicing. Therefore, this is the Roaring Stream. Upon crossing this river, they are no longer in a land which the Lord intends to be left alone. The inhabitants of the land they will now encounter are those noted to Abraham over four hundred years earlier –

“Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror *and* great darkness fell upon him. ¹³ Then He said to Abram: “Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land *that is* not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. ¹⁴ And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet complete.” Genesis 15:12-16

Abraham was promised the land of Canaan, a land where Amorites also dwelt. However, the Lord was not yet ready for them to be dispossessed. They had not done enough evil to justify their extermination.

But the Lord knew that by the end of these four hundred years, their iniquity would be so great that they would need to be destroyed. Therefore, the promise to Abraham was delayed until that time.

Some look at the extermination of these people as a brutal and unjust act by the Hebrew people, but they fail to see that the Lord treated Israel in exactly the same manner. For example, when Israel's iniquity had become so great, there was eventually nothing else that could be done but allow their destruction and exile –

And the LORD God of their fathers sent *warnings* to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending *them*, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. ¹⁶ But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till *there was* no remedy.

¹⁷ Therefore He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, on the aged or the weak; He gave *them* all into his hand. ¹⁸ And all the articles from the house of God, great and small, the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his leaders, all *these* he took to Babylon. ¹⁹ Then they burned the house of God, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces with fire, and destroyed all its precious possessions. ²⁰ And those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, ²¹ to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years. 2 Chronicles 36:15-21

The only difference between the extermination of the Amorites and the destruction of Israel is that the Lord had made a covenant with Abraham, and He had made a covenant with Israel.

Despite their conduct, which was as bad and often worse than those they dispossessed, the Lord kept His covenant promises to them. No such covenant was made with the Amorites however...

^{24 (con't)} **Look, I have given into your hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land.**

The narrative will be filled in later as to what will bring about the coming battle. For now, Moses states the words as a fact. The land is given into Israel's hand. Unfortunately for these Amorites, and unlike the others whom Israel has already encountered, there was no word of protection from the Lord for these people.

The name Sihon, or *Sikhon*, was introduced in Numbers 21:21. He is actually referred to many times in the Old Testament, even as late as the time of Jeremiah. This is because his name is directly associated with the land he rules. We do the same today when we might say, "This is the land of Chief Red Cloud."

Sihon's name comes from a root which signifies "to sweep away," or "to strike down." Thus, his name may signify anything from "Tempestuous" to "Warrior."

He is defined further as *melekh kheshvon ha'emori*, or "king of Heshbon the Amorite." The word *kheshvon*, comes from *kheshav*. It is a word which signifies to consider, calculate, or devise. Therefore, it signifies an explanation of things, or "Intelligence."

Amorite comes from *amar*, meaning to utter or say. Therefore, the name signifies being spoken of, and thus "Renowned." The idea with the combination of his name, title, and location, is that despite his greatness as a warrior, despite the intelligence of the foe, and despite the renown of the people, Israel is assured victory.

As He says, "I have given." The king, meaning he and all the people and the land, is given as a possession. The time of the iniquity of the Amorites is full, and Israel is to be used as the instrument of the Lord's judgment against them.

One cannot find fault in the Lord, who is the Creator, and thus sovereign over His creation. He had mercy on this group of people for four hundred years, and in that time their iniquity grew to the point where there was no other remedy than their destruction. Therefore, Israel is told to...

²⁴ (con't) **Begin to possess *it*, and engage him in battle.**

In verse 2:5, the word *garah*, or "engage," was first used. It signifies to stir up, coming from a primitive root meaning to grate, and thus it figuratively means to anger. Here, it means to excite oneself against another.

It has been used three times to prohibit Israel from stirring up a fight. In 2:5, they were prohibited from stirring up a fight with the descendants of Esau. In 2:9, it was then seen

that they were not to stir up a fight with the descendants of Moab. And in 2:19, they were then told to not stir up a fight with the sons of Ammon.

Now, it is used for the fourth and last time in the books of Moses to do exactly the opposite. They are to actively *garah*, or engage, the Amorites in battle for the purpose of possessing what will be dispossessed by Sihon. But there is further reason for conducting this battle which is outside of Canaan proper...

²⁵ This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the nations under the whole heaven,

The reason for stating this now, rather than after the events of the actual account, which begin in verse 26, is to set the stage for Israel's victories in relation to the nations of the world. It makes the fact more poignant by telling what will result, even before stating what will lead to this intended outcome.

Israel is promised that a dread and fear of them will affect the nations under the "whole heavens" (the word is plural in the Hebrew). Some scholars take this as hyperbole, but what occurs here still applies today.

God's covenant with Israel, their campaign for the land of promise – both outside and within the borders of Canaan – and their continued existence, literally permeates the entire world. Just because the event recorded here occurred thousands of years ago, it doesn't mean that it has any less value than it did then.

Rather, because the history of Israel is recorded, and because the covenant of God with them is contained within their historical record (meaning Scripture), this word – in fact – has gone out to all nations under the whole heavens. It is both geographically and temporally a true statement to all...

^{25 (con't)} who shall hear the report of you, and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you.'

v'ragezu v'khalu mipanekha – "and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you." The first word, *ragaz*, was used in Exodus 15 after Israel had passed through the Red Sea –

"The people will hear *and be afraid*;

Sorrow will take hold of the inhabitants of Philistia." Exodus 15:14

The second word is *khul*. It signifies to whirl or dance, and thus by implication to writhe. It is used when waiting because there is this sense of anxiety or writhing when one waits. It is used also when a woman gives birth. There is travail and pain in the process. One can then think of the nations whirling and writhing as if waiting in anguish for a terrible outcome.

The idea, then, is that Israel is the Lord's possession. It is through Israel that the Lord is glorified. Those who are in fear of Israel are so because they understand that it is the Lord who accomplishes His feats through them.

So, it is logical to ask – “As recorded in the Bible, did all of the nations tremble because of Israel?” No. What about in their history and even today? Do all of the nations tremble because of Israel? No. And so, is this a failed statement?

The answer is “No.” It obviously speaks of those people and nations who understand that Israel is the Lord's possession, and who accept that the Lord is God. This is the purpose of keeping Israel for all these millennia. Eventually, the nations will come to understand not only that the Lord is Israel's God, but that the Lord is God. This is what is referred to in Ezekiel –

“And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I *am* the LORD,” says the Lord GOD, “when I am hallowed in you before their eyes.”
-Ezekiel 36:23

Here in Deuteronomy, the Lord says He will “begin” this process. In Ezekiel, it speaks of a time when the Lord will continue this process – something that is happening in our lifetime. Someday, the completion of this process will be realized, and all of the world will see that not only is the Lord Israel's God, but that the Lord is, in fact, God. With that understood, the details of how this is to come about are now set to be reviewed...

*I have given you the victory, and the battle is won
All you need to do is to engage the enemy
The outcome is assured, and the fight is done
Just step forward in faith, and this you will see*

*The fear of you will be upon all who hear
And none shall be able to stand against you
Whether the enemy is afar or near*

Just step forward in faith; it's all you need to do

*The victory is assured because of Jesus My Son
In Him, the battle is won; surely the battle is through
Trust in Him and the fight is done
Just step forward in faith; it's all you need to do*

II. A Hardened Spirit and an Obstinate Heart (verse 26-37)

The words now go from those of the Lord to those of Moses. He will fill in the details concerning what the Lord had just spoken.

²⁶ “And I sent messengers

In Numbers 21:21 it says, “And Israel sent messengers.” That was the narrative form of the account. Moses is now recounting it from his perspective. As the leader, he directed messengers to go forth...

²⁶ (con't) from the Wilderness of Kedemoth to Sihon king of Heshbon, with words of peace, saying,

The “Wilderness of Kedemoth” has never been mentioned before. The name comes from *qedem*, or east. However, *qedem* also speaks of that which is before, because the sun rises in the east. Therefore, the location means “Ancient Times,” “Antiquity,” or “Beginnings.”

It is from this newly stated location that Moses sent messengers to Sihon. And with them they carried words of peace. Israel has already been told to destroy all the inhabitants of Canaan. That was stated explicitly in Numbers 33 –

“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you have crossed the Jordan into the land of Canaan, ⁵² then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, destroy all their engraved stones, destroy all their molded images, and demolish all their high places; ⁵³ you shall dispossess *the inhabitants of the land* and dwell in it, for I have given you the land to possess.’”

-Numbers 33:51-53

Sihon is not in Canaan, and therefore he was exempt from this directive. Therefore, Moses’ messengers extended words of peace from him, just as they were extended to

the descendants of Esau and of Lot. Therefore, the fate of Sihon will be his own fault. For now, Moses' words of peace are...

27 'Let me pass through your land;

The words are identical to Numbers 21:22. Israel had asked because Moses had asked. He petitioned the king through his messengers to simply pass through the land, but with the following guarantees...

27 (con't) I will keep strictly to the road, and I will turn neither to the right nor to the left.

In Numbers 21, it said "we." Here it is spoken in the first person, "I will keep," and "I will turn." Moses gave his personal guarantee on behalf of the people. Further, he gives a strong emphasis by saying, *baderek baderek elek* – "by the way, by the way, I will walk." He further defines that as, *lo asur yamin u-semol* – "no I will turn right and left."

Sihon is given the same strong sureties that were given to Edom, as was stated in Numbers 20 –

"Please let us pass through your country. We will not pass through fields or vineyards, nor will we drink water from wells; we will go along the King's Highway; we will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left until we have passed through your territory." Numbers 20:17

At that time, however, Edom refused passage to Israel, and so Israel turned and took another route. Eventually, as we will see, some of those in Edom did allow them a certain amount of passage through their land. For now, and with Sihon, Moses continues...

28 You shall sell me food for money, that I may eat, and give me water for money, that I may drink; only let me pass through on foot,

The offer is the same as that for Edom. The offer is to pay with silver for anything that is eaten or for any water that they obtain from wells or springs. They further note that they are passing through on foot. In this, there is no mobilized army. Any animals would be led, not ridden on. The sureties are that there will be peace and complete compliance with the stated words.

²⁹ just as the descendants of Esau who dwell in Seir and the Moabites who dwell in Ar did for me,

The words here appear contradictory to both the earlier record in Numbers concerning Edom, and also a later note concerning Moab. First, after their petition to Edom, the response from the king of Edom was –

“You shall not pass through my *land*, lest I come out against you with the sword.”
-Numbers 20:18

Also, later in Deuteronomy, we will read this concerning Moab –

“An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his *descendants* shall enter the assembly of the LORD forever, ⁴ because they did not meet you with bread and water on the road when you came out of Egypt.” Deuteronomy 23:3, 4

The first thing to consider is that this is a continuing narrative, and the second statement is contained in the same book that the verse we are looking at now is in. It would be ridiculous to think that Moses would write one thing and then to contradict himself with his own words.

To resolve this, we can note first that the words here do not specifically apply to traveling through Edom, which was denied by them, but rather to the willingness of Edom and Moab to sell food and water to them as Israel traveled around their borders.

Secondly, in regard to Moab, the word Moses uses in Deuteronomy 23 is *qadam*. It signifies to come before or to meet. It would imply a hospitable meeting. The descendants of Lot may have been willing to allow Israel to skirt their borders, and they may have even sold them food and water for silver, but they did not voluntarily tend to their needs.

As their forefathers, Abraham and Lot, were related by blood, this was an especially unfriendly act. Thus, Moses codified it into the law that they should not be allowed into the assembly of the Lord for their lack of fraternal care for Israel.

And finally, Moses’ words here do not mention the king of any of these peoples. He simply notes that the people of the land sold them food and drink. Therefore, there is

no contradiction in what Moses says now to anything which, at first, appears contradictory elsewhere. Understanding that, he now says...

29 (con't) until I cross the Jordan to the land which the LORD our God is giving us.'

Moses is obviously speaking for Israel, and not merely of himself. He already knows that he will not pass over Jordan and into Canaan. Therefore, his words – though in the first person – are spoken of concerning Israel collectively.

Despite this, the words are actually a continued note of surety to Sihon. If the Lord their God is giving them the land west of the Jordan, and as Sihon is east of the Jordan, then the Lord has not granted Sihon's land to Israel. The words are actually a careful note of security for Sihon to consider. Despite these guarantees...

30 "But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass through,

The word here is different than that used in Numbers 21. There it said that Sihon would not *nathan*, or "give," passage to Israel. Here it says he is not *abah*, or willing, to allow passage. The change is purposeful in order to set up the next words...

30 (con't) for the LORD your God hardened his spirit

Here is a verse which is similar to that of Exodus concerning Pharaoh, and which uses the same word, *qashah*, or harden –

"And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt." Exodus 7:3

The word signifies to be hard, harsh, or severe. Moses says that the Lord made his spirit hard. But further...

30 (con't) and made his heart obstinate,

The word here is *amets*. It signifies to be strong, bold, and courageous. It is the same word used later by Moses when he tells Israel to be strong and courageous. Likewise, the Lord says the same thing to Joshua to encourage him once Moses dies.

Rather than saying his heart is obstinate, I would say something like "strengthened," or "encouraged." The obvious question to consider, just as with Pharaoh in Exodus, is, "Did

the Lord actively harden his spirit and encourage his heart, meaning purposefully override Sihon's nature and thus bring the change about?"

The answer is, "No." Sihon saw how Israel had traveled around Edom and Moab, not through them. Thus, it was obvious that they had not granted access to Israel through their lands. Sihon would have seen the passivity of Israel in this, and so he assumed they were unable to fight in such a battle. The same is true with Ammon as was seen in verse 2:19.

The trek to Canaan could have been immensely shorter if they had gone through their lands, but they didn't. Therefore, Sihon's spirit was passively hardened, and his heart was passively encouraged. Further, as an Amorite, he was kin to the Amorites on the other side of the Jordan.

Therefore, his spirit would have been hardened against Israel because of this as well. The very fact that Moses said to him that it was "the land which the Lord our God is giving us," would bring exactly the opposite effect that it was supposedly intended to.

"We don't want your land, because Canaan is given to us," became in Sihon's mind, "The land the Lord our God is giving us is the land that the Amorite's gods will be expelled from." The hardening was passive, and yet it was completely effective. This is so...

³⁰ (con't) **that He might deliver him into your hand, as *it is* this day.**

The word is *l'maan*. We simply say, "so" or "that," but it signifies "to an end purpose." The process of doing the things that have been done was purposeful. Nothing was left to chance, and Sihon's reaction to it was assured. And yet, and despite this, Sihon is solely to blame for what occurred. Based on this...

³¹ **"And the LORD said to me, 'See, I have begun to give Sihon and his land over to you.**

The Lord, having directed all things to meet a determined outcome, now states that outcome which has been derived from His divine causality. "I have begun to give" signifies that it is done. The initiation of the process has begun, and the hardening and the encouraging have met their intended goal. Therefore...

³¹ (con't) **Begin to possess *it*, that you may inherit his land.'**

As in verse 24, it is an imperative. “You are to take this action.” However, in verse 24, it shows how it will come about. In this verse, the stated outcome is given. This is seen by putting the two side by side –

Begin to possess *it*, and engage him in battle.

Begin to possess *it*, that you may inherit his land.

The same word, *yarash*, is used in both verses, but it is repeated in the second one. It speaks of inheritance. In other words, one could say, “Begin to inherit *it*, that you may inherit his land.” The battle is merely a steppingstone on a path that leads to a guaranteed outcome. Because the land is an inheritance, it belongs to Israel.

³² Then Sihon and all his people came out against us to fight at Jahaz.

The name, Jahaz, or *yahatz*, comes from a root meaning “to stamp.” Thus, it signifies, “Trodden Down.” The name of the place is probably derived from what occurred during the battle. At this location, the Amorites were trodden down, and thus Israel gave the location its name as a memorial of what occurred.

It is Sihon who initiates the action. Israel has not moved from the wilderness, as is seen from the Numbers account –

“But Sihon would not allow Israel to pass through his territory. So Sihon gathered all his people together and went out against Israel in the wilderness, and he came to Jahaz and fought against Israel.” Numbers 21:23

Israel had peacefully petitioned Sihon, and they had remained encamped at their place of petition. Therefore, Sihon is to blame for the aggression, and any land lost in battle, by default, will belong to Israel. And the outcome is...

³³ And the LORD our God delivered him over to us;

The Lord is given the credit as the principal cause. He is ultimately responsible for the victory, and without Him, the victory would not have come about. Sihon was delivered to Israel by the Lord so that Israel could accomplish the Lord’s purposes, as is next stated...

³³ (con’t) so we defeated him, his sons, and all his people.

Israel is the instrumental cause of Sihon's defeat. Because the Lord delivered him, so Israel was enabled to defeat him. And the victory was complete. As it says, "him, his sons, and all his people."

At times in the Hebrew, there is a difference between the written text and that which is read. This is the case here. The written text says, "his son." That margin note, however, says, "his sons." Either way, whether one son or more died in the battle, even if he had more sons it makes no real difference. This is because...

³⁴ We took all his cities at that time,

Verse 31 said that "Sihon and all his people came out against us." The implication is "all the fighting men." In doing this, he left open the possibility of total defeat. In such a case, there would be no battle-capable men to defend the cities. Thus, Israel would have been able to take all of the cities with relative ease. Sihon's overconfidence left his people in a very bad state...

^{34 (con't)} and we utterly destroyed the men, women, and little ones of every city; we left none remaining.

The word translated as "utterly destroyed" is *kharam*. It comes from a primitive root signifying to devote to religious uses. In such a case, it signifies a devotion to God, meaning that nothing would be spared, but all would be devoted to the Lord. In this, the implication is that the slaying of these people is by divine direction.

As He is the judge of all souls, and as all things belong to Him, what Israel does here with the extermination of even who we would call "innocents" in a regular war, cannot be considered either murder or some type of war crime.

As the Lord is God, and because Israel is the Lord's arm of judgment, their actions are wholly acceptable. But this cannot be said in any other scenario. As there is only one God, then all other gods are false. Thus, the actions of those who randomly take innocent life cannot be condoned, even while the actions of Israel – as directed by the Lord, cannot be condemned.

Despite the mandate for *kharam* of the people, however, the cities were not destroyed. And more...

³⁵ We took only the livestock as plunder for ourselves, with the spoil of the cities which we took.

The act of *kharam*, at times, extends to all things, including the livestock and the spoil of the cities. This is the case, for example, with Jericho. Nothing was to be taken from it. This is true at other times, such as with the Amalekites as is recorded in 1 Samuel 15.

The decision was the Lord's, and each instance is based upon His will, not the desires of the people. Therefore, the act of *kharam* is as much a test of obedience to Israel as it is a point of authority of the Lord over Israel. Israel devoted to the Lord that which the Lord determined to be devoted, and they were also provided for from their battles according to the decision of the Lord.

³⁶ From Aroer, which is on the bank of the River Arnon, and from the city that is in the ravine, as far as Gilead,

Aroer means "Stripped," "Bare," or "Naked." It is noted as being on the bank of the Arnon. It rested on the north bank of the Arnon River. The next boundary is noted as a city in the ravine. That is probably Ar of Moab which is noted in Numbers 21:15.

By naming Aroer and not naming Ar, it is showing that Aroer at least partially belonged to Israel, while Ar, though forming a border, still belonged to Moab. The middle of the river itself, however, is the border between the two lands. From that border, all of the land was taken "as far as Gilead."

In the Hebrew, there is an article before Gilead. It says, "the Gilead," and thus it surely speaks of Mount Gilead. The name Gilead means "Perpetual Fountain." All of the land and all of the cities within the land were taken. As it says...

^{36 (con't)} there was not one city too strong for us;

Here is a new word, *sagav*. It comes from a primitive root meaning "to be lofty," and thus inaccessible. Therefore, it is better translated as "not one city was too high for us." We could paraphrase that by saying, "No city was out of our reach."

It is this word that brought to mind the text verse today where Paul spoke of "every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God." Moses is rejoicing in his words over a physical conflict that took place. Paul's words rejoice over the spiritual equivalent which we face as believers.

Both are obstacles on the road to the Land of Promise, and both are only defeated in one way. For the church today, and for Israel of the past that is...

³⁶ (con't) **the LORD our God delivered all to us.**

Though we are given weapons of war – be they physical or spiritual – apart from God, there can be no victory. But with Him, all strongholds will be cast down, and every high thing is brought low. It is He who ultimately delivers the enemy and grants His people the victory.

^{*37} (fin) **Only you did not go near the land of the people of Ammon—anywhere along the River Jabbok, or to the cities of the mountains, or wherever the LORD our God had forbidden us.**

The Jabbok, or *yaboq*, means “Pouring Out.” It is the designated border of the land. In this, is another note of obedience by Israel. They refrained from securing any land that belonged to Ammon, the descendants of Lot. Here it says, “along the River Jabbok.”

The Jabbok was the border between the two lands, and so Israel stopped at that point. However, in Joshua 13, it will say this concerning the inheritance of land given to Gad –

“Their territory was Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the Ammonites as far as Aroer, which *is* before Rabbah.” Joshua 13:25

This land comes into dispute in Judges 11. However, that was land which was won in battle by Sihon. When Israel defeated Sihon, that land became a part of Israel’s possession. Ammon lost their claim to it when it was lost to Sihon.

Everything else which still belonged to Ammon at that time was left to them as the Lord commanded as was all other land prohibited by the Lord. The borders remained set by the Lord alone.

*The spoil is yours with the battle over and done
The enemy is destroyed, and you can now rest
You trusted in Christ Jesus, My precious Son
You had faith in Him, and you passed the test*

*In this battle, you have the victory
And the spoil is there, waiting for you*

*The rewards of heaven are yours, heaped up aplenty
Because you trusted in Jesus who is Faithful and True*

*Great are You, O God! And greatly are You to be praised
We honor You for all You have done
With hearts of joy and voices loudly raised
We worship You through Christ Jesus Your Son*

III. Prophetic Pictures

The subject of Sihon has already been presented in Numbers 21. There, it was seen that he prefigured the antichrist. His name means Warrior, something identified with the antichrist. He is here called the king of Heshbon, or Intelligence.

His destruction here in a physical battle is equated to what Paul says of such things in a spiritual sense in 1 Corinthians –

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written:
‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.’” 1 Corinthians 1:18, 19 (NIV)

The antichrist is the king of that which is opposed to God. There is the wisdom of God and there is that which is opposed to Him, meaning false wisdom.

The first notable thing is that Moses sent his message from Kedemoth, or “Ancient Times.” That is reflective of the word of the Lord, issuing forth from eternity itself. The Lord uses *qedem*, the root of Qedemoth in this manner in Isaiah –

Remember the former things of old,
For I *am* God, and *there is* no other;
I *am* God, and *there is* none like Me,
¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times *things* that are not *yet* done,
Saying, ‘My counsel shall stand,
And I will do all My pleasure.’” Isaiah 46:9, 10

It is a note of surety that what the Lord has ordained will come to pass. As we saw, despite it being a request for passage through the land, the request was actually the

means of hardening Sihon's heart to effect the purposes of the Lord. That is exactly what has been purposed for the antichrist from the very beginning.

And so, Israel proposes to go through his land to the Land of Promise, exactly what will happen in Israel's future. But that is denied by him. However, as we saw, the Lord purposed for this to come about. The spirit of the antichrist, and thus the antichrist, must be destroyed, and the Lord purposed that it will come to pass.

As we saw in Numbers, and is repeated here, the place of the battle is at Jahaz which means Trodden Down. This is what will happen to Jerusalem as is noted in Revelation 19. The holy city will be trodden underfoot.

However, Israel will prevail in the end and they will take possession of Sihon's land. What belonged to the antichrist and his master, the devil, is regained for Israel. At that time, it says that they have inherited the land from the Aroer on the Arnon to the Jabbok and even as far as the Gilead.

Aroer, means "Stripped," "Bare," or "Naked." That is referring to the state of all things before the Lord –

"For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account." Hebrews 4:12, 13

Arnon comes from *ranan*, which signifies to give a jubilant, ringing cry, and thus rejoicing. The *yaboq*, or Jabbok, means, "Pouring out." There is a pouring out of God's favor – love, grace, mercy and the like – even the Holy Spirit – on Israel. But there is also a pouring out of God's wrath on the antichrist.

And Gilead, or Perpetual Fountain, speaks of the state of Israel from that point on. They will have the Perpetual Fountain of God flowing forth for them, from that time on.

The narrative today is both in line with the account in Numbers 21, and it also expands on it, adding in new details through new names and places. It is a note of confirmation that God's promises to Israel will not fail, and though they must face this foe in the end times, the Lord will be with them, bring them through what is coming, and bring them to the place that He promised their fathers thousands of years before.

The faithfulness of God to Israel is the surest sign of the faithfulness of God to us in Christ. He made a covenant with Israel which he has never forsaken, and which He will never forsake.

And, in the giving of the New Covenant in Christ, the same reliable surety is found for us. God can be trusted to follow through with His promises, even when we fall short. Have confidence in this, and trust that what God has promised in Christ will be brought to its happy conclusion.

Closing Verse: *“Trust in the LORD, and do good;
Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.*

*⁴Delight yourself also in the LORD,
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.” Psalm 37:3, 4*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 3:1-11 *Another foe, another battle, someone to whoop up on...* (The Defeat of Og King of Bashan) (9th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Defeat of Sihon, King of Heshbon

“Rise, take your journey, and cross over the River Arnon
Look, I have given into your hand
Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land
Begin to possess it, and engage him in battle, his defeat will be grand

This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you
Upon the nations under the whole heaven, so I shall do
Who shall hear the report of you
And shall tremble and be in anguish because of you

And I sent messengers from the Wilderness of Kedemoth
To Sihon king of Heshbon, with words of peace, saying
Let me pass through your land; I will keep strictly to the road
And I will turn neither to the right nor to the left, so I was relaying

You shall sell me food for money, that I may eat
And give me water for money, that I may drink
Only let me pass through on foot
That's my proposition, what do you think?

Just as the descendants of Esau
Who dwell in Seir and the Moabites who dwell in Ar did for me
Until I cross the Jordan to the land
Which the LORD our God is giving us, this is my plea

“But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass through
For the LORD your God his spirit hardened like clay
And made his heart obstinate
That He might deliver him into your hand, as it is this day

“And the LORD said to me
See, I have begun to give Sihon and his land over to you
Begin to possess it
That you may inherit his land, so you shall do

Then Sihon and all his people came out
Against us to fight at Jahaz, this he did do
And the LORD our God delivered him over to us
So we defeated him, his sons, and all his people too

We took all his cities at that time
And we utterly destroyed (the victory we were gaining)
The men, women, and little ones of every city
We left none remaining

We took only the livestock as plunder for ourselves
With the spoil of the cities which we took
From Aroer, which is on the bank of the River Arnon
And from the city that is in the ravine; that is in the brook

As far as Gilead, there was not one city too strong for us
The LORD our God delivered all to us, we had no fuss

Only you did not go near the land of the people of Ammon—

Anywhere along the River Jabbok, you did not trod
Or to the cities of the mountains
Or wherever had forbidden us the LORD our God

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 3:1-11 **(The Defeat of Og, King of Bashan)**

At times, I have to stop and wonder if the passage I'm evaluating for you is being given proper treatment concerning the pictorial or typological patterns that I am making. I have to ask, "Does this really fit, or am I simply making things fit what I want it to say.

This was especially true for me in the Numbers 21 sermon where Sihon and Og were first described in Israel's victory over them. I really stressed as to whether the typology was correct or not. At other times, the typology has seemed so clear that it is hard to miss. It simply jumps off the page and announces itself.

One good example of that is the typology of the Jordan picturing Christ. The Jordan flows from Mt. Hermon to the Salt, or Dead, Sea. In order for Israel (or indeed anyone) to enter the Land of Promise, it must be through the Jordan, or Christ.

The picture is so obvious, and everything associated with it is so certain, that it doesn't really require any stress as to whether it is right or not. And yet, each time I have typed up some picture of it – meaning Hermon, the Jordan, the Dead Sea, and so on, I still have to ask myself if what I have been certain about is actually certain.

Presenting something inaccurate means presenting faulty theology. And presenting faulty theology will lead to faulty doctrine. And that leads to unstable Christians who have a part of their walk (maybe more than a part of it) on unstable footing. And each unstable step will lead one a little further off the proper path.

Text Verse: *"A mountain of God is the mountain of Bashan; A mountain of many peaks is the mountain of Bashan." Psalm 68:15*

Until typing this sermon, I had never stopped to evaluate the name Hermon. Despite assuming the typology, I hadn't actually checked it out fully. That actually troubles me thinking about it now. But the patterns seemed so obvious that knowing the actual meaning of Hermon never even came to mind.

However, the mountain is first introduced into the biblical narrative in today's passage. Because of this, it became necessary to determine its meaning. Thankfully, and with a giant retroactive sigh of relief, it actually fits the typology of everything that you have been taught concerning it, the Jordan, the Dead Sea, and so on.

If it didn't, the typology of at least half a dozen sermons, or more, would have to be reconsidered, all because I never checked the meaning of the name of a single mountain. But this will be true a thousand more times as we continue through Scripture.

It is impossible to anticipate everything that will arise in Scripture in regard to such things. The fabric is too intricate, and the weaving is too complicated to be able to guess all that the Lord has put in His word for us. So far so good though. The patterns have fit, the typology has matched, and the story continues to unfold so beautifully.

What a treasure God has given us in this marvelous gift we call the Holy Bible. Yes, great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let's turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Do Not Fear Him (Verses 1-11)

Chapter 2 ended with the defeat of Sihon, king of Heshbon. Israel is being prepared for their crossing of the Jordan and into the promise. That prophetically looked forward to the destruction of the antichrist, something which must come about at the time of Israel's acknowledgment of Jesus as their true Fountain of hope.

But, as we saw in the Numbers' sermons, there were two foes to be defeated. The second of them is ahead of them on their trek to the promise. After defeating Sihon, Israel was in a place which made entrance into Canaan possible.

However, with Og and his people holding the northern portion of Gilead and also all of the Bashan, it would be unwise to leave him untouched. In type and picture, the same is true for Israel of today. There are two foes who must be removed before they will pass into the knowledge of Christ and into the heavenly inheritance.

Chapter 3 begins with the details concerning this second foe...

¹“Then we turned and went up the road to Bashan;

va'nepheh va'naal derek ha'bashan – “And we turned, and we ascended *the* road to the Bashan.” The verse begins with the simple word “And.” it is a continuation of the narrative, despite the chapter divisions later imposed on the text.

Further, the words of the verse are the exact same as Numbers 21:33, except that there it is in the third person plural (they) instead of the first person plural (we). Moses is exactly recounting the narrative as it was previously given, but from a personal perspective.

As is consistent, there is an article in front of Bashan. It says, “the Bashan.” The name signifies something like the “Place of fertile soil.” Israel was making its ascent to this spot...

^{1 (con't)} **and Og king of Bashan came out against us,**

va'yetsa og melekh ha'bashan liqratenu – “and came out Og king of the Bashan against us.” The king of this entire fertile place brings himself against Israel.

Here, as in Numbers 21, Og is said to be king of the Bashan. His name comes from *uggah*, which is a round baked cake. That comes from *ug*, to bake. The picture we see is one set in opposition to Israel.

Obviously, he then is to be destroyed. The *uggah*, or baked cake, is seen seven times in the Bible. It is that which nourishes and sustains life. One can see that in denying Israel access to this fertile place, and standing in opposition to them, a picture is made which will be more fully developed.

For now, not only does the king not come out as if he was a friend, but rather, because he will stand against Israel, it will be...

^{1 (con't)} **he and all his people,**

hu v'kal ammo – “he and all his people.” Based on the size of the Bashan, one can assume that it was a very large force. They gathered from the entire area of the Bashan in order to destroy them, knowing already that Israel had destroyed Sihon.

As this was so, they would not only have whatever weapons they previously possessed, but they would have accumulated those of Sihon's army, they would be battle-hardened from the recent fighting, and they would be extremely confident in their capability to fight the next foe that came before them. Thus, Og mustered “all his people.” He could do no less. He then came...

^{1 (con't)} **to battle at Edrei.**

la'milkhama Edrei – “to battle *at* Edrei.” Og led his entire force out to meet Israel at Edrei. Edrei means something like “Mighty.” Despite the name, implying the great force which has arisen against Israel, the Lord was shown to be more powerful. At that time, He had good news for His people...

² And the LORD said to me, ‘Do not fear him,

The words are almost an exact repeat of Numbers 21:24. Again, the only difference is that it is in the first person here rather than the third person of Numbers 21.

It would be reasonable for an army to fear such a foe. The description of his physical size, which is coming in the verses ahead, along with an army which consists of all of his people throughout the Bashan, and in an area filled with strongly defended cities, one might expect fear and trepidation on the part of Israel. But the Lord told them that it should be otherwise...

^{2 (con't)} for I have delivered him and all his people and his land into your hand;

The outcome is assured, and the Lord conveys it in that way, *ki b'yadekha nathati*, “for into your hand I have given.” All Israel has to do is engage the enemy. The Lord has worked out the details, in advance, for them to find complete victory. In defeating the army, they are then to complete the task by also destroying it entirely...

^{2 (con't)} you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon.'

Israel did not just defeat Sihon, they destroyed him and his entire army to the last man. None were to be spared so that there could be no remnant to later make a claim against the land. And, just as was promised, it also came about – both from the Lord's assurance, and from Israel's obedience...

³ “So the LORD our God also delivered into our hands Og king of Bashan, with all his people, and we attacked him until he had no survivors remaining.

The verse here is similar in thought to Numbers 21:35, but it is worded quite differently. It is, again, in the first person instead of the third person. Also, in Numbers it said, “So they defeated him,” meaning Israel defeated Og. However, here the credit is given to the Lord first – “So the Lord our God also delivered.” Only after that are Israel's actions then mentioned.

Further, in Numbers it mentioned the sons of Og. Here, that is left out. Rather, it simply states that there were no survivors remaining. The victory was complete because the Lord so ordained it, and Israel complied with the Lord's directives. This was not only true with the army itself, but of all of Og's kingdom...

⁴ And we took all his cities at that time;

Og ruled over an entire area, filled with cities. The area, not being very large, and with no access to the sea, would seem to not be fit for many cities, and yet throughout the years, it has been noted by those who visit the area that there are an exceedingly large number of ruins there. Israel, after destroying all of the men in the battle, went about taking those cities they left behind, and Moses says...

⁴ (con't) there was not a city which we did not take from them:

Despite the difficult terrain, and the description of the cities yet to come, Israel was able to take and possess every single one of them. In total, they numbered...

⁴ (con't) sixty cities,

In his book, *The Giant Cities of Bashan*, dating to 1867, Josias Porter notes the size of the area and that there were the remains of at least sixty walled cities and a great number of unwallied towns still there. To this day, one can go on Google maps and view them from a satellite view.

Therefore, the account stands as not only possible, but factual. Israel took over these cities after exterminating the inhabitants. These are next noted as being in...

⁴ (con't) all the region of Argob,

Here is a new word translated as "region," *khevel*. It signifies a cord, rope, or measuring line. It comes from *khaval*, meaning to wind tightly, as a rope is wound. As it is a measuring line, it speaks of a region, as if it is measured off.

Another new word is the place itself, Argov. That comes from *regev* meaning a clod of the earth. Thus, the name means, "Stony" "Rough," or "Rugged." This is the same place referred to as Trachonitis, meaning "the rugged (or stony) region" in Luke 3:1.

This location, Argov, will be found only here in Deuteronomy 3 and in 1 Kings 4, when speaking of this same location and which mentions these same sixty cities which were captured and remained in continuous use at the time of Solomon. The entire location is then further defined as...

⁴ (con't) **the kingdom of Og in Bashan.**

There is a progression of thought in this one verse which appears to be an inked celebration of what occurred. First, it states what occurred in the positive and in the singular, "And we took all his cities."

Then, it next states it in the negative, and in the plural, "there was not a city which we did not take from them. It then sings out, "sixty cities!" After that, it mentions the region in which this occurred, "all the region of Argob." And then it resoundingly shouts out the final glory of the victory, once again speaking of the singular person, "the kingdom of Og in Bashan."

Next, to show the exemplary nature of the victory, the cities themselves are described...

⁵ **All these cities were fortified with high walls, gates, and bars,**

The sixty main cities are described as if by an eyewitness, which Moses surely was. He is recounting the state of the towns for posterity to know the greatness of the victory, and to give assurances to Israel that any such fortifications in Canaan will be equally conquerable.

In this, he uses a word, *gaboah*, meaning "high" which hasn't been seen since Genesis 7. There, during the Flood of Noah, it said –

"And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered." Genesis 7:19

The word signifies high and exalted. Further, the Hebrew reads, "gates and a bar." Each city would have two doors which would form a gate, and then a large bar would go through holders on the doors to form an almost impenetrable wall.

Despite this, and despite the other fortifications, Israel – because of the Lord's hand being with them – was able to conquer them. Nothing was too high for them to attain. They conquered all sixty...

⁵ (con't) **besides a great many rural towns**

This is a new word, *perazi*, or hamlets. These would be little towns, maybe surrounded by any rocks cleared from fields, or with low walls to keep in livestock, but not used as protective walls.

The houses would probably be centrally located with the fields outside of any stone borders. Each of these would have had numerous livestock and probably sizeable stores of food when they were taken over. And, as it says, there were many of them. Of all of these cities and towns, Moses says...

⁶ And we utterly destroyed them, as we did to Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children of every city.

The translation does not give the sense of the Hebrew. Instead of “the men, women, and children,” it says, “utterly destroying men, the women, and the children.” It thus provides an emphasis that is missed by the translation. The women and the children were not exempt from the destruction.

As this is so, the words require further explanation. In Deuteronomy 2, concerning Sihon’s kingdom, it said –

“We took all his cities at that time, and we utterly destroyed the men, women, and little ones of every city; we left none remaining. ³⁵ We took only the livestock as plunder for ourselves, with the spoil of the cities which we took.”

-Deuteronomy 2:34

Both there and here, the word *kharam*, or devoted to destruction, is used. It signifies that the devotion was required by the Lord, and the obedience of the people was followed through with according to the Lord’s word. We also saw this in last week’s sermon.

Though it seems overly brutal to our sensibilities, that is irrelevant to what the Lord determines. He creates, and He can dispense with His creation in whatever way He finds appropriate. As these are Amorites, they had been given the full measure of time to seek the Lord, as He conveyed to Abraham –

“Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet complete.” Genesis 15:15, 16

The destruction of the Amorites was ordained for when their iniquity had reached full measure. That time had come, and Israel become the instrument in the Lord’s hand to accomplish His judgment upon them. Despite the *kharam* of the people, the Lord allowed the property and belongings to be spared...

⁷ But all the livestock and the spoil of the cities we took as booty for ourselves.

Like last week with Sihon, at the allowance of the Lord, all the possessions of the people were not set apart as *kharam*. This would have been no small amount of livestock and agricultural goods, along with whatever else the people possessed.

At times, such things were set apart for destruction. When that was mandated and not followed through with, the anger of the Lord would then turn against Israel. They were never exempt from the same punishments as the people they encountered, with the exception of being kept as a people because of the Lord’s covenant with them.

In the end, obedience to the word of the Lord is that which is highlighted as the highest importance throughout Scripture.

⁸ “And at that time we took the land from the hand of the two kings of the Amorites who were on this side of the Jordan, from the River Arnon to Mount Hermon

Here is a summary statement of all of the land which was taken by Israel from these two kings. It is stated as going from the River Arnon all the way to Mount Hermon.

As we have seen in earlier passages, Arnon comes from *ranan*, which signifies to give a jubilant, ringing cry, and thus Rejoicing.

Hermon, or *Khermon*, is introduced here, and it will be seen using this name 13 times. The word comes from the same verb used in verse 6, *kharam*. It speaks of designating something to the afterlife (like the people here were), to the thing that is designated in this way, or keeping that thing for something sacred. It is the same idea as the word harem that bears the same meaning.

Thus, Khermon means Sacred. As it is the name of a mountain, it is “Sacred Mountain.” It is a fitting description of heaven, from which the Jordan, or the Descender, flows from. One can see the marvelous picture here of the land of Bashan, the Place of Fertile Soil.

At one end is Rejoicing, and at the other is the Sacred Mountain, and flowing alongside it is the Descender. Here is a picture of life with Christ in view.

There is rejoicing, there is the fertile soil of the word, there is the coming of Christ from the Sacred Mountain, meaning heaven, and descending to earth. If one simply crosses over Jordan (the Descender), meaning going through Christ, there is access to the Land of Promise.

With that typology understood, the narrative continues...

⁹ (the Sidonians call Hermon Sirion, and the Amorites call it Senir),

Here the Sidonians are introduced. Their name comes from Tsidon, or Sidon, which means “Fishing” or “Fishery.” The Sidonians called the mountain Sirion, or “Sheeted with Snow,” while the Amorites called it Senir, which is believed to mean “Glittering Breastplate of Ice.” It will be given another name, Sion, in Deuteronomy 4:48. That is probably a shortened form of Sirion.

The reason for including these words appears to be as a historical and geographical note. The mountain forms a natural boundary between several nations, and so the names are given as clarification now for when they will be used elsewhere, both in Israel’s history, and in Scripture itself.

Sirion will be mentioned again in Psalm 29:6, and Senir will be used in 1 Chronicles, the Song of Solomon, and Ezekiel. The KJV will mistakenly use the word Sion in Psalm 65:1 when speaking of Zion, thus adding another error to its translation.

With the borders designated as the Arnon and Mount Hermon, another general description is seen with the words...

¹⁰ all the cities of the plain,

Here is a new word, *mishor*. It signifies an even place, like a plain. It is then figuratively used at times to speak of uprightness and justice.

¹⁰ (con't) **all Gilead, and all Bashan,**

Both words are actually prefixed by an article, “the Gilead,” and “the Bashan.” Thus, they refer to locations, not cities. Gilead means “The Perpetual Fountain.” Bashan, as we saw, means “Place of Fertile Soil.”

¹⁰ (con't) **as far as Salcah and Edrei,**

Salcah is first seen here, and it means “Walking.” Edrei means “Mighty.” These are both...

¹⁰ (con't) **cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan.**

These cities would be those furthest out in the regional areas, and so they stand as representative of the border regions of what was previously the kingdom of Og in Bashan. He is especially highlighted because of his genealogical relationship to another group who are again brought into the narrative...

¹¹ **“For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of the giants.**

Again, as was seen in Chapter 2, the word is Rephaim. It is speaking of the exceptional size of the people from which he came. Their large size was probably the product of special inbreeding. This would seem most likely because there is a Rephaite in 2 Samuel 21 with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot.

That is a particular genetic defect or hereditary syndrome known as polydactyly. Og was the last of them in this area, not everywhere, as they appear again in Canaan, and of whom the Anakim were associated. What their great size is actually attributable to is not stated in Scripture, but it is not from sleeping with angels. These were normal humans who were genetically larger than others. Of Og, the following is provided...

¹¹ (con't) **Indeed his bedstead was an iron bedstead.**

There is a great deal of speculation on what is being said. Some translate it directly as is given here. He has an iron bestead with the given dimensions. Others say that this is speaking of his sarcophagus, a distinct possibility. Other suggestions have been made concerning both the material and what it is fashioned into.

The word itself is *eres*. It comes from an unused root meaning “to arch.” It is translated as couch or bed throughout the Old Testament. If it is a couch, and as he was a king, it very well could be speaking of a large covered place where he sat as a throne. Charles Ellicott writes of such a throne that was discovered in his time and which was close to the same dimensions.

¹¹ (con’t) **(Is it not in Rabbah of the people of Ammon?)**

Rabbah, or *Rabath*, is now introduced into Scripture here. It comes from the verb *ravav*, meaning to become many or much. Thus, Rabbah means “Great City.” What appears to be the case is that the Ammonites either captured this in a previous battle, they got it from Israel after Sihon’s death and took it to their country, or something similar to that.

However they got it, it became a piece of war spoil so noteworthy that it is recorded here, showing that it was well known to exist and a point of somewhat awe or pride on the part of those who possessed it. The reason for it being so noteworthy becomes obvious from our final words of the day...

^{*11} (fin) **Nine cubits is its length and four cubits its width, according to the standard cubit.**

Understanding that this may or may not be a bedstead, it does not mean that Og was thirteen feet tall. It is simply referring to whatever he sat, lay, or reclined on was. He was obviously a big guy, and he had big things around him.

The point is that he was defeated in battle, and therefore size was not the main factor in winning such a war – the Lord is. As an interesting note, the dimensions are specifically given in Scripture, and so we are asked to look at the numbers for clarity.

Of the number 9, EW Bullinger says that “...It is akin to the number six, six being the sum of its factors ($3 \times 3 = 9$, and $3 + 3 = 6$), and is thus significant of the end of man, and the summation of all man’s works. Nine is, therefore, the number of *finality* or *judgment*.”

And then, of the number 4, Bullinger says, “It is the number of things that have a beginning, of things that are made, of material things, and matter itself. It is the number of *material completeness*. Hence it is the *world number*, and especially the ‘city’ number.”

It is rather incredible that the two numbers fit so well with the finality and judgment of Og and his kingdom, and that the bed ended in Rabbah, or “Great City.”

For now, in Deuteronomy, Israel trusted the Lord, the Lord delivered His enemies into their hands, and they were able to defeat them because of this.

*We bear the shield and by faith head in
We gird ourselves with truth as we seek the reward
We have a helmet of salvation for the battle to win
And in our hand, we carry the Spirit’s sword*

*Yes, the word of God is the instrument by which we fight
And prayer is the line to our side’s Head
Upon our feet is the gospel of peace, as is right
And we have prevailed in the battle; the enemy lies dead*

*The spoil is piled high from the battle of which we fought
There is great reward for those who entered the fight
On behalf of the Lord, the battle was wrought
And the rewards piled high are a beautiful sight*

II. Types and Pictures

As we saw in the Numbers 21 sermon, and which is given more detail in this passage, Og is typical of the False Prophet of Revelation. He is the king of the Bashan, his name coming from *uggah*, which is a round baked cake. That comes from *ug*, to bake. He is set in opposition to Israel.

The *uggah* is that which nourishes and sustains life. In denying Israel access to Bashan, the fertile place, he – as typical of the False Prophet – denies the people of God the truth and nourishment of the word. The battle of Israel against him was at Edrei which signifies “Mighty.” Despite the mighty place chosen for this final battle, it is the Lord, through Israel, who defeats Og. It is even possible that the place was named because of the battle.

The region of the Argob is first mentioned here. It means, “Stony.” It also stands in opposition to the people, and it is something that must be defeated. If you remember, there was great highlight in the verse where the Argob was mentioned, focusing on the sixty cities as if they were the heart of the area.

Those obstacles would reflect the condition of the hearts of the people before coming to Christ – an act signified by passing through the Jordan. Such a condition of the people is actually prophesied about by Ezekiel –

Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, ²⁰ that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God. Ezekiel 11:19

The Lord even repeats this thought in Ezekiel 36:26.

After noting the victory of the battle, it then noted the scope of both campaigns – against Sihon and against Og. They conquered all the foes on the side of the Jordan. They were the last foes to conquer before they were set to cross over. Likewise, both the Antichrist and the False Prophet will be destroyed before Israel enters the true Land of Promise.

The scope of defeating both these foes included from the Arnon to Mount Hermon. From “Rejoicing” to the “Sacred Mountain.” It pictures a complete victory with heaven as the furthest border. It then noted all the cities of the plain. That introduced the word *mishor*. A word figuratively used to speak of uprightness and justice.

The condition of the people has gone from wandering in the wilderness of disobedience to possessing the habitation of uprightness. Next, it mentioned “the Gilead,” and “the Bashan.” They now possess “The Perpetual Fountain,” meaning access to the Spirit, and the “Place of Fertile Soil,” meaning the truth of the word.

Also, the account notes the extent of those locations as being as far as Salcah and Edrei. Salcah is first seen here, and it means “Walking.” Edrei means “Mighty.” Both of these anticipate the state of a person at any given time. One can walk in the flesh or walk in the Lord. One can pursue his own might, or he can pursue the might of the Lord.

In possessing the land through the defeat of the two final foes, Israel is thus walking in the land of the Lord and in the strength of the Lord.

Finally, what is really most noteworthy is the connection between the dimensions of the bedstead that were recorded and a connection to that of Mystery Babylon, of which the False Prophet is so obviously connected to.

The number 9 is the number of finality or judgment. The number 4 is the city number. Og found his finality and judgment and his bed was taken to Rabbah, the Great City. Mystery Babylon is likewise called the “great city” again and again in Revelation 17 & 18.

It, and the false prophet, like this foe of Israel, will find both finality and judgment. The patterns are wonderfully placed within Scripture to show us, in advance, clues of what lies yet ahead in redemptive history.

The review of Moses concerning the events of those two battles – with Sihon and Og – is to remind Israel that it is the Lord who brought them to where they now stand, and it is the Lord who offers them the final step in their long and meandering existence as a people.

In this chapter, he will continue to describe this land in the verses ahead, he will speak of the rest offered to them on the other side of the Jordan, and he will then note his desire to cross over the Jordan with Israel, followed by the fact that he cannot do so.

The entire chapter is one which speaks of a promise which cannot be earned through the law, and it is through the law that the Antichrist and the False Prophet will make their deal with Israel, as is recorded in Daniel 9.

The law stands against Israel, except as the law is fulfilled in Christ. This is what the Gentiles learned and accepted two thousand years ago, and this is what Israel as a collective has yet to realize. The law must die outside of the promise.

Unfortunately, it is the law, not the grace of God in Christ, which has risen in the hearts of so many people again and again throughout the ages. It is the constant failing of human existence to simply trust God and to instead attempt to earn His favor through personal merit.

Israel fought these battles, but the victory was found in the Lord, not in their effort. We either have fought or will fight the same battle, but it must be a battle of faith in what He can do, not in what we can do. The spirit of Antichrist, and the teaching of false prophets, exists in the world today.

Together, they deny the Son. When we deny the Son, we deny the Father. When we receive the Son, we are adopted as sons by the Father. Israel is being prepared for her meeting with destiny, and each of us has our own meeting to face. Let us receive the

Son and His fulfillment of that which stands against us, meaning the Law, and let us trust in the grace of God found in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Closing Verse: *“One generation shall praise Your works to another,
And shall declare Your mighty acts.*

*⁵I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty,
And on Your wondrous works.*

*⁶Men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts,
And I will declare Your greatness.*

*⁷They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness,
And shall sing of Your righteousness.” Psalm 145:4-7*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 3:12-20 *You are being given a great and lengthy test...* (Until the Lord Has Given Rest) (10th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Defeat of Og, King of Bashan

“Then we turned and went up the road to Bashan
And Og king of Bashan came out against us
He and all his people, to battle at Edrei
He was making a royal fuss

And the LORD said to me, ‘Do not fear him
For I have delivered him and all his people
-----and his land into your hand
You shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites
Who dwelt at Heshbon; you shall do as I have planned

“So the LORD our God also delivered
Into our hands Og king of Bashan
With all his people, and we attacked him
Until he had no survivors remaining; until his people were gone

And we took all his cities at that time

There was not a city which we did not take
From them: sixty cities, all the region of Argob
The kingdom of Og in Bashan was destroyed in our wake

All these cities were fortified
With high walls, gates, and bars also
Besides a great many rural towns
Our enemies we did swallow

And we utterly destroyed them
As we did to Sihon king of Heshbon; showing no pity
Utterly destroying the men, women
And children of every city

But all the livestock and the spoil – yes, all the looty
Of the cities we took for ourselves as booty

“And at that time, we took the land from the hand
Of the two kings of the Amorites, as they were known
Who were on this side of the Jordan
From the River Arnon to Mount Hermon

The Sidonians call Hermon Sirion
And the Amorites call it Senir – so it was known

All the cities of the plain
All Gilead, and all Bashan too
As far as Salcah and Edrei
Cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan we cut through

“For only Og king of Bashan remained
Of the remnant of the giants, as they are known
Indeed his bedstead was an iron bedstead
(Is it not in Rabbah of the people of Ammon?)

Nine cubits is its length and its width cubits four
According to the standard cubit; pretty big, for sure

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word

Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 3:12-20 **(Until the LORD Has Given Rest)**

The words of this passage speak of possessing land, the division of the land, and the possession of other land by the rest of Israel at a future point. However, there is a difference between the land given to those on one side of the Jordan and those on the other.

It's not really apparent at first, but the difference is there. We will see that especially as we look over the final three verses of our passage today. In fact, it is so hard to notice this on a cursory, or even on a very close reading, that our minds tend to skip right over the subtlety of what is being conveyed.

It is, however, something that is reflected in the words of Paul to the Ephesians in a roundabout way. He is speaking to the Gentiles, but what he says pertains to what is tucked away back here in Deuteronomy. His words of Ephesians 2 form our text verse today...

Text Verse: *"Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—¹² that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."* Ephesians 2:11-13

Paul speaks of the covenants of promise. But more exactly, the Greek reads, *diathēkōn tēs epangelias*, "the covenants of the promise." The word covenants is plural, while the promise is singular. The law is not of promise, and the inheritance is not of the law. Paul explains that in Galatians 3.

Therefore, the covenants of the promise, though maybe inclusive of the law, are not directed by the law. The law is simply a covenant which leads to the promise, hopefully, for those under it. I say "hopefully" because Paul also explains that the law was simply given as tutor to lead people to Christ. It does not, however, automatically do so.

In fact, the law is one of the greatest hindrances to a relationship with Christ if it is used as a means of earning God's favor through personal merit, something which excludes grace. The law is supposed to show us that we need grace, not that we can obtain favor through it.

This same thought is seen in our verses today. As I said, it is so well hidden in there that it will take a marvelous little pattern, an unusual literary form, to draw out what is actually being conveyed.

Such interesting things as different types of literary forms are used by God to teach us wonderful lessons right out of His superior word. And so, let's turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Land East of Canaan (verses 12-17)

¹² **“And this land, *which* we possessed at that time,**

The words of Moses now return to the thought left off in verse 3:10, where verse 11 was a descriptive insert. From 3:8-10, it spoke of the conquest, and now it speaks of the result of that conquest. The division of the land which was won in battle is now described.

It says they “possessed” the land. The word speaks of an inheritance. Up until this point in Chapter 3, Moses has used two words *lakad* and *laqakh*, saying they “took,” and they “captured” the lands. Now it says *yarash*. It is the result of the seizing of the land. It has become an inheritance.

These two Amorite kings were disinherited from the land, and Israel took possession of it, thus it became the inheritance of Israel, to be passed on from then on.

That was originally recorded in great detail in Numbers 32. Reuben and Gad came forward to petition Moses for the land because of its suitability for livestock, and they had a great deal of livestock. After obtaining assurances from them that they would assist Israel in securing their own possessions, Moses agreed to grant them this land. That grant extends...

¹² (con't) **from Aroer, which *is* by the River Arnon,**

As has been seen, Aroer means “Stripped,” “Bare,” or “Naked.” The noun meaning “river,” is *nakhal*, and it implies a wadi which flows during the times of rain. The word is from the verb *nakhal* which speaks of obtaining as an inheritance or possession.

Arnon comes from *ranan*, which signifies to give a jubilant, ringing cry, and thus “Rejoicing.” From that point, and with the Arnon as the boundary...

12 (con’t) and half the mountains of Gilead and its cities,

As elsewhere, the Hebrew is singular, mountain, and Gilead is prefixed by an article, “the Gilead.” Gilead means, “Perpetual Fountain.” Included in this tract of land were the many cities which had been conquered by Israel.

Other than any damage incurred while being besieged, they remained intact. Thus, they were to profit off the labors of those they defeated in battle. All these...

12 (con’t) I gave to the Reubenites and the Gadites.

All of this is the southern area of the land conquered by Israel outside of Canaan proper. This was specifically recorded in Numbers 32:33, along with a separate inheritance –

“So Moses gave to the children of Gad, to the children of Reuben, and to half the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land with its cities within the borders, the cities of the surrounding country.” Numbers 32:33

It is the half tribe of Manasseh, spoken of there, that Moses now recounts the details concerning their grant...

13 The rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og,

This is the northern portion of the land which was conquered. It included everything remaining of the Gilead and also all of the Bashan, or Place of Fertile Soil. Moses describes that as, “the kingdom of Og.” He was disinherited from the land and Israel received the land for an inheritance, Moses specifically says...

13 (con’t) I gave to half the tribe of Manasseh.

The reason for this land grant was explained in Numbers 32 –

“And the children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead and took it, and dispossessed the Amorites who *were* in it. ⁴⁰ So Moses gave Gilead to Machir the son of Manasseh, and he dwelt in it. ⁴¹ Also Jair the son of Manasseh went and

took its small towns, and called them Havoth Jair. ⁴² Then Nobah went and took Kenath and its villages, and he called it Nobah, after his own name.”

-Numbers 32:39-42

That region is next further described by Moses...

¹³ (con't) **(All the region of Argob, with all Bashan, was called the land of the giants.**

As we saw in the previous sermon, Argob means, “Stony.” The words of this clause are difficult. The word translated as “region” was introduced in verse 3:4. It speaks of a measuring cord which would be used to define a specific parcel of land.

Thus, “region of the Argob,” is not different from “all Bashan,” but it is the same thing. This is certain, because the word Argob is prefixed by an article in this verse. Therefore, a literal translation would say, “All of the region of the Argob, namely all the Bashan – the that was called ‘land of Rephaim.’” It is a descriptive record of what had been, and which now belonged to the tribe of Manasseh.

The Rephaim – the great and tall race of people – were subdued by Israel outside of Canaan. Therefore, the battles inside of Canaan would not be the difficult task their fathers claimed it would be a generation earlier. By faith in the Lord, the possession would be theirs.

¹⁴ **Jair the son of Manasseh took all the region of Argob,**

These words are an expansion of what we just read a moment ago from Numbers 32. Jair, or Yair, means, “He Enlightens.” It is he who is specifically given credit for having defeated the entire region known as Argob. This region is then explained as reaching...

¹⁴ (con't) **as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maachathites,**

The name Geshur comes from an unused root meaning to join. Thus, it may mean “Bridge.” They may have been located at a spot which forded, or bridged, the Jordan. Maakah comes from a verb which means to press or squeeze. Thus the name signifies “Oppression.” These people groups would border the land given to Manasseh. Jair took the region...

¹⁴ (con't) **and called Bashan after his own name, Havoth Jair, to this day.)**

The difficulty of the previous verse seems to be taken away in this verse. And a new difficulty is introduced. First, the region known as Argob is the same as the Bashan. It is this entire region that Jair called after himself, Havoth Jair.

The word Khavoth is the plural of the name Khavah, or “Life.” It is the same name as Khavah, or Eve, Adam’s wife. It is often translated as “the towns of Jair,” probably because a town or city is where the bustle of life occurs. Thus, we could paraphrase this as the “Livings of Jair.”

Secondly, the new difficulty is that the words, “unto this day,” are claimed by numerous scholars to indicate that this is a later insertion into Deuteronomy. There is no reason to assume this.

Though it may seem odd for Moses to say this only a few months after the land was subdued, it is as simple as saying, “He called the cities he defeated by this name, and I have now formally given him the land, and the name shall remain according to his decision.” The same expression *ad hayom ha’zeh*, has already been used in verse 2:22, and there is no reason to assume that was an insertion.

¹⁵ **“Also I gave Gilead to Machir.**

This was cited from Numbers 32 when we looked at verse 13. Machir is specifically given Gilead. Machir means something like “Salesman.” To him is given the Gilead, or “the Perpetual Fountain.”

Machir is named here, even though he is dead. He was the firstborn son of Manasseh (Joshua 17:1) through his Syrian concubine (1 Chronicles 7:14), and he stood as representative of Manasseh on this side of the Jordan. Thus, the northern half of Gilead was given to him.

In these words, we have a marvelous picture of Israel’s conversion, which is still ahead in redemptive history.

Jair – He Enlightens; Manasseh – He Shall Forget; Argob – Stony; Bashan – Place of Fertile Soil; Havoth Jair – Livings of He Enlightens; and Gilead – Perpetual Fountain.

Christ, or He Enlightens, the Son of He Shall Forget – speaking of forgetting the sins of Israel, shall have victory over the Stony hearts of Israel (Ezekiel 36:26) in the Place of Fertile Soil (signifying their readiness to receive Christ), and will afterward call them the

“Livings of He Enlightens.” They will dwell in the illumination of Christ, and they will possess the Perpetual Fountain – the water of Life that will forever issue forth from the throne of God.

There is no reason to assume this is stretching the picture. The names are set, they are given, and they perfectly fit the typology of what has thus far been presented in the Numbers, and now Deuteronomy, account. Next, as was seen in verse 3:12 and which is now expanded on here, Moses says...

¹⁶ And to the Reubenites and the Gadites I gave from Gilead

This is the northern border of the land of Reuben and Gad. Where the land of Machir the son of Manasseh ended, is where the land of Reuben and Gad would begin. That would extend south to...

¹⁶ (con't) as far as the River Arnon, the middle of the river as *the* border,

There is minute and almost tedious specificity here, adding to what has already been stated. It speaks of the middle of the River Arnon, something which seems almost superfluous, but the reason for this is what was said in verse 2:36 –

“From Aroer, which *is* on the bank of the River Arnon, and from the city that *is* in the ravine, as far as Gilead, there was not one city too strong for us; the LORD our God delivered all to us.” Deuteronomy 2:36

Because this city of the Moabites was located in the middle of the ravine, Moses is saying that the land, even to the middle of the river, belongs to Israel, but it does not include the whole river and ravine. Israel was given no land of the Moabites, and this is now confirmed by Moses.

This is the southern border of their land, and it is based on a wadi which flows down from the mountains of Moab to the west and ends at about the middle of the Dead Sea just across from En Gedi. So far, the northern and southern borders have been named, and the western border is obviously the Jordan and the Dead Sea. All of this land then extended...

¹⁶ (con't) as far as the River Jabbok, the border of the people of Ammon;

The Jabbok River flows north and south for some distance and eventually flows west. This river, today known as the Zarqa River in Jordan, was to be the border between the Ammonites and Reuben and Gad.

There are water rights on two sides of this land grant – between Israel and both Moab and Ammon. But with a city in the very ravine of one of the borders, the specificity of this verse had to be stated. Instead of being either superfluous or a later addition, it is an absolutely necessary part of the words of Moses.

17 the plain also, with the Jordan as *the* border

The *aravah*, or plain is the flat land that ran on the eastern side of the Jordan River. The plain, right up to the Jordan, belonged to them, but the Jordan itself is the border of their land, with Canaan on the other side. Next, it says...

17 (con't) from Chinnereth

Chinnereth is the Sea of Galilee. The name Kinereth comes from *kinor*, meaning a type of harp. The reason for the name is the shape of the sea, which looks like a particular type of harp when viewed from above. This would be the northwest corner of their land. That western border would then extend from there southwards...

17 (con't) as far as the east side of the Sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea),

This is the western border as it extends southward. It would go all the way down, along the Jordan, and end about halfway down the Sea of the Arabah, meaning the Salt Sea where it would terminate at the middle of the Arnon River...

17 (con't) below the slopes of Pisgah.

Here is a new word, *ashedah*, translated here as “slopes.” The word comes from *eshed*, signifying a foundation or a bed, but that comes from a word signifying an outpouring. Therefore, it means either springs or slopes.

Pisgah, or *ha'pisgah*, meaning “the Pisgah,” signifies a cleft. It is a high area where there is a cleft in the mountain. Because of this, the word “slopes” seems to make more sense than “springs.” It is this spot, Pisgah, which is on Mount Nebo, from which Moses will survey the land of Canaan before he dies.

*Oh, weary soul, there is a fountain of Life waiting for you
If you will just come to Him and receive the Gift
There are nail-scarred hands of the One, Faithful and True
And in taking them, your spirit He will lift*

*It is He who descended from heaven to give us life
He walked among us and provided the way
No more enmity with God; no more strife
In coming to Him, there dawns a new day*

*After His walk, He died on Calvary's tree
And descended to the lowest parts, our debt to pay
By God's power, He was raised – justification for you and for me
And now, through Him, we are provided the Way*

II. Unpacking a Mystery (verses 18-20)

¹⁸ “Then I commanded you at that time, saying: ‘The LORD your God has given you this land to possess.

The words of these next three verses are very precise and speak in a rather remarkable way of promises, possession, and performance. But they are almost mysterious when looked at and considered carefully. While typing up this sermon, I realized there is a decidedly chiasmic structure to these next three verses –

Deuteronomy 3:18-20 – Much Livestock
A Chiasm of Contrasts (23 March 2020)

- a. “Then I commanded you at that time, saying (Moses’ command)
- b. ‘The LORD your God has given you this land to possess (east of Jordan)
- c. All you men of valor shall cross over armed before your brethren, the children of Israel (prepared for battle)
- d. But your wives, your little ones, and your livestock (needing security)
 - x. (I know that you have much livestock)
 - d. shall stay in your cities which I have given you (given security)
 - c. until the LORD has given rest to your brethren as to you (given rest)
- b. and they also possess the land which the LORD your God is giving them

beyond the Jordan (west of Jordan)

- a. Then each of you may return to his possession which I have given you
(Moses' command)

With the division of the land east of the Jordan settled, Moses now recalls the agreement made in Numbers 32 concerning the land which has been divided up as mentioned here. This division, despite being settled according to set boundaries, will actually only take full effect after Canaan is subdued and with these tribes having participated in that 7-year conquest.

A clue to the mystery presented in these verses is actually the first words of them, "Then I commanded you at that time, saying." It is Moses who commanded. Moses is the lawgiver, and thus he represents the law.

Understanding that, the words, "The Lord your God has given you this land to possess," are conditional. That is based on what was stated in Numbers 32:29, 30 –

"And Moses said to them: 'If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben cross over the Jordan with you, every man armed for battle before the LORD, and the land is subdued before you, then you shall give them the land of Gilead as a possession.³⁰ But if they do not cross over armed with you, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan.'"

In Numbers 32, English translations say, "all your armed men," or "every man." But the Hebrew does not say this. Instead, the Hebrew was carefully hyphenated and said, "every-armed." That precise wording was necessary to show that not all men would go.

Rather, only every man that was to go would be armed. Moses was specific, because otherwise, after he died, a dispute could arise that he intended for every man to go, thus leaving the women and children to build and defend the cities. It would immediately force these tribes to give up this land grant.

Instead, though, some would stay while others will go to battle. After the faithful service of these men, drawn off from the whole, they would then have earned their right to return and possess, with their brothers, the homes and lands which had been tended to during their time of war. Those very specific words are now qualified by Moses...

¹⁸ (con't) **All you men of valor shall cross over armed before your brethren, the children of Israel.**

The order of the Hebrew is more specific. It says, “drawn off, you shall cross over before your brothers – the sons of Israel – all men of valor.” Actually, only a portion of the men crossed over, about forty thousand out of almost one hundred and eleven thousand. They would be drawn off from the whole.

Further, these who are drawn off were to be *bene kayil*, or “sons of valor.” The army would be selected based on several requirements. Here, it is specifically noted concerning their willingness and ability to wage war. This will be more specifically defined, however, later in Deuteronomy 20.

When we get there, we will see several reasons for being exempt from warfare including this from Deuteronomy 20:8 –

“What man *is there who is* fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return to his house, lest the heart of his brethren faint like his heart.”

No cowardly person was to serve in the army because when he turned and fled, it was bound to be that another, and then another, and then another would follow suit. Just as bravery leads to bravery, so cowardice leads to cowardice. Therefore, only the men of valor were to go. And more...

¹⁹ But your wives, your little ones, and your livestock

Rather than saying, “A portion of your men, your wives, and your little ones,” Moses leaves off those men who would not join in the battles. Instead, he only notes the wives, little ones, and livestock.

The word *taph*, or little ones, normally means small children. They are those who require protection. Here, he is certainly extending it to any who are defenseless. It could be that by using these three examples of helplessness, he is truly looking to cut out any who were cowards. If they were to be included among those three groups, they were certainly not wanted in the battles for Canaan.

As men rotated in and out of the battle, it would be a note for the men to remember and willingly volunteer to join the forces in Canaan rather than be left out during the entire campaign and face the shame of having failed to join in the conquest. This is especially so because of what was originally said to the leaders of these two tribes when they proposed receiving their inheritance outside of Canaan –

“And Moses said to the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben: ‘Shall your brethren go to war while you sit here? ⁷ Now why will you discourage the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD has given them? ⁸ Thus your fathers did when I sent them away from Kadesh Barnea to see the land. ... And look! You have risen in your fathers’ place, a brood of sinful men, to increase still more the fierce anger of the LORD against Israel. ¹⁵ For if you turn away from following Him, He will once again leave them in the wilderness, and you will destroy all these people.” Numbers 32:6-8 & 14, 15

The implication at that time was that they were a bunch of cowards. Once that issue was resolved, and with that still on Moses’ mind, one can see why he is so specific in his words now. And that underlying tone continues with the following words...

¹⁹ (con’t) **(I know that you have much livestock)**

When these tribes came forward to make their initial proposal, there was a heavy stress on the word *miqneh*, or livestock. It set the tone for the entire passage to be understood. They had a lot of livestock and they used that as their excuse to stay in the land east of the Jordan –

“Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of livestock; and when they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead, that indeed the region *was* a place for livestock, ² the children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spoke to Moses, to Eleazar the priest, and to the leaders of the congregation, saying, ³“Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Shebam, Nebo, and Beon, ⁴ the country which the LORD defeated before the congregation of Israel, *is* a land for livestock, and your servants have livestock.” Numbers 32:1-4

With that memory still fresh on his mind, Moses recalls their words and returns them to their ears. How he conveys his words isn’t known. It could have been in a comical way, as if the whole misunderstanding was cleared up and he was jokingly stating it, “I know you have much livestock!”

Or, it could be that he really thought they were cowards and so he is subtly reminding them of it – “I know you have much livestock...”

If the latter is correct – and it seems likely based on his inclusion of this now – then his note concerning the wives, children, and livestock were to forever remain a pricking

reminder in their minds that they needed to man up and conduct themselves as such henceforth.

This is especially so, because the chiasm centers on the idea of their livestock. It appears to be an emphasis that is to be taken to heart and remembered as a point of shame which should spur them on to act with bravery in the battles to come. Either way, of the defenseless ones, Moses says that they...

19 (con't) shall stay in your cities which I have given you,

Again, the words are conditional. Moses has only given them the cities if they fulfill the commitment they had promised before the Lord. There would be a sufficient number of people to have all of the land cared for, protected, and for rotation of troops in and out of battle. All they needed to do was act in accord with the promise.

In verse 18, it said, "The Lord your God has given you this land to possess." Now Moses says, "your cities which I have given you." The word of Moses is the word of law. Unless his words were directed through him by the Lord, it would be a wholly inappropriate statement to make.

But rather than inappropriate, one can see the uniting of the word of the Lord with the spoken word of Moses, the prophet of the Lord. The thought concerning the conditional nature of Moses' words is next brought to the forefront...

20 until the LORD has given rest

The word "until" is given to remind them that they were under obligation to participate in the campaign to the end. However, it is also a note of surety that it will happen. The words, "until the Lord," can only mean that the Lord has purposed and thus it will come to pass.

And more, the thought continues with "until the Lord has given rest." Not only will the endeavor come to pass, but it will end with a set result. The Lord will give *nuakh*, or rest, as the completion of the campaign that is yet to begin. And that state of rest will be...

20 (con't) to your brethren as to you,

They had received their inheritance, and with their inheritance, they had received their rest. However, the men of war were to not rest until the other tribes of Israel were also given the same. That is next noted with the words...

20 (con't) and they also possess the land

Here, the word *yaresh*, or to inherit, is again used, as it was in verses 12 & 18. Canaan is their inheritance, and when it is subdued, they will have their rest in the land. The thoughts are united as one. Possessing the land is to possess the inheritance, and possessing the inheritance is to obtain the rest.

For all of the other tribes, Moses says that their rest would come from possessing the land...

20 (con't) which the LORD your God is giving them beyond the Jordan.

There is a unity of thought in the words of these verses. It said both in verse 18 and here, "the Lord your God." However, in verse 20 it said, "until the Lord has given rest to your brethren." Their Lord is also the Lord of those on the other side of Jordan.

And again, in verse 3:8, it spoke of defeating the enemies *b'ever ha'yarden*, or "in side the Jordan," while speaking of the eastern side. In this verse it again says, *b'ever ha'yarden*, or "in side the Jordan," while speaking of the western side. The Lord is the Lord of both sides, and He is the Lord of both groups.

There is one Israel on the side of the Jordan, regardless of which side it is, and the inheritance for each side is given to both by the Lord. For those on the eastern side, once those in Canaan had obtained their possession...

20 (con't) Then each of you may return to his possession

The conditional nature of the promise is again seen in these words. The inheritance is granted, but only through obedience to the word. For those on the other side, no such note is stated. All it says is that if they cross the Jordan, the Lord will give them the land to possess. The inheritance is assured by simply faithfully trusting in the Lord.

For those who are to receive their inheritance east of Canaan, they must follow the command of Moses. In their obedience to his word, they may then each return to his possession...

*20 (fin) **which I have given you.'**

Again, it is Moses who says that he has given the possession to them. In verse 18, it said the Lord had given them rest, but it was through Moses that this came about. After the Land of Promise was subdued, they returned to where they had settled. That is recorded in Joshua 22, and it again says that Moses gave them the land –

“Then Joshua called the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, ² and said to them: ‘You have kept all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you. ³ You have not left your brethren these many days, up to this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God. ⁴ And now the LORD your God has given rest to your brethren, as He promised them; now therefore, return and go to your tents *and* to the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side of the Jordan.’”

-Joshua 22:1-4

What this is certainly telling us is that man has been given an inheritance from the Lord – all men, including and particularly Israel. But one inheritance is of the law, and one is of the promise. One is earthly, and one is heavenly.

Only those of promise – whether Jew or Gentile – will receive the Lord’s inheritance, meaning the heavenly inheritance. This is why there is the stress on Moses being the one to give the inheritance to those outside of the Land of Promise. They had to earn their inheritance, and it is only an earthly one.

However, those destined for the Land of Promise are granted it through simply believing the Lord and trusting in His work to receive what is offered. The chiasm which spans these last three verses clearly shows us this.

What is it that you are looking for? If it is livestock and worldly wealth, you will have to earn that. But if it is a heavenly inheritance, then you must receive it by faith in the Lord. The two stand in opposition to one another.

Israel is Israel. They are the same group on either side of the Jordan, but only some of Israel will inherit the promise. And for those Gentiles who come to the Lord by faith, they are brought into the commonwealth of Israel to receive the same heavenly inheritance that Israel – the Israel of God – will receive.

The verses are clearly laid out for us to see this, and we must pay heed to what we have seen and heard today. You can be granted an inheritance through law and be separate from the inheritance of the Lord. Or, you can cross the Jordan, come through Christ, and receive the Land of Promise by a simple act of faith.

Choose wisely, and be sure to choose quickly. Life is a passing vapor, and then it is gone. Come to Christ and receive that which is already waiting for those who are willing to do so.

Closing Verse: *“Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed,’ who is Christ. ¹⁷ And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.” Galatians 3:16-18*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 3:21-29 *I’m getting tired of this chatter.. (Speak No More to Me of This Matter) (11th Deuteronomy Sermon)*

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Until the Lord Has Given Rest

“And this land, which we possessed at that time
From Aroer, which *is* by the River Arnon, and all its sites
And half the mountains of Gilead and its cities
I gave to the Reubenites and the Gadites

The rest of Gilead, and all Bashan
The kingdom of Og, I gave to half the tribe of Manasseh
All the region of Argob, with all Bashan
Was called the land of the giants; so the people did say

Jair the son of Manasseh took all the region of Argob
As far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maachathites
-----yes, in the direction that way

And called Bashan after his own name
Havoth Jair, to this day

“Also I gave Gilead to Machir
Lots of land for sheep to shear

And to the Reubenites and the Gadites I gave
From Gilead as far as the River Arnon
The middle of the river as the border, as far as the River Jabbok
The border of the people of Ammon

The plain also, with the Jordan as the border
From Chinnereth as far as the east side
Of the Sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea)
Below the slopes of Pisgah; a land spacious and wide

“Then I commanded you at that time, saying:
‘The LORD your God has given you this land to possess
-----so to you I tell
All you men of valor shall cross over armed
Before your brethren, the children of Israel

But your wives, your little ones, and your livestock
(I know that you have much livestock) – yes, it is true
Shall stay in your cities which I have given you
Until the LORD has given rest to your brethren as to you

And they also possess the land
Which the LORD your God is giving them beyond the Jordan
-----Yes, when they do
Then each of you may return to his possession
Which I have given you

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone

We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 3:21-29 **(Speak No More to Me of This Matter)**

Last week, we saw a short chiasm which helped us determine what was going on in the passage that was set before us. In today's passage, another chiasm starts, and it will continue about halfway through Chapter 4. We'll lay it out now and then you can contemplate it as we go through the verses.

Deuteronomy 3:25-4:22 - Call upon Him.
Israel's Instruction (11/07)

- a 3:25 Moses wants to cross Jordan
- b 3:26 Lord angry with Moses
- c 3:27 "Lift your eyes toward the west, the north, the south, and the east."
- d 4:3, 4 Example of apostasy (idolatry)
- e 4:5 Taught statutes and judgments
- f 4:6 Be careful to observe them (judgments)
- g 4:7 Great nation
- x 4:7 Call upon Him
- g 4:8 Great nation
- f 4:9 Diligently keep yourself (judgments)
- e 4:10-14 Taught statutes and judgments.
- d 4:15-18 Warning of apostasy (idolatry)
- c 4:19 "Lift your eyes to heaven."
- b 4:21 Lord angry with Moses
- a 4:22 Moses must not cross over the Jordan

Chiasms are not only interesting curiosities, but they serve various purposes as well. They can help us to more fully understand a passage. They can reveal a central point which the Lord wants us to focus on. They demonstrate that a wisdom and purpose is behind what is written, and that the passage isn't merely a hodge-podge of disconnected ideas. And so on.

Another thing they do is to demonstrate that what is written came from a single source, not from varying authors at varying times. This is especially important to remember when reading commentaries by supposed scholars who say things like, "This verse was added many years later," or "This was definitely not written by Moses." Humbug.

The reason for this is that most of these chiasms have only been found in recent years. Thus, it demonstrates that what is there was original all along. We have a sure word in the Word of God.

Text Verse: *“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul;*

The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;

⁸*The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;*

The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;

⁹*The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;*

The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.” Psalm 19:7-9

The psalmist said that the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. A lot of supposedly wise scholars are actually very simple. And a lot of people who read the law are as well, because they don't read it as it was intended to be read – meaning as an anticipatory step on the way to Christ.

An online member of the church, Paul Steiner, posted one time, “Cure your lobotomy with Deuteronomy.”

Even the simple can be made wise through understanding the law, and even someone who is dull enough to seemingly have been lobotomized – like many Bible scholars – will benefit from what the law presents, if... if it is taken in regard to the whole body of Scripture.

As I have said to you, many times, the law is not an end in and of itself. Rather, it is a steppingstone on the path to God's final, full, and finished revelation of Himself in the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

The Lord asks us to look to the law as a way of learning of our need for Jesus. If we can do that, we will be in the sweet spot. And so, that is what we will do again today. You see, He is the embodiment of this law, and He is what this law anticipates.

We shall see this for sure as we open and contemplate the verses set before us. We can cure our lobotomy as we continue through Deuteronomy. Yes, great hints of Christ are to be found in His superior word. And so, let's turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. From Kings to Kingdoms (verses 21 & 22)

²¹ **“And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying,**

In the previous passages, Moses recounted the defeat of Sihon, king of Heshbon and Og, king of Bashan. After that, we were presented last week with a recounting of the division of the lands east of the Jordan, and the instructions to the people concerning their responsibilities in helping subdue the lands west of Jordan.

Only in the completion of that campaign, could they truly be considered as acceptably possessing the lands to the east of the Jordan. As Moses finished his words to them, he said, “Then each of you may return to his possession which I have given you.”

With that understood, Moses now turns his direction to what lies ahead, across the Jordan. He knows already that he will not cross Jordan. He will repeat, in just a couple of verses, the substance of that. But before he does, he introduces Joshua into the narrative.

Joshua has been mentioned only once so far in Deuteronomy. In Chapter 1, it said –

Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall go in there. Encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.

³⁹ ‘Moreover your little ones and your children, who you say will be victims, who today have no knowledge of good and evil, they shall go in there; to them I will give it, and they shall possess it. ⁴⁰ But *as for* you, turn and take your journey into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea.’ Deuteronomy 1:38-40

A word of encouragement and a fuller explanation of the details concerning Moses not crossing the Jordan are now given. This is necessary for several reasons. First, it is to again confirm that Joshua is the chosen person designated to lead Israel, and it is to provide typology concerning the law in relation to the work of Christ.

Concerning his words to Joshua, he now recounts them...

²¹ (con’t) **‘Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings;**

enekha ha’root – “your eyes, the seeing.” It is not past tense, but rather present. We would say, “your eyes that are seeing.” Of this, Charles Ellicott says, it “may also serve to

remind us of the fact, that though the Law was given by Moses, no eye saw its full breadth and grasp until it came into the hand of Jesus, the antitype of Joshua.”

The redemptive plan is set, it is unfolding, and those under the law were participants in that plan. So, it is true with us today. Our eyes are seeing the passing of redemptive history as it winds towards the next dispensation in time, and which will ultimately lead us to whatever eternal state the Lord has prepared for His people.

The words here have not been recorded before, and so they must be inserted into the narrative that has previously been given in Numbers 27. Because there is an active sense to the words in the Hebrew, what occurred in the battle which is now past is only a part of the ongoing narrative of the life and times of Israel.

What happened to Sihon and Og was a part of that narrative, and the land that they once possessed is a part of it as well. But more, Joshua’s eyes will continue seeing the effects of what has happened in relation to what will continue to happen. It is as if time is a movie that can be beheld until it reaches its end.

For Joshua at that time, his eyes were seeing what the Lord was doing through the defeat of Sihon and Og. Thus, surely...

²¹ (con’t) **so will the LORD do to all the kingdoms through which you pass.**

The Lord’s past performance is the principal indicator of the surety of what will come about in the future. Just as He defeated these two great kings, so He will do to any and all of the kingdoms which were yet to be engaged in battle.

The boundaries of the land had already been detailed in Numbers 34. If the boundaries were specified, even before they crossed the Jordan and into the land, then it means that the Lord had already gone before them to determine what would be theirs.

As there were kings and kingdoms within those borders, it means the Lord had already granted them into Israel’s hands. If someone bought a piece of property with specific borders, say a lot for selling cars, it would make no sense to say, “This land is yours, but all of the cars on the lot have to remain where they are. You have no right to them or to remove them.”

Rather, with the grant of the land comes full right to the land and to that which is on the land. Because the borders of the promised inheritance have been named, then what is

in that inheritance has also been granted – fully and completely – to Israel. Joshua is being encouraged by this thought.

Moses will repeat this to Israel shortly before he closes out the book of Deuteronomy. In Chapter 31, it says –

“The LORD your God Himself crosses over before you; He will destroy these nations from before you, and you shall dispossess them. Joshua himself crosses over before you, just as the LORD has said. ⁴ And the LORD will do to them as He did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites and their land, when He destroyed them. ⁵ The LORD will give them over to you, that you may do to them according to every commandment which I have commanded you. ⁶ Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He *is* the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.” Deuteronomy 31:3-6

The ongoing and unfolding plan which God has set in motion will come to pass. The foes are already defeated as far as the Lord is concerned. As Moses understood this, so Joshua was to understand it as well. Therefore, he continues...

²² You must not fear them,

lo tiraum – “You (all) must not fear them.” The previous verse was spoken to Joshua alone, but now the words are in the plural, and it is thus an address to all who will be under Joshua. Israel, though having a leader, is a collective whole. Where Joshua leads, Israel must follow, and they must do so without fear...

²² (con’t) for the LORD your God Himself fights for you.’

The words are in an emphatic form, “For the Lord your God, HE, fights for you.” Again, the words are second person, plural. They are directed to the entire congregation under Joshua, but who is himself under the Lord.

Though Israel will, in fact, be in the battles, it is the Lord who would be the unseen Force behind the victories. But it is also true that He would stand against them if they failed to obediently follow Him. This will be seen just after the battle of Jericho.

As long as Israel was properly aligned with the Lord, the Lord would be with Joshua, and thus with Israel. This will be repeated again by Moses later in Deuteronomy –

“Then He inaugurated Joshua the son of Nun, and said, ‘Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land of which I swore to them, and I will be with you.’” Deuteronomy 31:23

It can be seen that Israel and the Lord, and what happens between them, are completely interconnected. The Lord has a plan which is set, and which will come to pass, but that plan includes all of the obedience and victory which Israel displays, and it also includes all of the disobedience and defeat that Israel receives.

The connection between the two is based on the covenant which exists between the two. They are inseparable because the word of the Lord, and the promises of the Lord, reflect who He is. Even if Israel violates her side of the covenant, that in no way negates the Lord’s faithfulness to it.

For those who fail to understand this, they become enmeshed in a world of irresponsible theology which claims the rights to the covenant promises of God even at the exclusion of Israel – the very group to whom the covenant promises were made.

Until those covenant promises are fulfilled, and until Israel enters the New Covenant in Christ, the Lord will continue to work in and through this otherwise disobedient nation. In the end, His plans and purposes for them as a collective whole will be realized.

*You are great, and mighty are your deeds
You have done things more marvelous than we can tell
Out of You comes beauty, and from You wisdom proceeds
Trusting in You will keep us from the very pit of hell*

*You have made everything beautiful in its own way
You have blessed the earth with abundance for us
You bring forth the sun, day unto day
And You brought forth for us Your Son, Jesus*

*Great are You, O God, and greatly are You to be praised
And we shall forever seek after You
With arms stretched out and with our voices raised
We love You, our God – You are ever Faithful and True*

II. The Prayer of Moses (verses 23-29)

²³ “Then I pleaded with the LORD

va’eth-khanan el Yehovah. The word is *khanan*, and it signifies to be gracious or show favor. Correctly, it would be translated, “And I entreated for grace unto Yehovah.” Grace is getting what you do not deserve, and Moses did not deserve the favor he was asking for, having disobeyed the Lord at the waters of Meribah at Kadesh.

However, it is worded as it is for a specific theological purpose as well. Moses pictures the law. The law and grace are mutually exclusive. If one is under law, he is not under grace. And if one is under grace, he is not under law. The law, petitioning for grace, is a petition which cannot be granted.

²³ (con’t) **at that time,**

This exchange most probably fits between Numbers 27:13 and 14, where it says –

Now the LORD said to Moses: “Go up into this Mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the children of Israel. ¹³ And when you have seen it, you also shall be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was gathered. ¹⁴ For in the Wilderness of Zin, during the strife of the congregation, you rebelled against My command to hallow Me at the waters before their eyes.”
(These *are* the waters of Meribah, at Kadesh in the Wilderness of Zin.)

Insert Moses prayer into the chronology here.

¹⁵ Then Moses spoke to the LORD, saying: ¹⁶ “Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, ¹⁷ who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be like sheep which have no shepherd.” Numbers 27:15-17

What seems likely is that the Lord told Moses that he was to see the land and then be gathered to his people. Moses, hoping for the grace of being allowed to cross over, and seeing to the end that which he had begun, petitions the Lord. The Lord denied his request, and so Moses knowing the decision was set and fixed, petitions for a competent leader to replace him...

²³ (con’t) **saying:**

Here is contained the second of only two times Moses petitions something specifically for himself from the Lord. There are many times he begged for the people, and there are times when he asked for relief from the burdens laid upon him. However, this is a petition for something additional to be granted, rather than being taken away.

The first was in Exodus 33, and it is tied into this request in a slightly hidden way. In Exodus 33, we saw this –

And he said, “Please, show me Your glory.”

¹⁹ Then He said, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” ²⁰ But He said, “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.” Exodus 33:18-20

The same word Moses used in this verse, *khanan*, was used twice by the Lord in that exchange in Exodus. “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.” Moses, remembering that now, petitions the Lord based on His own acknowledgment of His graciousness, hoping that he will receive it from Him.

However, to maintain the typology, the request must be refused. Moses, the man of Law, anticipates all who are under law. If that is where they choose to hang their hat, then they are excluded from what Moses will now petition the Lord for. This is exactly what John penned in the very first chapter of his gospel –

“And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*.” John 1:16-18

Just a moment before writing those words, John had written –

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:14

The glory that Moses asked to see, he was denied, and the grace that he now petitions for will also be denied. The law and those under the law have no part or portion with those who receive the gift of God found in the grace of Jesus Christ.

Moses, not seeing the end from the beginning, and not understanding the typology which he was fulfilling for God's unfolding story of redemption, now makes his petition for grace...

²⁴ 'O Lord God,

Moses says, Adonai Yehovah – “My Lord Yehovah.” It is the first time the expression has been used since Genesis 15, during the time of Abraham. It is a personal, but formal touch to carefully introduce the petition. It also, quite clearly, dispels the myth that the Hebrews of old never pronounced the divine name. They did, and they did so because it is His name.

²⁴ (con't) You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand,

The words now are not limited to the conquering of the two kings east of the Jordan, but they are inclusive of everything that has occurred since he first stood before the burning bush and the divine name was revealed to him. The Lord at that time said –

“I have surely seen the oppression of My people who *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. ⁸ So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.” Exodus 3:7, 8

The Lord had promised two things: 1) to bring them out from Egypt, and 2) to bring them into Canaan. Thus, the Lord had only begun to show Moses His greatness and His mighty hand. Only when they had been given rest would the process be considered complete. But Moses knew that it would, in fact, be completed...

²⁴ (con't) for what god *is there* in heaven or on earth who can do *anything* like Your works and Your mighty *deeds*?

Moses' mind reaches back almost forty full years to what he had written after being brought through the waters of the Red Sea –

“Who *is* like You, O LORD, among the gods?
Who *is* like You, glorious in holiness,
Fearful in praises, doing wonders?” Exodus 15:11

He is not acknowledging the actual existence of any other gods, but that the nations of the world simply believed there are other gods, worshipping false gods as such. The question is rhetorical, and it demands a negative response – “Though there are other gods to the mind of man, truly there is no other god.”

The sentiment is found elsewhere in the Old Testament –

“Among the gods *there is* none like You, O Lord;
Nor *are there any works* like Your works.

⁹ All nations whom You have made
Shall come and worship before You, O Lord,
And shall glorify Your name.

¹⁰ For You *are* great, and do wondrous things;
You alone *are* God.” Psalm 86:8-10

It is also found in the New –

“Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there is* no other God but one. ⁵ For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), ⁶ yet for us *there is* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom *are* all things, and through whom we *live*.” 1 Corinthians 8:4-6

²⁵ I pray, let me cross over

The chiasm which we noted in our opening comments begins with this verse and it will continue all the way through verse 22 of the next chapter. Moses desires to cross over...

²⁵ (con't) and see the good land

ha'arets ha'tovah – “the land, the good.” It speaks of the entire land of which the boundaries were delineated in great detail in Numbers 34.

Moses knew as much of the land as any person who had never actually been there. He had received the Genesis account from the Lord and had probably read it through many times in the years of wandering in the wilderness.

Further, he had the account of the spies who had gone forth about 38 years earlier, and that account had likewise been put into writing. It would have been read from time to time as one would pick up a cherished book and read it again and again.

From the descriptions he had received, he knew the land was good indeed, and he desired to see it himself – that beautiful land...

²⁵ (con't) **beyond the Jordan,**

b'ever ha'yarden – “in side, the Jordan.” The meaning is to be determined from the context, and the context is the side which he was not currently in. He was on one side of the Descender, and he desired to cross over to the other side.

One can see the yearning of the law to receive the promise in Christ, the true Descender, but the law cannot do so. Only Christ, who embodies the law, can allow for one to cross over. Man, under law and apart from Christ, cannot obtain the inheritance.

²⁵ (con't) **those pleasant mountains,**

ha'har ha'tov ha'zeh – “the mountain (it is singular) the good the this.” Moses looked to the land itself as the promise, and he desired to see that which God had promised. He didn't understand that the land itself only looked forward to a greater Promise. But the words speak of that Promise.

In coming to Christ (symbolized by crossing the Jordan), one comes to the Mount where Christ dwells. Moses goes from the general to the specific first speaking of the good land, and then the good mountain.

The good mount is the place where the ark of the covenant will rest, but that mount represents the city in which it rests, and that – in turn – represents the whole land and its inhabitants. That is seen in the words of Hebrews 12 –

“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels,²³ to the general assembly and church of the firstborn *who are* registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect,²⁴ to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than *that of Abel.*” Hebrews 12:22-24

Moses is thinking of geographical locations, but the Lord is using his words to connect us to greater spiritual truths. In coming to Christ, one comes to Mount Zion.

²⁵ (con't) **and Lebanon.'**

v'ha'levanon – “and the Lebanon.” This is the same phrase used in Deuteronomy 1:7. Lebanon means “Place of Whiteness,” coming from a word which signifies a brick, because bricks whiten as they are fired. Thus, it signifies works.

But as was seen in Chapter 1, this doesn't picture works *for* salvation, but works which stem *from* salvation. One does not work in order to merit God's favor. Rather one's works are acceptable only after having received His grace. Paul explains that in Colossians 1 where those who have believed in Christ will then be fruitful in every good work.

Moses desires to see the glory, but as a picture of the Law, it cannot be so...

²⁶ **“But the LORD was angry with me on your account,**

This appears similar to what was said in verse 1:37 –

“The LORD was also angry with me for your sakes.”

However, a completely different word, translated as “angry,” is used. In Chapter 1, the word was *anaph*. Here it is the same word used in the last verse, translated as “cross over,” *avar*. It appears to be a play on words, “Let me cross over, over the Jordan, but the Lord crossed over me.”

Also, a different word is used concerning the blame. In Chapter 1, “on your account” came from a word signifying a rolling motion, as if the deeds of the people rolled around and ended up harming Moses. However, here the word is *maan*, which speaks of purpose or intent.

One cannot help but seeing the work of the Lord here. The law cannot bring one to the inheritance, and so the Lord crossed over the law (pictured by Moses) for the sake of His people.

He was born under the law, He lived out the law, and He died in fulfillment of the law – thus crossing over it for us. As it says, “on your account,” meaning, because of their sins. It was with the purpose or intent of the people that he did this.

²⁶ (con’t) **and would not listen to me.**

The Lord will not listen to those who live under the law. Rather, He hears the word of faith. This is exactly what Paul speaks of in Romans 10 –

For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, “The man who does those things shall live by them.” ⁶ But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*) ⁷ or, “‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ⁸ But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:5-9

The Lord only hears the law when it is in relation to its fulfillment in Christ Jesus. It is a word of faith, and that alone, which brings one into the Promise of God...

²⁶ (con’t) **So the LORD said to me: ‘Enough of that!’**

The Lord says, *rav lakh* – “much to.” It is similar to what was said in Numbers 16 when the Levites accused Moses and Aaron of taking too much upon themselves. Moses then repeated the same words back to the Levites, showing that they had gone too far in their grab for power.

The Lord is saying that Moses could only go so far and no further. He had seen enough of what the Lord was doing, and the matter was settled. Again, one can see that the law can only take one to the promise, but it cannot get them into the promise. Only Christ can take one the rest of the way.

²⁶ (con’t) **Speak no more to Me of this matter.**

It is a perfect picture of what Paul writes concerning the law –

“Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty

before God. ²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.” Romans 3:19, 20

Those under the law cannot speak of entering the promise. The law only provides a knowledge of sin, but not how to correct that sin.

²⁷ **Go up to the top of Pisgah,**

aleh rosh ha'pisgah – “Go up to the top of the Pisgah.” Pisgah signifies a cleft. Thus, it is The Cleft. It comes from the word *pasag*, meaning to pass between. That, in turn, comes from a root signifying to cut up. Thus, *pasag* figuratively means, “to consider” or “to contemplate.” This is a spot where Moses could pass through to view the land, but only from a distance...

²⁷ (con't) **and lift your eyes toward the west, the north, the south, and the east;**

The directions are given based on the layout of the land that he views, not based on the position where he is standing. The directions are:

- 1) *yamah*, “westward,” but meaning seaward, and signifying the Mediterranean Sea. The word *yam*, or sea, comes from a root meaning “to roar.” Thus, it signifies the direction from which the roaring of the Mediterranean waves comes.
- 2) *v'tsaphonah*, “and northward,” signifying the hidden, or dark direction, because in the northern hemisphere, the north is the last area to receive the sunlight.
- 3) *v'temanah*, “and southward,” signifying to the right, and thus demonstrating that the south is right in relation to one standing in the land looking east. It is from the perspective of where the Lord would dwell in Canaan, not from where Moses stood.
- 4) *u-mizrakhah*, “and eastward, signifying the direction from which the sun rises, to which Moses’ back would be facing.

²⁷ (con't) **behold it with your eyes, for you shall not cross over this Jordan.**

The thought of this verse is precisely stated by the author of Hebrews. He describes those who lived by faith before the coming of Christ, saying –

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” Hebrews 11:13

Moses was the man of law, but he was also one who lived by faith. To maintain the typology of those who came before Christ, even if living in faith, Moses was allowed to see the promise from afar off, but he was not allowed to cross over the Jordan. The law can have no inheritance in the promise. The typology must be maintained. That typology, however, continues after Moses...

²⁸ But command Joshua, and encourage him and strengthen him;

Joshua means “The Lord is Salvation.” In this picture, he is typical of Jesus the Man. The law cannot pass over the Jordan, but a Man must cross over in order to bring the people in. However, Moses is told to encourage and strengthen him.

It is by the fulfillment of the law, including through His death under the law, that man can be brought to the promise. But Christ, in His human nature, needed encouragement and strengthening in His work under the law.

In Luke 9, Jesus was transfigured, and at that time, Moses and Elijah appeared and, as it says, “spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem” (Luke 9:31). In the same chapter, it then says, “that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51). Thus, He was encouraged by the lawgiver (Moses), as well as the prophet of the law (Elijah) fulfilling the typology here.

Later, in Luke 22:43, while Jesus was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, it says that “an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.” Christ Jesus, under the law, was both encouraged and strengthened in order to continue His work of fulfilling the law...

²⁸ (con’t) for he shall go over before this people,

There is an emphasis here on the word “he.” “He it is that shall go over before this people.” The emphasis is to clearly show that Moses would not be the one to take the people in, but rather “The Lord is Salvation,” which is what “Joshua” means, would do so. He would go before them to bring them in...

²⁸ (con’t) and he shall cause them to inherit the land which you will see.’

Again, the same emphasis is on the word “he.” “And he it is that shall cause them to inherit the land which you will see.” The Lord, not the law, will bring the people in, and the Lord, not the law, shall cause them to inherit. Again, the picture is exactly fulfilled as seen in the words of Paul –

“Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed,” who is Christ.¹⁷ And this I say, *that* the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.¹⁸ For if the inheritance *is* of the law, *it is* no longer of promise; but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.” Galatians 3:16-18

It is by Christ, and by Christ alone that the promise is received, and the inheritance is obtained...

***29 (fin) “So we stayed in the valley opposite Beth Peor.**

Beth Peor means “House of Peor.” Peor comes from the verb *paar*, meaning “to open.” Thus, it is the House of the Opening. It was a place known for a temple to the Moabite god known as Peor.

The reason for including this final sentence, is that this is the ending of recounting the narrative which brought them to this place. It is from this spot that Moses will finish out the book of Deuteronomy, and then it is in this spot where Moses will be buried, as is seen in Deuteronomy 34:5, 6 –

“So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.⁶ And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day.”

This word, *paar*, is used in Isaiah 5 when speaking of Sheol, the pit of death, opening its mouth beyond measure to receive those who reject the Lord. When under law – whether trusting in the law for righteousness, or in rejecting the law and satisfying one’s own desires – the inevitable outcome is death.

No matter which way one goes, man under law is condemned and will die outside of the promise. It is only through coming to Christ who fulfilled the law, and who embodies it on our behalf, that we can be made right before God.

In following Him, we will cross over His life, and be brought into the promise. This is – again – the theme set before us in these seven verses today. The Lord keeps giving us the same pictures, again and again and again because we are otherwise slow to learn.

He asks us to wake up from our slumber, our life of ignoring Him, or our supposed life of personal righteousness because of how good we are, and to come to Jesus with our hands empty and our hearts opened wide to Him.

In this, God will be pleased to call us His children and to provide us with a home in the true Land of Promise for all eternity. Think of it! People under the law are doing exactly what Moses did – whether intentional or not.

They are observing the law in an attempt to obtain the inheritance. Why would anyone observe the law if there was nothing to be gained from it? I have a Jewish friend right now who is dying of cancer. The last time I spoke to him, I tried – yet again – to convince him of his need for Christ.

He wrote, please don't speak to me about Jesus anymore. The funny thing is that I printed out Isaiah 52:13-53:12, removing the verse numbers so that he wouldn't know it was from the Bible. I said what do you think about this? Who is this referring to?

His answer was, "Jesus." He knew that. It was obvious. I asked him, "Where did that come from?" His answer, "I have no idea." I said, it is in your Bible – it is from Isaiah. He acknowledged that his own Scriptures refer to Jesus, and yet he does not want to hear about what his own Scriptures tell him.

And so, his last statement to me will testify against him at the judgment. I want to enter the promise, but I want to do it by my own effort under the law. And the Lord has said to man – "Speak no more to me of this matter."

There is no inheritance for the soul who desires to merit God's grace, because grace cannot be merited – it must be received. How stubborn we are to reject the offering of God in Jesus Christ and to say, "I can do better than what You promised, what You accomplished, and what You offer. Speak no more to me about this JESUS."

It is a sad and self-condemning choice. Be wise, be prepared to meet your God by coming to Christ, and you will be brought near to Him through His precious shed blood today.

Closing Verse: *“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.’¹¹ But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for ‘the just shall live by faith.’¹² Yet the law is not of faith, but ‘the man who does them shall live by them.’” Galatians 3:10-12*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 4:1 *Only the evaluation of one verse will I give... (That You May Live) (12th Deuteronomy Sermon)*

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Speak No More to Me of This Matter

“And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying
‘Your eyes have seen; yes, you know it is true
All that the LORD your God has done to these two kings
So will the LORD do to all the kingdoms which you pass through

You must not fear them; this you shall not do
For the LORD your God Himself fights for you

“Then I pleaded with the LORD at that time, saying:
So to Him I was then relaying

‘O Lord GOD, You have begun to show
Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand
-----from You such great power proceeds
For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can
Do anything like Your works and Your mighty deeds?

I pray, let me cross over and see the good land as it stretches on
Beyond the Jordan, those pleasant mountains, and Lebanon

“But the LORD was angry with me on your account
And would not listen to me. So the LORD said to me:
‘Enough of that! Speak no more to Me of this matter

It is decided and that is it. Can't you see!

Go up to the top of Pisgah, and lift your eyes
Toward the west, the north, the south, and the east
Behold it with your eyes
For you shall not cross over this Jordan
-----only with your eyes shall you on this beauty feast

But command Joshua, and encourage him and strengthen him
For he shall go over before this people, prepared for war
And he shall cause them to inherit the land which you will see
"So we stayed in the valley opposite Beth Peor

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 4:1 (That You May Live)

In our sermon last week, which ended Chapter 3, we were shown a chiasm which continues through much of this chapter, even to verse 22. The beginning and ending parts of that chiasm revealed that Moses wanted to cross the Jordan (verse 3:25), but that he must not do so (verse 4:22).

We have seen, and we certainly will see today, that the reason for this is that Moses is a type, or picture of the law, and thus of those under the law. But in our verse today, Moses refers to “the Lord God of your fathers” when speaking to Israel there before him.

That is referring to those who went before them, including their fathers who received the law. But those who received the law did not enter. And those before them did not have the law, and yet, the Lord promised the land to them.

If he did this, before giving them the law, then inheriting the promise cannot be because of the law. As Paul says in Galatians 3:18, “For if the inheritance is of the law, *it is* no longer of promise; but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.”

Further, Paul says in Romans 4:14 that, “...if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect.” The promise there in Romans 4 is the same promise to Abraham Paul referred to in Galatians 3. To maintain the typology, Moses (picturing the law and thus those under law) is not to cross the Jordan and enter Canaan.

Well then, if God gave the inheritance to Abraham and his descendants by promise, and yet Israel under law will actually go over Jordan and dwell there, it means that the promise is not really the land of Canaan at all. These people and places are given as types and shadows of something greater.

But this still doesn't explain why the law was given. What purpose did it serve? Paul answers that in his next words of Galatians after speaking of the inheritance, our text verse for today...

Text Verse: *“What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. ²⁰ Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one.” Galatians 3:19, 20*

Paul says the law was “added because of transgressions.” What that means is that the statutes and judgments which Moses will begin to refer to today actually multiply Israel’s guilt before the Lord. They don’t bring the people nearer to God, but rather, they were to show the people the perfection of God and how far short of that standard they actually were.

Thus, in the coming of the Seed, meaning Christ, they could also understand the immense grace of God, the infinite mercy of God, and the immeasurable love of God. But those attributes of God can only be realized by faith in God, not in observing the law.

If someone observes the law, it is done to merit favor or to avoid punishment, but it is not done out of faith. You are going to hear this presented to you so many times, and in so many ways, in the next few minutes that your heads may either spin off or explode, but this is necessary to clearly think through what is presented here on several different levels.

The reason we are going to do this, is in hopes that you, or someone else, will finally be able to say, “Aha, I get it.” We may have heard the story of grace a million times, and yet we may still be clinging to our own selfish means of making God happy other than in simply trusting Him and what He has done.

How many of you refrain from certain types of foods because you believe the Bible tells you to? How many of you give a tithe because you believe the Bible tells you to? How many of you think your time at church is part of a Sabbath Day worship?

If you think any of these things, you are both wrong, and you are not pursuing grace, but rather you are pursuing a law, attempting to please God through your efforts. You are setting aside grace in the process of living out some supposed law that you think is bringing you nearer to God. Grace is grace. It cannot be merited.

If you are trying to do so, let’s hope that after the countless repetitions of thought that you are about to hear, you will finally give that up and just... trust. May it be so. By grace, and by faith, meaning faith alone for salvation, is a principle point of Christian theology, and it is clearly laid out in God’s superior word. And so, let’s turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Statutes and Judgments

Moses has spent the first three chapters of the book of Deuteronomy recounting the events which brought Israel to the place where they are now. All of what he has conveyed has been given as typological pictures of future redemptive history, and most especially that of the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

Israel was brought out of Egypt and was set to enter into the land of Canaan, they failed to believe the Lord and His promises, and they were turned into the wilderness to perish there. That pictured Israel's rejection of Christ, and their exile among the nations for these past two thousand years.

The typology has been exceedingly precise and clear. Now, Israel is once again set to enter into the Land of Promise. But Canaan is not the true Promise. Rather, it is only a typological picture of entering God's rest which comes by believing in Christ Jesus. As the author of Hebrews says –

“For we who have believed do enter that rest.” Hebrews 4:3

He is referring to faith in Christ which makes that possible.

Chapter 3 closed out with verses 23-29 where Moses petitioned the Lord to allow him to enter the land. To understand the context of what will now be presented, those verses, which we evaluated last week, are again given –

“Then I pleaded with the LORD at that time, saying: ²⁴ ‘O Lord GOD, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand, for what god *is there* in heaven or on earth who can do *anything* like Your works and Your mighty *deeds*? ²⁵ I pray, let me cross over and see the good land beyond the Jordan, those pleasant mountains, and Lebanon.’

²⁶ “But the LORD was angry with me on your account, and would not listen to me. So the LORD said to me: ‘Enough of that! Speak no more to Me of this matter. ²⁷ Go up to the top of Pisgah, and lift your eyes toward the west, the north, the south, and the east; behold *it* with your eyes, for you shall not cross over this Jordan. ²⁸ But command Joshua, and encourage him and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which you will see.’

²⁹ “So we stayed in the valley opposite Beth Peor.” Deuteronomy 3:23-29

Understanding the typology from last week (Moses represents the law, and the law cannot bring people into the promise), the narrative now turns to...the law. It seems almost contradictory. How can it be that Moses, who represents the law and who is forbidden entry into the promise, now issues forth more words of law which he expects the people to be obedient to?

The answer to that question is found in the first verse which introduces the words of law which will span the next twenty-nine chapters, right up until the end of Chapter 32.

¹“Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments

v’atah Yisrael sh’ma el ha’khuqim v’el ha’mishpatim – “And now Israel, hearken unto the statutes and unto the judgments.” The word *shama* means to hear, but the sense here is to hear and to pay heed to what is heard. And that which is to be hearkened to are the statutes and judgments.

The words are variously translated – decrees and laws, statutes and rules, statutes and ordinances, ordinances and judgments, etc. The first word is *khoq*, signifying something prescribed or owed.

It comes from *khaqq* which is something decreed or even a person or thing which is appointed. That comes from a primitive root meaning to hack, and thus to engrave. These things are appointed and are expected to be obeyed, as any decree would be.

The second word is *mishpat*. It is a standard or a judgment, coming from *shaphat* which means to judge or to govern. Moses is now going to relay statutes and judgments for the people to hearken to.

Many of these are going to be repeated from earlier times and will include further recountings of what occurred, and why they were given. In other words, and for example, Moses will repeat the Ten Commandments, which were given to Israel, but He will also recount the many events which surrounded the giving of those commandments.

The end of Moses’ recounting the past is not over, but Moses first recounted the events which led to their punishment before recounting those events that surrounded things which occurred before that time. If this seems out of order, it isn’t.

The Lord, through Moses, is showing Israel in typology what brought them the years of disaster that had happened to them (meaning their rejection of Christ) before showing them again what led them to that point.

So, what led them to it? The law. They had been given the law, and even though they were under law, it is not disobeying the law that brought about their punishment. It was a lack of faith in the Lord that brought it about. That was stated, explicitly and in the most poignant terms, in Deuteronomy 1:32, 33

“Yet, for all that, you did not believe the LORD your God, ³³ who went in the way before you to search out a place for you to pitch your tents, to show you the way you should go, in the fire by night and in the cloud by day.”

The people failed to... believe. If you remember, the Hebrew was very marked and specific. Moses had recounted what got them to the door of Canaan, and yet – and despite all of that – they failed to believe. Nothing about the law was even said. They simply failed to trust the Lord.

Moses is now going to heap all of the laws back onto the people again, and he is going to add in other laws as well. And yet, it isn't their failure of the law that excluded them from the promise, and so it cannot be their observance of the law which will – next time – bring them into the promise.

So why is Moses doing this? Because the Law of Moses, this impossible body of statutes and judgments and penalties – and so much more – is given as a body of instruction to teach Israel one thing... that they need grace. Paul says as much in Galatians 3 –

“Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. ²² But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. ²³ But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”

-Galatians 3:21-25

The first time, Israel was given the law, and while under the law they were presented Christ – the embodiment of the law. They failed to believe, and they were punished.

Israel will again be presented the law – for a final seven years known as the tribulation period.

They will have a temple, sacrifices, and all of the trappings that are a part of the Law of Moses, and they will find that it will fail to bring them any closer to the Lord. Eventually, as a people, they will demonstrate faith, they will come to Christ, and they will enter the promise. It is not the law that will save, but Christ's fulfillment of it.

This is why Deuteronomy is given. It is a second attempt at bringing the people to understand their need for Christ, just as they will have a second attempt after their many years of exile to realize their need for Christ. In the end, it is about Christ. But how contradictory that sounds from Moses' next words...

¹ (con't) **which I teach you to observe,**

asher anokhi m'lamed etkhem laasot – “which I train you to do.” Here is a new word, *lamad*, which means learning, teaching, instructing, and so on. It comes from a primitive root signifying “to goad.” One uses a goad to prod an animal along. Moses will use this word seventeen times in Deuteronomy alone.

Moses is thus, prodding the people through this instruction to do the things that he will expound to them, and it is for a very specific purpose...

*Listen to the statutes and the judgments too
Pay heed to the word you are about to hear
I am going to lay out all that you are to do
Keep them with you always, yes – be sure to keep them near*

*Think on all I am going to tell you
Consider what needs to be done
Will you trust in your own ability, these things to do?
If so, you must accomplish them all – yes, every single one*

*Think on what I am going to tell you
Consider again what needs to be done
Will you trust in your own ability, these things to do?
Or will you by faith simply trust in My Son?*

II. That You May Live

¹ (con't) **that you may live,**

l'maan tikhyu – “that you may live” is technically correct, but to understand the meaning, one might paraphrase this as, “to the end purpose of your living.” The word *maan* speaks of a teleological view of things. In other words, “What is the purpose of what is relayed?” In this case, it is that “you may live.”

This is the entire point of the giving of the law – whether it seems like it or not. We can think of the law as a basis for holy living, for moral conduct, for treating others as humans created in the image of God (which is both holy living and right moral conduct), etc.

However, people all over the world do the things of the law, even without having the law, don't they? All societies, cultures, and nations have codes – written or unwritten – concerning murder, adultery, theft, lying, and so on. But they don't have life, meaning a right standing with God, through the doing or not doing of those things, do they? No. Paul says as much in Romans –

“For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law ¹³ (for not the hearers of the law *are* just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; ¹⁴ for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, ¹⁵ who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves *their* thoughts accusing or else excusing *them*) ¹⁶ in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.” Romans 2:12-16

Paul seems to say that people without the law, who have this law on their heart, can live (be right with God) apart from the law by doing these things. But this is not the case. He later says that all have sinned and all fall short of the glory of God. Without Jesus, all stand condemned. Jesus confirms this in John 3:18 –

“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” John 3:18

Moses sums up what he is going to present, saying to Israel that obeying the law has the end purpose of granting life. It is a general repeat of what was said in Leviticus 18 –

“You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I *am* the LORD.” Leviticus 18:5

Moses repeats this now, but even more, the very last thing he says in this major section of Deuteronomy – a section which goes all the way through Deuteronomy 32 – is exactly the same thing he says now in the first verse of this section –

“Moses finished speaking all these words to all Israel, ⁴⁶ and he said to them: ‘Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe—all the words of this law. ⁴⁷ For it is not a futile thing for you, because it is your life, and by this word you shall prolong *your* days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess.’”

-Deuteronomy 32:45-47

The only things after this large section of instruction are that Moses will speak out a blessing to the tribes of people in Chapter 33, and then it will record his ascent up Mount Nebo where he dies in Chapter 34. The body of instruction actually ends in Chapter 32.

Think of it! The first words of the actual body of instruction of the book of Deuteronomy say that the end purpose of them is so that the people may live. And the last words of that same body of instruction say that in the observance of these things it is their life.

But more, that is based upon the words of the Lord which explicitly say that the man who does the things of things of the law will live. Those words from Leviticus are a set of words that are so important that they are repeated by Nehemiah (Nehemiah 9:29) after their first exile. They are substantially repeated by Ezekiel several times (Ezekiel 20). And, they are repeated twice by Paul (Romans 10:5 & Galatians 3:12).

And yet, Paul explains something to us concerning these words there in Galatians 3 that is contrary to what we already saw in Deuteronomy 1 –

“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed *is* everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.’ ¹¹ But that no one is justified by the law in the

sight of God *is* evident, for ‘the just shall live by faith.’ ¹² Yet the law is not of faith, but ‘the man who does them shall live by them.’” Galatians 3:10-12

Paul cites the very law that Moses is about give, right from Deuteronomy 27:26 –

“Cursed *is* the one who does not confirm *all* the words of this law by observing them.” Deuteronomy 27:26

He then cites a prophet who lived under the law, and who thus prophesied words of law–

“Behold the proud,
His soul is not upright in him;
But the just shall live by his faith.” Habakkuk 2:4

Habakkuk shows that attempting to be justified before God on one’s own merit, something that the law requires, is prideful, and that the soul of one who is prideful is “not upright in him.”

As this is so, then it is not – nor can it be – that observance of the law will bring life. If it does not bring life, then it – by default – will bring death. Paul says that in Romans 7:7-12 –

“What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, “You shall not covet.” ⁸ But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of evil* desire. For apart from the law sin *was* dead. ⁹ I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. ¹⁰ And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. ¹¹ For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed *me*. ¹² Therefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.”

Moses has said, right at the beginning of his giving of the law, and he will then repeat, right at the ending of this giving of the law, what the Lord said in His words of law – that the purpose of the law is for the granting of life. Can anyone disagree with that? No. It is explicit.

And yet, Israel did not enter into the promise. And more, not only did they not enter the promise, it wasn't at all because of a matter of law. The Lord never commanded the people to go into Canaan, despite the translation of Deuteronomy 1:26. There it said –

“Nevertheless you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of the LORD your God.” Deuteronomy 1:26

Rather, and as we saw at that time, the Hebrew said, *va'tamru eth pi Yehovah elohekem* – “and rebelled against *the* mouth of Yehovah your God.”

The “mouth of the Lord” can mean a commandment, but in this case the Lord did not “command” the people to go up. Instead, He promised to go before them. The implication is that they would believe Him and His promises and willingly follow His lead. But they did not.

They failed to have faith that the Lord would lead them and fight their battles for them. In failing to believe, they cut themselves off from the promise. From there, they found death in the wilderness instead of life in Canaan.

But then that brings us to the next thought. Were they under law while in the wilderness? The answer is “Yes.” The entire time that they were wandering there, they were under law. They certainly observed the Sabbath and were bound under the precepts of the law, and yet they could not fulfill the law entirely.

This is because the law included certain observances that can only be fulfilled while in Canaan – such as certain aspects of the Feasts of the Lord. And so, they were under law, but they were so in an imperfect manner.

This is the same as it was for Israel after their rejection of Christ during their dispersion. They were bound to the law, and yet they could not truly be obedient to the law.

When the Lord said that all would die in the wilderness, it isn't just true for the thirty-eight years after failing to enter Canaan. It was also true for every one of them who was exiled after rejecting Christ. The law that was to bring life, was found to bring death – both while they lived in Canaan, and during their time exiled from Canaan.

But those who were in the wilderness, and who were dying could be spared. Remember the account of the fiery serpents! It says the people spoke against Moses (meaning the

law) and so the Lord sent fiery serpents among them. After acknowledging their wrong, Moses prayed for the people. At that time, it said –

“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Make a fiery *serpent*, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.’⁹ So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.” Numbers 21:8, 9

It says that whoever looked to the bronze serpent lived. He found life. But Moses says here in Deuteronomy 4 that in observing the law, they would live. But these people found life not through the law, but through an act of faith alone.

And who is it that made the serpent and put it on a pole? Moses! It was Moses who – at the direction of the Lord – did so. Moses, the lawgiver, put the serpent on the pole. And it is the law – the penalty of the law – which necessitated Christ being placed on the cross. This is seen first from Jesus’ words –

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,¹⁵ that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” John 3:14-17

And then from the words of Paul –

“In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,¹² buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.¹³ And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,¹⁴ having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.” Colossians 2:11-14

Jesus says that Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. Moses, the “law,” did so because the Lord told him to do so. Jesus equates what happened there to what will happen to Him – He would be lifted up. As Moses is a type of the law, what Jesus is

implying is that it is *the law*, the word of the Lord through the law, that necessitated that He would be lifted up.

But those who looked to the snake lived, not because of the law, but because of faith in looking to the serpent on the pole. Jesus is implying through the analogy, and explicitly stating through His words, that the world is saved through faith in His being lifted up, not through direct obedience to the law.

Paul then speaks of circumcision, a precept of the law (Leviticus 12:3), as being fulfilled in any who are in Christ, and that in this forgiveness, Christ wipes out the handwriting of the law, meaning He annuls it for that person.

And how is this possible? It is because God has taken the law “out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.” Did any of this – either at Moses’ time, or in the life of a believer now – occur through obedience to the law? Absolutely not. It came by faith in God’s provision.

If you can see it, when Moses put the serpent on the pole and lifted it up, he was – for all intents and purposes – nailing the law he had been given to that pole, crucifying it. Why?

Because first, the Lord said that the man who does the things of the law would live. Moses repeats this, saying that by observing the law you will live. And yet, the people who looked to the serpent on the pole – without doing a single deed of the law – lived.

If people found life without the law, then the law was no longer needed. This is what every Jew – few as they may be – who have come to Christ over the last 2000 years has discovered. The law died to them because they died to the law through Christ.

If Moses was astute, he may have said to himself, “The people have this law (under which they were condemned to die), which is supposed to bring life, and they are all dying around me, except for those who look at this bronze serpent. What on earth do we need the law for then?”

If he were exceedingly astute, he might have then said, “The law, which is supposed to give life to the man who does the things of this law, is summed up in the faith he has in looking to this serpent. This serpent embodies everything that the law was intended to provide. And it came from the Lord by an act of grace.”

If Moses figured that out, which the Bible does not even hint at, then he would have understood one of the main premises of the gospel as explained in detail by Paul –

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

-Ephesians 2:4-9

And this is what occurs with every Gentile as well. Paul already said it, as we cited earlier, “And the commandment, which *was* to *bring* life, I found to *bring* death” (Romans 7:10). This is exactly why Leviticus 18:5 is so important. Again –

“You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I *am* the LORD.” Leviticus 18:5

While evaluating that verse, it was noted that there is a definite article before “man.” And further, it used the word *adam*, instead *ish*. Both mean “man,” but in using the word *adam*, it speaks of a human being, the species. It is speaking of a specific man, “if the man does.” Paul explains who the Man is –

“For since by man *came* death, by Man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.”

-1 Corinthians 15:21, 22

Adam died because of the law. God gave him a law, he disobeyed it, and he died. Paul says that through that man, meaning Adam, came death. The Lord says that if the Man does His statutes and judgments, He will live. Christ did the Lord’s statutes and judgments and He lives.

Jesus, and the apostles also, show that faith in Him means that we shall be made alive. If that is said to people who are alive – because only those who are alive can hear it, then it cannot simply be speaking of physical life.

As Paul says, “all in Adam die.” It is a confirmation of the doctrines we call “original sin” and “inherited sin.” Adam sinned, sin entered the world, and we have all inherited his spiritually dead state.

Paul cannot merely be speaking about people who had physically died, because he then says, “even so in Christ all shall be made alive.” But that includes us, who are physically alive right now. And so, it must be speaking of spiritual life, and thus eternal life.

We cannot even begin to speculate on whether Moses realized this or not. All we can know is that Moses repeats the words of the Lord concerning life for the people being found in doing the statutes and judgments set before them, and that some of the people lived, not by doing those, but by looking in faith to a serpent on a pole.

*The words are given so that you may live
But you must think on them and consider what to do
These innumerable laws are presented, to you them I give
And in doing them, life shall be granted to you*

*But consider well what this means to you
Every precept must be exactly completed and done
The man will live who these things doing he does do
Yes, he will live when he does every single one*

*Can you pass muster in doing these things you are to do?
Can you accomplish them all – yes, every single one?
There is another option laid out for you...
Trust in the doing of them all by My own precious Son*

III. Possess the Land

Having said all that we have said thus far, all of which is true and proper, it must be observed that the words of this verse are in the second person plural. Moses is speaking to Israel. When he said, “the statutes and judgments which I teach you,” the word “you” is plural. The word “you” in “that you may live” is also plural, and so are the words of the next clause...

^{1 (con't)} and go in and possess the land

Of this verse, Charles Ellicott says, “Life is put before possession. The penalty of the broken law is death.” This depends on what Ellicott is speaking of. If he is referring to physical life, the statement is incorrect. Breaking the law depends on what law is broken.

However, if what he says is speaking of the truth of the law itself, then he is correct. In Adam’s breaking of the law, death was the result. Any infraction of God’s law incurs spiritual death, but as we are born in that condition, it hardly matters. It simply means that we will never be made alive by breaking the law.

However, in this, Ellicott would continue to be correct. Life is put before possession. One cannot obtain the inheritance without first being given life. One believes in Christ unto salvation (the granting of life), and then the inheritance is realized. They may actually occur at the same time, but the logical order is life and then possession.

The verb “and go in” is plural as is the verb “and possess.” Moses is speaking to Israel as a collective body. But the fact is that once in the land, the people failed to do the statutes and judgments of the Lord, and yet they – as a people – have continued to live, even though individually they have either 1) trusted in Messiah and been granted eternal life, or 2) they have continued to die physically, and also to remain spiritually dead forever.

After entering Canaan, they lived in the land up until the time of the prophet Jeremiah. At that time, they were exiled to Babylon, as promised. Eventually, they were brought back to the land, also as prophesied.

After the return, Nehemiah went to accomplish a task in Judah, and during his time there, he repeats Leviticus 18:5 in the context of none of the people having done what was expected –

“But after they had rest,
They again did evil before You.
Therefore You left them in the hand of their enemies,
So that they had dominion over them;
Yet when they returned and cried out to You,
You heard from heaven;
And many times You delivered them according to Your mercies,
²⁹ And testified against them,
That You might bring them back to Your law.
Yet they acted proudly,

And did not heed Your commandments,
But sinned against Your judgments,
'Which if a man does, he shall live by them.'
And they shrugged their shoulders,
Stiffened their necks,
And would not hear.
³⁰ Yet for many years You had patience with them,
And testified against them by Your Spirit in Your prophets.
Yet they would not listen;
Therefore You gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands.
³¹ Nevertheless in Your great mercy
You did not utterly consume them nor forsake them;
For You *are* God, gracious and merciful. Nehemiah 9:18-30

Nehemiah cites Leviticus 18:5, speaking of a singular man, but without the article – “if a man does...” No man had. All had died. The rest of the time, he is speaking of the people collectively – they, them, etc.

And more, not only had *a man* not done the things of the law, it implied that *no man* had done the things of the law – meaning that all of Israel had failed to do the things of the law. One plus one equals two. If they had not – meaning none of them – then the promise of Moses in Deuteronomy cannot have been attained.

Further, the people were exiled a second time, but the record shows that a Man (THE Man) had done the things of the law. That is the purpose of the gospels. It is to show that THE Man came, He fulfilled the law, and therefore the promise can be obtained.

However, Israel collectively rejected THE Man, and they were exiled again. Their exile demonstrates that one of two truths must exist: 1) Either *no man* did the things of the law, and thus Israel did not do the things of the law, or 2) *a Man* did do the things of the law and they rejected that.

The answer to which is true is obvious based on the gospels, and also on the words of Acts and the epistles. However, because Moses' words are to Israel collectively, and because they are now back in the land, even though they had not been doing the things of the law, nor are they now doing the things of the law, then there must be a purpose for them being there.

This is evident from our final words of this opening verse of Deuteronomy 4...

***1 (fin) which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you.**

The land is given to Israel by the Lord God of their fathers. If the land is given to Israel, which it clearly is stated here, and if they may live (meaning not die), and that they may both go in and also possess the land, then – as was clearly seen in our last of three Leviticus 26 sermons – Israel will someday come to Christ.

They are under the law right now, whether they are observing it or not. They will be under the law during a period of observing it – meaning with a temple, sacrificial rites, and etc., and yet they will continue to be bound by the law which they cannot meet. For a third time, as Paul says, “And the commandment, which *was* to *bring* life, I found to *bring* death” (Romans 7:10).

If they cannot meet the law, and if the law brings death, and yet Moses says that through observing the law they may live, then it must mean through *the Man* who did the things of the law. Their life, the collective life of Israel, is bound up in the observance of the law. But it is only so in regard to Jesus Christ’s fulfillment of it – nothing more. THE Man has done the things of the law.

It doesn’t matter if it is singular you, or plural you all, the same truth holds for both. By deeds of the law, no man – and no nation – will be justified in God’s sight. For all of the detail of our words today, for all of the carefully and precisely stated words, and for all of the logic that had to be applied to certain points, one truth is inescapable – the law promises life, but it only brings death.

This does not mean that the Lord deceived Israel. It means that they misunderstood what the promises entailed, and that they failed to observe what the very promises of the law speak to – both from Moses and from the later writings. That which it speaks to is the incarnation of God in the Person of Jesus Christ.

Does the law truly bring death? Well, yes. Jesus Christ was born under the law, He lived without violating the law, and thus He could have lived in that capacity forever. But the law even brought death to Christ – not for His violations of it, but for ours –

“I am the good shepherd; and I know My *sheep*, and am known by My own. ¹⁵ As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock *and* one shepherd.

¹⁷ “Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.” John 10:14-18

Thank God for Jesus Christ who was willing to die *under* that law so that we could die *to* the law. My hope and great desire for you is that you will contemplate what this means, and then that you will decide to trust Jesus, by faith alone, for your salvation.

The sin in man must be judged, or man must be judged in sin, but either way, our sin will be judged. Be wise and discerning and ask God for your sin to be judged at the cross of Calvary in the sinless Man who became sin so that we could become the righteousness of God in Him. May it be so, and may it be today – to the glory of God and to the saving of your soul.

Closing Verse: *“But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²² even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, ²⁶ to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” Romans 3:21-26*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 4:2-7 *It applies to all – be it a Janice or a Jim... (For Whatever Reason We May Call Upon Him) (13th Deuteronomy Sermon)*

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

That You May Live

Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments
Which I teach you to observe, that you may live
And go in and possess the land
Which the LORD God of your fathers is going to you give

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 4:2-7 (For Whatever Reason We May Call Upon Him)

Last week, we got through just one verse, and in all honesty, that could have easily happened again today. There is sufficient detail in verse 2 that it could have been fully fleshed out in a single sermon. But I thought, “If I do this, there will be a rebellion. Eventually, someone is going to go crazy, or shoot me, or both.”

And so, I cut the commentary on verse 2 short. About an hour after having done this, Sergio messaged me and asked if I was sticking with verse 2 alone for the sermon, or if there would be progress. I told him my thoughts about a rebellion and went back to work. He suggested that I not rush it and to just give you one verse. He said that if you have a problem with that, you should email him.

Ok, he didn’t really say that, but a few minutes later, he sent me a GIF of a riot – people destroying a car with the caption, “Rebellion on Siesta Key After 2nd One Verse Sermon.” I laughed and got back to work.

But two minutes later, a second GIF came in of a black congregation applauding in the Spirit, saying, “While Sarasota Protests, SW Satellite Church in Uganda is Like...” meaning that they were all behind another one-verse sermon.

I think he’s implying that folks in the US are lazy about their theology, but those in Africa cherish the word. Can it be? I dare not try to find out because he sent one more GIF with a picture of a person drowning in emails and a caption, “Charlie the Day After the Sermon,” implying that people will, in fact, be upset enough to email by the hundreds.

And so, I have done my best to shorten the comments of verse 2, and to continue on through the rest of what is now our sermon text.

Text Verse: *“Oh, how I love Your law!
It is my meditation all the day.” Psalm 119:97*

Meditating on the law of the Lord is what brings out the beauty of the law of the Lord. One cannot meditate on what he does not know, nor can he know unless he first opens the word and reads it.

Sermon typing is to be an active meditation on the word which is then intended to be expressed to others concerning what has been considered and brought forth. I can’t

think of any other way of expressing myself in a sermon that has more value than to sit and contemplate each word of each verse and then pass that on to whoever is willing to listen.

It is God's word and it is given for us to find Christ, and/or to marvel in what Christ has accomplished for us. We will see more of that today as we go through our verses. For now, I would like to remind you of the chiasm which spans the verses we're looking at.

Deuteronomy 3:25-4:22 - Call upon Him.
Israel's Instruction (11/07)

- a 3:25 Moses wants to cross Jordan
- b 3:26 Lord angry with Moses
- c 3:27 "Lift your eyes toward the west, the north, the south, and the east."
- d 4:3, 4 Example of apostasy (idolatry)
- e 4:5 Taught statutes and judgments
- f 4:6 Be careful to observe them (judgments)
- g 4:7 Great nation
- x 4:7 Call upon Him
- g 4:8 Great nation
- f 4:9 Diligently keep yourself (judgments)
- e 4:10-14 Taught statutes and judgments.
- d 4:15-18 Warning of apostasy (idolatry)
- c 4:19 "Lift your eyes to heaven."
- b 4:21 Lord angry with Moses
- a 4:22 Moses must not cross over the Jordan

We will get through a portion of the verses of this chiasm today, including the central verse upon which it is anchored. What a treasure we have in the word! It is filled with beauty and riches. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Do Not Add to It nor Take from It (Verse 2)

²You shall not add to the word

Here, the "statutes and judgments" referred to in verse 1 are combined into one thought – *lo tosiphu al ha'davar* – "No shall you add to the word." The word "you" is

plural. It is spoken to all of the people of Israel, and what is conveyed to them is a codified body of law which stands alone – *ha'davar*, “the word.”

Despite being made up of many words which then comprise the statutes and judgments that must be individually observed, together they form a single unit. This idea is precisely conveyed by James –

“For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all. ¹¹ For He who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.” James 2:10, 11

Of this, Charles Ellicott says, “The *word* is the substance of the Law. The *words* in which it is expressed may be more or less.” He then continues with, “The law of Moses contains in it the germ of all revelation to the very end.”

In other words, what Moses presents here is what will spring forth into new revelation. The prophets, under the law of Moses, would speak forth more to the people which would be considered further revelation within the framework of the law.

For example, Jeremiah, again and again, would come forward to the people and say, “Hear the word of the Lord.” The book of Jeremiah is a revelation of God, and it is authoritative. His words are incorporated into the body of Scripture which issues forth from the Lord.

At times, what he or others said was simply a call to observe what is already laid out by Moses. At times, Jeremiah would reveal something which would occur because of obedience or disobedience to the word, and so on.

It is the word (singular) of the Lord, spoken with words (plural) which become a continued part of the word of the Lord. However, it is – in fact – the word of the Lord. When the false prophets spoke, it was not the word of the Lord.

Based on these things, one might jump to the conclusion that what is presented in the Law of Moses is the complete and completed word of law which stands alone and for all time.

And indeed, there are those who treat it as such, as least in principle. The Jews of Jesus’ time would hold up Moses as the full and finished revelation of God, sticking fast to

every precept when it was convenient, but then dismissing what the Law of Moses clearly revealed, and what the prophets later continued to reveal.

Even today, many messianics and Hebrew Roots adherents look at the Law of Moses as still binding in every precept. And yet, even they conveniently dismiss those parts of the law which are inconvenient, or impossible, to observe.

What the Jews of Jesus' time, those swayed by the false apostles who came forth to reinsert the law as recorded in Paul's writings, and the pseudo-Christians today who continue to hold to the Law of Moses, fail to see is that the Law of Moses, itself, speaks of its own end. It is merely a steppingstone on the path to a New Covenant, of which Moses Himself speaks of. For example, Deuteronomy 18 says –

“The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, ¹⁶ according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.’

¹⁷ “And the LORD said to me: ‘What they have spoken is good. ¹⁸ I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. ¹⁹ And it shall be *that* whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require *it* of him.” Deuteronomy 18:15-19

A Prophet like Moses is different than any other prophet who would come under the Law of Moses. Other prophets spoke in accord with the covenant, but Moses spoke out the covenant. Thus, a Prophet like Moses would speak out a New Covenant. Ironically, Jeremiah – a prophet under the Law of Moses – spoke of exactly this –

“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— ³² not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. ³³ But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴ No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” Jeremiah 31:31-34

Jeremiah spoke the word of the Lord, with words in accord with the word of the Lord, which support Moses' words concerning a New Covenant. But such a New Covenant would not be, and indeed could not be, a part of the Law of Moses. This is a truth which was completely missed by the scholar Keil –

“Christ also said that He had not come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil (Matthew 5:17); and the old covenant was not abrogated, but only glorified and perfected, by the new.” Keil

He could not be more wrong in this. As we saw ever so clearly last week, the law was glorified in Christ, but only so in His fulfillment of it. And the law could not be “perfected.” As it is from God, it is perfect in what it teaches, even if incomplete in what it presents concerning His revelation of Himself. The law was abrogated in the introduction of a New Covenant.

Jeremiah said that the sins of the people would be remembered no more. And yet, it is through law that sin is imputed. If the Lord God would no longer remember their sins, then this New Covenant could not be a part of the Law of Moses, meaning the Old Covenant. And this is confirmed, explicitly, in Hebrews with the words, “In that He says, ‘A new *covenant*,’ He has made the first obsolete” (Hebrews 8:13).

And that takes us back to the opening words of the verse, “You shall not add to the word.” Observing the Law of Moses required that it was to be kept, exactly as it was given. But this is the very thing that Israel did as is recorded throughout the prophets, and as is recorded by Jesus' own words at His time –

“Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:

⁸ ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth,

And honor Me with *their* lips,

But their heart is far from Me.

⁹ And in vain they worship Me,

Teaching *as* doctrines the commandments of men.” Matthew 15:7-9

Both the words of the prophets, and Jesus' words, show that Israel failed in this. They added in words to the word which were not a part of the word, thus violating the word itself...

² (con't) **which I command you,**

The Lord has spoken out the terms of the covenant, and He has relayed through Moses His expectations to the people. This was seen innumerable times in the previous books with the words, “And the Lord spoke to Moses saying.”

From there, Moses would transmit that word to the people. It is the word of the Lord, from the Lord to Moses, and which is then given to the people. However, Moses now says, “which I command you.” What is to be presented is the word of the Lord, and yet it is not the word from the Lord *to* Moses, but the word of the Lord *through* Moses.

Though it is the word of the Lord, it is a completely different way in which the Lord will speak. In Numbers 7, we read –

“Now when Moses went into the tabernacle of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice of One speaking to him from above the mercy seat that *was* on the ark of the Testimony, from between the two cherubim; thus He spoke to him.” Numbers 7:89

When there, we learned that the verb was in a particular form, expressing the reflexive voice where the subject of the verb is both performing and receiving the verbal action. A more literal translation would be “...he heard the voice conversing with him” (Pulpit).

In Exodus 33:11, it said that “the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.” This means that they had open and free discussion. And, in Numbers 12:8, it said that Moses “sees the form of the Lord.”

The Lord conveyed His word to Moses, and Moses then relayed that which he received. But because Moses is speaking in the first person now in Deuteronomy, “which I command you,” it is still divine revelation, but rather than direct revelation “to,” it is divine inspiration “through.”

It is the word of the Lord, and it is not to be added to. This is why the true prophets were not to be stoned to death as if they were violating the covenant, but the false prophets were. A remarkable example of this is found in Jeremiah 26. Jeremiah prophesied to the people words of judgment, they said –

“And the priests and the prophets spoke to the princes and all the people, saying, ‘This man deserves to die! For he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your ears.’” Jeremiah 26:11

However, Jeremiah gave a defense for his words, stating they were, in fact, the word of the Lord and that he was in their hands to do with as they wished. After that, we read –

So the princes and all the people said to the priests and the prophets, “This man does not deserve to die. For he has spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God.”

¹⁷ Then certain of the elders of the land rose up and spoke to all the assembly of the people, saying: ¹⁸ “Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spoke to all the people of Judah, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts:

“Zion shall be plowed *like* a field,
Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins,
And the mountain of the temple
Like the bare hills of the forest.””

¹⁹ Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah ever put him to death? Did he not fear the LORD and seek the LORD’s favor? And the LORD relented concerning the doom which He had pronounced against them. But we are doing great evil against ourselves.” Jeremiah 26:16-19

The prophet Micah was held to be a true prophet of God. In citing Micah, they had a set precedent which could not be denied without denying that he was a prophet. As Jeremiah’s words both confirmed the word of the Law and were also supported by Micah who confirmed the word of the Law, they could not punish Jeremiah without violating the Law of Moses.

² (con’t) **nor take from it,**

There are two things which are to be considered. The first is the performance of what is given. Verse 1 said, “listen to the statutes and judgments.” To listen means more than hearing. It speaks of hearing and acting. For example, in Numbers 15, it said –

“Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners.” Numbers 15:38

In this, there is the possibility of a sin of commission or a sin of omission. If a person made the tassels as instructed, but put a red thread in them, that would be a sin of commission. He purposefully disobeyed the precept. But if he made the tassels and

forgot to put in a blue thread, it would be a sin of omission. Both are violations of the law.

But there is another aspect of the law which is what is now spoken of here, and it is what we have been addressing. There is adding to the law that which is not law, or there is taking away from the law that which is law.

Jeroboam, in order to have the people worship in Israel rather than in Judah, made two golden calves for the people to present their sacrifices and offerings to. He added that which was not law.

King Ahaz, on the other hand, took away the burnt altar made by Moses, replacing it with another, one of pagan design. He both took away from the law that which was mandated, and he added that which was not.

Moses is telling the people to not add to, or take away from, that which he is instructing them, meaning purposeful manipulation of the law. This was so...

² (con't) **that you may keep the commandments**

If there was an addition to the law, they could not rightly keep the law. If there was a taking away from the law, they could not rightly keep the law. But in leaving the law – as given by the Lord, either to or through the prophet of God – the people could then rightly keep the commandments.

From that point, it would be up to the people to not commit violations of the law and to not omit doing the commandments of the law. But if the law is manipulated, the people could not successfully do either. The law is God's revelation of Himself, and it was to be treated as such. As Moses says, they are commandments...

² (con't) **of the LORD your God**

Despite being conveyed from Moses to the people, they are ultimately words which form the word of the Lord. And, that the words of the later prophets are a part of that same word is obvious.

The Lord spoke through them His continued revelation to the people, and the words of those prophets carried the same weight and authority as that of Moses, because Moses was not the source of his words, just as the prophets were not the source of their

words. In both, they are the words of the Lord God. This is certain based on Jesus' own words –

“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. ¹⁸ For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. ¹⁹ Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

-Matthew 5:17-19

Jesus refers to the Law and the Prophets, placing them on equal authority. He then confirms this by combining them into one thought – “one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law.” The word of the Lord to Moses is law. The word of the Lord through Moses is law. And the word of the Lord to and through the prophets is law. For now, these are the words of the Lord through Moses, as he says...

² (con't) **which I command you.**

Moses had the authority to do so because these are the words of the Lord. However, that authority did not end with his death. Rather, it was a word binding upon Israel even at Jesus' time. When a question of law arose, Jesus would appeal to the law, asking “What did Moses command you?” (Mark 10:3). Also, He told the people to do what the scribes and Pharisees instructed because they sat in Moses' seat (Matthew 23:2).

The final authority of the Law was Moses, representative of the law, even if the words were of later prophets. This is because the law is one codified body.

Before we go on now to verse 3, you might wonder why this is so important. Why go through all of this detailed analysis over something so simply stated? It is because one must hang his hat somewhere.

One can hang his hat on Moses and thus be obligated to Moses – wholly and entirely. This is the weight and the penalty of the law. No man may add to it, and no man may subtract from it. If one desires the law, he must live and die by the law –

“And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. ⁴ You have become estranged from Christ, you who *attempt to be justified by law*; you have fallen from grace.” Galatians 5:3, 4

Or, one can come to Christ, find life in His fulfillment of the law, and receive His grace and mercy, as provided to under the law – of which He embodies, as we see in John 1:16, 17 –

“And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”

This is not an arbitrary, haphazard, way of spending Sunday morning. Rather, it is an encounter with the God of the universe and what His expectations are for fallen man, because His expectations are based on His eternal, unchanging nature.

Any violation of the law is reason for condemnation, but through the law mercy could – at times – be given. At others, the just, righteous, and holy standard of God was to be meted out to the people for their willful disobedience of His word...

*Keep the commandments of the Lord your God
This is what you are asked to do
To reject this is thinking that is flawed
These words are life and blessing for you*

*And to every word, you are to pay heed
Not missing a single precept, because they all apply
In the doing of them, life has been decreed
So be sure to cross every “t” and dot every “i”*

*But be sure not to miss what I am telling you
There is one precept you are surely not to miss
When you fail to do what you have been told to do
Come to my Son, and Him you shall kiss*

*In Him it is all accomplished and done for you
Come to Him and be reconciled to Me; so, you shall do*

II. Be Careful to Observe Them (verses 3-7)

³Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Baal Peor;

To continue the chiasm, which is hidden in these verses, Moses now gives a concrete example of what violating the law calls for. He takes Israel back to what occurred in

Numbers 25. Something which was still fresh on their memories, because it only happened a short time earlier.

In this, he says, *enekhem ha'root*, "your eyes that are seeing." It is present tense, plural. The events occurred within the time of law, the plan is set, it is unfolding, and those under the law were active participants. And this was at a time when all of the previous generation had died, except for Moses, Joshua, and Caleb.

What occurred was with the new generation – those who were set to leave Kadesh, head towards Canaan, and eventually enter into the Land of Promise. But along the way, they were seduced to worship the Baal of Peor through sexual sin on a large scale. It happened, and one can assume it is exactly what is expected of Israel in the near future.

A temple will be built, the people will live under this covenant, and they will suffer the consequences of violating what this covenant demands. Although we are not there yet, a portion of the people of Israel today can be expected to play the harlot through sexual sin – maybe it will be at the annual gay parade in Tel Aviv. And the nation will suffer the consequences of their actions.

This isn't idle speculation. The past can be expected to be called forward, and that which has been will be again. Israel was given an example of apostasy leading to death, and it can be expected that they will again be given that same example.

When it comes, it will be to remind them that they, as a collective people, are bound to the covenant... or they can come to Christ and be relieved of its burden in Him.

Moses says it is "what the Lord did." A plague from the Lord came upon the people because of their harlotry and turning from the law which governed them. In turning from the law, they turned from the Lord. And in doing so, he says...

^{3 (con't)} **for the LORD your God has destroyed from among you all the men who followed Baal of Peor.**

The events of Peor culminated in the death of twenty-four thousand through the sword and through plague. If this is an event to be repeated once the temple rites begin again, and this is mere speculation, Israel can expect another plague in those who openly sin in some idolatrous and sexual way.

Again, something like the gay parades in Tel Aviv could spawn a sudden plague of death by those who participate in them. But even if this doesn't happen, the fact that it has occurred in Israel, and that it is recorded in the law, is sufficient to apprise Israel that they are bound under this law of penalty, punishment, and death.

However, in contrast to those who sinned...

⁴ But you who held fast to the LORD your God *are* alive today, every one of you.

Here, the word of the Lord is equated directly to the Lord. Moses says, *v'atem ha'debeqim Yehovah elohekhem* – “And you, the clinging ones to Yehovah your God.” It is by violating the law that the people died. It is by not violating the law that the people did not die. And yet, it says they clung to the Lord. The Lord, and the word of the Lord, cannot be separated. What He says is a reflection of who He is.

Further, there is a difference between living and being granted life. The law cannot grant life unless one does, and continues to do, the things of the law – perfectly. However, the law can (and does) bring death. In failing to observe the law, death is assured. This is what is being referred to here.

These people did not die, but it does not mean that they have been granted eternal life. Under the Law of Moses, this is impossible. One must be brought out from under the bondage of the law in order to be granted eternal life.

This is stated by John Lange. Understanding that the law cannot give life, he says that this verse only “points to the kernel of all fulfilling of the law, as a living union with the Lawgiver Himself, from which springs, as here, its fruit, life, and life enduring.” It is what Paul writes of in Romans 5 –

“Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, ²¹ so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 5:20-21

⁵ “Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to *them* in the land which you go to possess.

The words of this verse pick up the theme presented in verse 1. Putting the verses side by side will show you this –

* Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers is giving you.

* Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to *them* in the land which you go to possess.

First, he uses the same word here as was introduced there, and which is translated as “teach” and “taught.” It is *lamad*, coming from a primitive root signifying “to goad.” One uses a goad to prod an animal along.

Moses is thus using the word of the Lord to prod the people. However, in verse 1, it was stated as an ongoing act – “which I teach you to observe.” Here in verse 5, he says it in the past tense, “I have taught you.” Why would he do that?

He then uses the same word, *laasot*, that he used in verse 1. It signifies “to do.” Moses taught the people the statutes and judgments so that they could do them.

However, in verse 1, he said, “that you may live, and go in and possess the land.” Here, he leaves off “that you may live” and he says *b’qerev ha’aretz asher atem ba’im shamah l’rishtah* – “in the midst of the land which you go there to possess.”

In verse 1, Moses used a word, *maan*, which signified that the purpose, or goal, of observing the statutes and judgments was two-fold – 1) to live, and 2) to possess the land. He leaves that off now because he is speaking of those who actually cross the Jordan and who will be in the midst of the land.

This is why he changed it from “teach” to “taught.” He is speaking to them as if they have entered and are in the midst of the land. If the purpose of teaching was to live and to enter the land, then when they are in the land, what was taught should be adhered to.

The typology is not to be missed. Moses, representing the law, will be dead when they enter. Joshua, typical of Christ as the leader who replaces the law, will lead them in. They will pass through the Jordan, meaning passing through the life, death, burial, and

resurrection of Christ, and thus they will have life, and they will dwell in the midst of the land – meaning they will have entered the promise.

This is why Moses speaks of it as a done deal, not one which has a purpose or goal, and that is why he doesn't say, "that you may live." In type, life is granted in Christ – pictured by dwelling in Canaan. However, this is only in type.

The group who is going in will fail to act in the manner expected. In fact, Ezra uses almost the exact same wording, "the land which you are entering to possess" (Ezra 9:11), when speaking of the words of law which Israel failed to heed. In their failure, they were exiled, in their return from exile, they again failed to heed.

This is one of the main purposes of the Old Testament after the giving of the law. It is to show that Israel did not – and indeed could not – meet the demands of the law. Encouragement didn't work, punishment didn't work, and the attempts of people like Ezra and others to do their best at simply honoring the Lord through their efforts under the law didn't work.

Israel didn't learn, they continued to not learn, and to this day, their inability to learn this lesson has cost them greatly. Though they entered the land, they did not enter their rest. And today, back in the land once again, they have not entered their rest.

For now, and having left off "that you may live" from his words, Moses provides, instead, another reason for observing the law...

⁶Therefore be careful to observe *them*;

The Hebrew is more specific – *u-shemartem va'asitem* – "And you shall keep, and do them." One can keep and not do – "This is our law, but I am not going to do it." Or one can "not" keep and yet do – "There is no law that says I should do this, but I am doing it because it is right."

Israel, however, was given the law, they were to keep the law, and they were to do the law. This goes for common person as well as judge. A person could not do the law, and a judge could fail to punish him for that. Or, a person could not do the law, and a judge could punish him for that. In the case of the latter, the law is observed, and it is kept through the judge's actions.

This is especially seen and highlighted in the times of the kings. When the people were without restraint, and the kings likewise failed to restrain the people, the Lord would intervene to judge because the laws were not kept.

However, at times, kings would come in and take the necessary action to correct the people and the Lord would bless the land. Kings are known in the record by their conduct before the law.

A good king might have the words “and he did right in the sight of the Lord,” recorded in his record. A bad king might have the words, “and he did evil in the sight of the Lord,” recorded in his record. At times, David was used as the standard, and a king’s record might say, “he did right in the sight of the Lord, as his father David had done.” These and other variations are given based on one overarching rule – that of the law...

⁶ (con’t) **for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes,**

In keeping the law, there is – in the law – a promise of blessing from the Lord. When one is blessed, he prospers. There is contentment, wealth, abundance, and so on. When a person is seen in such a state, it is recognized that he must have wisdom and understanding.

In understanding this, the source of that wisdom and understanding is then observed. It logically follows that when a person prospers, the reason for it will want to be seen. In Israel’s prosperity, the framework of law which established them would then be heard and understood.

On the other hand, possessing the law, and yet not doing the law, is of little value. It further shows no wisdom at all. In fact, exactly the opposite is true. Israel had the law, and they – more often than not – failed to do the law.

The problem with this is that in the law are listed punishments for not doing the law. Those punishments came upon the people and the nations were quick to recognize why this had come about. The Lord even warned them, through Solomon, of exactly this –

“But if you or your sons at all turn from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, ⁷ then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out

of My sight. Israel will be a proverb and a byword among all peoples. ⁸ And *as for* this house, *which* is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and will hiss, and say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?' ⁹ Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore the LORD has brought all this calamity on them.'" 1 Kings 9:6-9

Either way, the law sets the parameters for how the peoples would view Israel. And the conduct of Israel was guided by the conduct of her leaders. Moses now conveys to them that it is the law, and it is obedience to the law, that will convey a positive image of Israel to the nations...

^{6 (con't)} **and say, 'Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people.'**

The psalms speak of the law of the Lord, of the blessings that follow in keeping them, and in the wisdom that is displayed in doing so –

"The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple;
⁸ The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes;
⁹ The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether.
¹⁰ More to be desired *are they* than gold,
Yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.
¹¹ Moreover by them Your servant is warned,
And in keeping them there is great reward." Psalm 19:7-11

Here and elsewhere, this is stated. And throughout the times of the kings, this is validated. This is especially so with Solomon where he is set as the epitome of wisdom and understanding. In this state, the Queen of Sheba sought him out and experienced the truth of what Moses now conveys.

How Israel is viewed by the people of the world is based on this one overarching premise. No one can deny the moral uprightness and greatness of the law. Nations around the world have incorporated portions of it into their own laws.

But the law in and of itself, despite being great, is not what conveys greatness. Rather, adherence to it does. When it is not adhered to, the opposite is true. Israel's identity is wholly tied up in the law. And, unfortunately, Israel's failure to adhere to their own law is what brought them scoffing from the nations, exile, and being viewed as pariahs in their places of exile.

But, in their times of obedience, the law provided them something that no other nation had...

⁷ “For what great nation *is there* that has God so near to it,

The word *elohim*, or “God,” is a masculine plural noun. It can be translated as “God,” “a god,” or “gods,” depending on the context. Here, the word *elohim*, and the adjective *qerovim*, or “near,” are both plural. Therefore, this could be read, “that has God near to it,” “that has a god near to it,” or “that has gods near to it.”

Moses could be saying that there is one God, and that he is especially near to Israel – unlike any other nation. Or, he could be mocking the nations concerning their false gods.

What seems likely is that it should be rendered “a god,” or “gods.” It appears from the next clause that by using the name Yehovah, He is set in contrast to what is stated in this clause.

Either way, the statement is defined by the words “near to it.” No other nation was as close to God, or “gods,” as was Israel, and no other nation had a god or gods that were truly near to it. They were false gods that could not come near. Instead, the nations had to be the ones to draw near. But the Lord, in relation to Israel, was always near. That is explained by Moses saying...

^{7 (con't)} as the LORD our God *is* to us,

ka'Yehovah elohenu – “as Yehovah our God.” The contrast appears to show that the previous clause is referring to false gods. Otherwise, one would think that Moses would say, *ha'elohim*, or “the God,” as is seen at times. By not using the article there, and by naming Yehovah and calling Him “our God,” he has formed a complete and total contrast to the other nations.

They had no god near, but Israel had Yehovah near...

***7 (fin) for whatever *reason* we may call upon Him?**

b'kal qareenu elav – “in all we may call upon Him.” These words form the center of the chiasm and they demonstrate that the greatness of Israel is tied directly to the Lord. But the word of the Lord is a reflection of who the Lord is. The two cannot be separated.

Therefore, the greatness of Israel rests solely on their adherence to the word of the Lord, meaning the law. The Lord is near to Israel only when they draw near to Him through obedience to His word. And this, then, brings us directly back to what was discussed in verse 2.

The law, meaning the word of the Lord, clearly and unambiguously spoke of the coming Messiah. And that coming Messiah was clearly revealed in its words. When Christ came, He told them as much –

“Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is *one* who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. ⁴⁶ For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. ⁴⁷ But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?” John 5:45-47

Moses wrote about Him, the prophets wrote about Him, and that is because they were inspired, by the Lord, to write about Him. At this time, there is no prophetic revelation from the Lord to Israel because Israel has rejected the Source of prophetic revelation.

If the Lord is near to Israel at this time, it is only in a protective sense, not in the friendly, relational sense that Moses speaks of here. His word says that they have seven more years of this law – the Law of Moses – ahead of them. That is intended to bring them into the New Covenant, and it will come to pass.

At that time, Israel will be as close to their God as the people of God, meaning the church, have been for the past two millennia. Moses asked, what nation has a god, or gods, so near to them? The answer begs a negative response – “There is no such nation.”

However, through Christ Jesus, a people, even if not a nation, has the God – the true God – near to them. Paul speaks of that in Romans 10 when speaking of those who are the saved of the Lord through the blood of Christ. Citing Deuteronomy 32, he says, “I will provoke you to jealousy by *those who are* not a nation” (Romans 10:19).

While Israel has groaned under the punishment of having rejected the Lord, who is the embodiment of this law, the people of the world have streamed to Christ Jesus. He has been, and He remains, as close to us as the simple call out of a prayer under our breath.

When we need comfort, we can talk to Him and He will provide it. When we need reassurance, He is there to give it. And when we need to lay our hearts out to Him for the things we have done wrong, He is there to listen and to forgive.

Israel has missed this because they have missed Jesus. But the church will be called home, the focus of attention will be on Israel, and they will be brought into that sweet fellowship with their God that they failed to receive in times past. This is so that for whatever reason, all will be able to “call on Him.”

Closing Verse: *“Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. ²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰ For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, ³¹ even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. ³² For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.” Romans 11:28-32*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 4:8-14 *Something to consider, ladies and gentlemen...* (That They May Teach Their Children) (14th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

For Whatever Reason We May Call Upon Him

You shall not add to the word which I command you
Nor take from it, that you may keep
The commandments of the LORD your God
Which I command you, as my obedient sheep

Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Baal Peor
For the LORD your God has destroyed, for sure
From among you all the men
Who followed Baal of Peor

But you who held fast to the LORD your God
Are alive today, every one of you still on this earth does trod

Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments
Just as the LORD my God commanded me
That you should act according to them in the land
Which you go to possess, from the Jordan to the Great Sea

Therefore be careful to observe them
For this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight
Of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say
“Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people
-----they have got things set just right

For what great nation is there
That has God so near to it, like a man’s own limb
As the LORD our God is to us
For whatever reason we may call upon Him?

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 4:8-14 **(That They May Teach Their Children)**

In Homestead, Florida, there is a place called the Coral Castle. It was built by a Latvian immigrant to America named Edward Leedskalnin. He was engaged to a sixteen-year-old girl, but one day before the wedding, she bailed on him.

Putting that life behind, in the early 1920s, he moved to America and eventually came to Florida. There, he began working on his home, which was a monument to the lost love of his life.

Ed was only 5 feet tall and weighed around 100 pounds, and yet, the house he built includes blocks of Oolite Limestone, meaning fossilized coral, over 25 feet tall, and weighing over 30 tons. Thus, some of the stones are taller than those in Stonehenge and heavier than the heaviest stone in the great pyramid of Giza.

The entry gate for the house weighs 9 tons and could be spun by a slight push by a child with a single finger. It is carved so that it fits within a quarter of an inch of the walls. In 1986, it stopped working, and so a crew was called in to repair it.

It took six men and a 50-short-ton crane to pull it out. After repairing it, it was set back in place. That lasted about 20 years and it had to be repaired again, but it has never rotated as precisely as it once did.

It has never been discovered how he was able to do the work he did, and his secrets died with him. A lesson we can learn here is that great things must be passed on to another generation, or they will die off and be lost – maybe to never be recovered again.

Text Verse: *“But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,²² even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:21-23*

In our verses today, both the Lord and Moses note the importance of parents teaching the children what they know concerning the words of the Lord. If we find it a loss to think of not knowing how Ed Leedskalnin did what he did, how much more of a loss should it be considered when the word of the Lord is not passed on to the next generation!

Or maybe even worse than that would be incorrectly passing on the word of the Lord. Who knows, someone who was not trained in the word of the Lord might find a copy of it, read it, and come to find Him in it. That actually will be seen in today's sermon.

But if someone is incorrectly taught the word of the Lord, the chances are likely that his doctrine will never be corrected. This is evidenced all over the world in people who learned incorrectly, and who continue on in the incorrect pursuit of the word for the rest of their lives.

Let us be sure to not only pass on the word of the Lord, but let us be absolutely sure that we are passing it on properly – to the glory of God who gave it to us in the first place. Such truths as these are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Gather the People to Me (verses 8-10)

The final verse of the previous sermon asked, "For what great nation *is there* that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God *is* to us, for whatever *reason* we may call upon Him?" That verse forms the middle of the ongoing chiasm which began in verse 3:25 and which will end in verse 4:22.

Moses just asked which nation has God so near to it. It was a rhetorical question which demanded the answer, "No such nation exists." Starting off where we left off, Moses now continues in this same line of thought by asking another rhetorical question...

⁸ And what great nation *is there* that has *such* statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law

Moses asked concerning the nearness of God to the people, noting that for whatever reason, they might call upon Him. Now, he asks concerning the "statutes and righteous judgments." What nation possesses any that are comparable to that which is contained in their law? Again, it demands a negative answer. "There is no such nation."

The question is dependent on two different thoughts. The first is concerning the statutes and judgments which the Lord first commanded Moses. That was seen in verse 4:5. There Moses said, "Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the Lord my God commanded me."

The second thought is that it is those same laws that Moses is giving to teach the people. That was seen in verse 4:1, saying, “listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe.” Both rhetorical questions are given in relation to the Lord God.

The Lord is Israel’s God, and He is near to them as a people. And the statutes and judgments find their source in the Lord God. Both of these together are what make them a great nation.

Israel cannot claim the nearness of God as a right to call upon Him unless they acknowledge – meaning hear and obey – the statutes and judgments which He has given. They are a reflection of Him, and a condition of a right relationship with Him.

The two questions asked by Moses show that the greatness of a nation is not truly based on size, military power, wealth, or any other such thing. Rather, it is based on its relationship with God and on its form and structure of government – meaning its statutes and judgments which form the basis of it – both of which are available to Israel.

At times, Israel had great military power, and Israel also had the greatest of wealth – especially under Solomon – but neither of these defined them, and neither of these could save them. Only in holding to the Lord and not false idols, and only in observance of His law and not in deviating from it, could Israel be considered a great nation. Moses says, it is these statutes and judgments...

⁸ (con’t) **which I set before you this day?**

liphnekhem – “before you.” It is second person plural. Moses is setting these things before the people. There was a time when the Law of Moses did not exist. The nations set up kingdoms and governments, and they conducted their affairs according to their own set guidelines. Many of them had noble laws, some of which mirror the laws found in the Law of Moses.

The expectations of God are often natural laws which are known even to those who do not have the law. Paul shows this is true in Romans 2 –

“...for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, ¹⁵ who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness,

and between themselves *their* thoughts accusing or else excusing *them*)”

-Romans 2:14, 15

However, not all of what God expects of man is found in nature. And further, with the introduction of sin, corruption of what is right is introduced into even what is evident from nature. Thus, the otherwise noble laws of the nations contained corruptions of what is right, and they also lacked the fulness of what God expected.

This would not be the case with the Mosaic Law. The laws of the nations could not provide life. They could only constrain or guide the people during life. The Law of Moses, however, was given to give life, if it was adhered to. Hence, Moses implored them to be attentive to what he set before them...

⁹ Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself,

raq hishamer lekha u-shemor naphshekha meod – “Only take heed to yourself, and watch your soul exceedingly.” First, this is a double imperative, using the same Hebrew word, *shamar*, twice. Secondly, the words are second person singular. Each individual, forming a collective whole, is to do so.

They are to watch their actions, and they are to exceedingly confine the actions of their souls. A good parallel to this thought is found in 1 Timothy 6 –

“O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane *and* idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge.” 1 Timothy 6:2

Thirdly, Moses will again use the word *shamar* in verse 4:15 in conjunction with the nature of God. No image bears His likeness, and therefore there is to be no image made attempting to reveal any likeness of anything which is to then be worshipped.

It is the soul of the man which is tempted to fall into idolatry, and so each man was to carefully guard his soul from doing so. This is what Moses begins to speak of now...

^{9 (con't)} lest you forget the things your eyes have seen,

Although all but Joshua and Caleb of those twenty and above had died in the wilderness, those nineteen and younger were spared. Those twenty and above had seen all of the

events – from the Exodus through until arrival at the border of Canaan, and yet they forgot what their eyes had beheld.

However, at the time of Moses' words, those who were around forty-five, up to those who were in their late fifties would have vivid memories of the Exodus, of the giving of the law, of the coming of the manna for the first time, of the water flowing from the rock, of enough quail coming to the camp to feed them all for a month, and on and on and on.

Moses, however, will focus only on the giving of the law for his words here. It is that display, and the events which surrounded it, that established them as the Lord's people under His rule and authority.

Their young, impressionable eyes would have seen those things. And in seeing, Moses implores them to not forget. And not forgetting was to be based on an active process of remembering by keeping and guarding themselves through observance of the laws that same Lord, through Moses, set before them.

^{9 (con't)} **and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life.**

In the Bible, when the heart is mentioned this way, it never speaks of the organ which pumps blood, nor does it speak of the seat of emotions as we use it today. Rather, it speaks of the place of reason and intellect. The words here may have been on the mind of the psalmist when he wrote –

“Your word I have hidden in my heart,
That I might not sin against You.” Psalm 119:11

Each individual was to take heed to himself, and to watch over his soul diligently in order to remember the precepts of the law. If any of you has ever learned another language, you know that unless you actively maintain that language, you will forget it – very quickly. This is what Moses is telling the people.

“If you don't actively pay heed to the law, and if you do not actively watch over yourself and your actions in relation to the law, the precepts of the law will depart from your mind, and they will be absolutely gone. You will not even have a memory of them unless you are once again schooled in them.”

Further, a knowledge of the law, like a knowledge of maintaining a free society itself, is not congenital. It must be carefully guarded and passed on...

^{9 (con't)} **And teach them to your children and your grandchildren,**

v'hodatam l'vanekha v'livne vanekha – “and teach them to your sons, and to your sons' sons.” This is the first time that Israel is instructed to not only pay heed to the word of the Lord but to actively pass that word on to their children after them. However, the same thought will be seen again several more times throughout Deuteronomy.

If a person fails to keep guard over what he knows, he will forget it, having it crowded out by all kinds of other things that come in and replace whatever that knowledge is. And, even if that person actively and carefully guards his knowledge, unless he passes it on to those who come after him, that knowledge will perish with him.

Further, this isn't just something that will happen to each individual. Rather, it is something that will happen to the entire nation collectively as well. Even though spoken in the singular, it is referring to the nation as a whole.

Unless the law is remembered and heeded by those under it, and unless it is taught to those who come after them, it will die from both the individual and the collective memory.

While Moses is speaking these words, his coming replacement, Joshua, is sitting right there with him. And yet, we read this in Judges 2 –

“When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.” Judges 2:10

Within one generation of the exhortation by Moses, the very thing that he implores for them to do is the very thing that they failed to do. An entire generation did not know the Lord, nor those things that He had done, because the parents failed to protect, keep, and pass on that which they knew.

This was corrected, from time to time, through the Lord's chastening hand, or His active intervention more than for any other reason. But no sooner would they turn back to the Lord, then they would fall away again. One generation to the next, failing to instill in their children the things that would keep them from His wrath.

Eventually, the knowledge of His statutes and judgments was so far removed from them, that they didn't even know that they existed. This is seen at the time of King Josiah and the entire chapter must be read to understand both the situation, and the ramifications of what transpired because of it. (2 Kings 22).

Moses' is imploring them to do these things now, because the Lord had already done so forty years earlier. He gave them a display which was intended to impress His glory upon their minds, and which was then intended to be passed on as a truthful account to each subsequent generation...

¹⁰ ***especially concerning the day you stood before the LORD your God in Horeb,***

The words "especially concerning" are not in the original, and they are an unnecessary insert. Moses is referring to the law, the Source of the law, and beginning of the giving of that law.

It is this Day in Horeb that is the basis of everything Moses is relaying concerning the law. The people stood before the Lord, and they became a people under the law at that time. In verse 9, Moses referred to *ha'davarim*, the things, that their eyes had seen. Now, he explains what those "things" are that he was referring to.

It is important for us to remember that the giving of the law at Sinai came at the same time of year that the descending of the Holy Spirit came to the church – Pentecost. The two occurrences at this time, spanned by almost fifteen hundred years, was to teach us a lesson. It is a lesson detailed throughout the New Testament.

In Romans, Paul says that the law, which was intended to bring life, actually brought death. Later, Paul refers to this in 2 Corinthians –

"Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some *others*, epistles of commendation to you or *letters* of commendation from you? ² You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; ³ clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, *that is*, of the heart. ⁴ And we have such trust through Christ toward God. ⁵ Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as *being* from ourselves, but our sufficiency *is* from God, ⁶ who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." 2 Corinthians 3:1-6

Again, in Galatians 4, Paul compares the two covenants and calls the Covenant at Sinai bondage, but he says those of the New Covenant are free. In the book of Hebrews, the author time and again speaks of the superiority of the New Covenant over the old, and in Hebrews 12, he specifically refers to the account which Moses will now remember.

We don't want to get our minds too far away from these New Covenant truths as we evaluate what Moses will say. This is because the very covenant which was promised to be life for the people turned out to be death for them.

It is not that the fault is with the law, but with man's inability to live by what the law says. The initial giving of this law is what forms the basis of the entire law, and it is that initial giving that Moses appeals to...

¹⁰ (con't) **when the LORD said to me, 'Gather the people to Me,**

This is a condensed version of what is stated in Exodus 19. There, the people were told to consecrate themselves, including not coming near their wives, meaning intimately, and they were to wash their clothes. After the consecration, the Lord was to appear to them on the third day atop Sinai...

¹⁰ (con't) **and I will let them hear My words,**

The words here tie in with "the things" their eyes saw which Moses referred to in verse 9. The word he used there, *ha'davarim*, literally means "the words." When hearing, one doesn't actually see the words, but to us things are made up of words, and so our minds can make a mental picture of things we hear.

The Lord here says *v'ashmiem eth devarai* – "and I will let them hear my words." In the Bible, and in both testaments, the words "see," "heart," and "eyes" are used again and again in the same verse. The heart discerns and understands what the eyes see. And sometimes, the eyes see without visually beholding something.

Here we have the Lord, coming to reveal Himself to Israel in two ways – 1) through His spoken word, and 2) in a terrifying display of His glory through sight and sound. This was to impress upon the people that the law, which is being given, did – in fact – proceed from the Lord.

Thus, as much as the sight and sound revealed the power of the Lord, the words revealed the nature of the Lord. The people will not see the Lord, but the words He speaks will convey to them images nonetheless.

It is these mental images that come with the commandments that will – at the same time – be intended for convicting them of holding fast to what they are told, and yet also bring to mind possibilities of breaking the very laws they are to hear.

Paul explains that, in detail, in Romans 7, and it is what we will consider in the verses ahead. The Lord, at the giving of the law, understood this. Because of this – and known to us now, but unknown to Israel at the time – the law is only an interim step in the panorama of redemptive history.

Thus, despite the next words of the Lord, which seem like the purpose of the law, the actual purpose of the giving of the law was to identify this problem in us, to teach us that it is the case, and then – by taking that information – it is intended to lead us by the hand directly to the cross of Christ where we can find grace. Not knowing this at the time, the Lord next says...

^{10 (con't)} **that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and *that* they may teach their children.'**

The word *lamad* (meaning learning, teaching, instructing) that was introduced in 4:1 and which was repeated in 4:5 is used again here two times – learn and teach. As we have seen, it comes from a primitive root signifying “to goad,” which is what is done to prod an animal along. The Lord intends to prod the people through this law to 1) fear Him, and 2) to teach their children.

But this prodding isn't confined to the land of Israel. Instead of the word *ha'ertz* or “the land,” He says, *ha'adamah*, or “the earth.” Though almost interchangeable at times, the word *adamah* speaks of the ground itself, without distinction to a specific location.

When under the law, wherever one goes on the earth, he remains under the law. The physical boundaries of the lands of the earth do not end the spiritual confines of the burden of the law.

The same is true with the generations under the law. The burden of the law does not end with the death of the parent. It continues on to the children. Thus, whether the

children are taught the law or not, the burden of the law remains. Therefore, the Lord includes them in His words now, both in word and in a visible manifestation...

*In the hearing of these commands, I find no hope
Even from the first one I was done in for sure
I used to think I was pretty great, but I see I am just a dope
Compared to God's standard, I am certainly impure*

*I tremble to think of my guilt, how it weighs me down
I fear to face God on my own deeds for righteousness
I once thought God would at me smile, but no! It will be a frown
I bear such heavy guilt, My God! I am such a mess*

*Oh, but then I heard of Jesus, sweet Jesus
He lived the life that I could never ever live
And He gave it up for sinners like me! Yes, for all of us
In exchange for my life of sin, His perfect life He did give*

*Oh! What a Savior! What a friend He is to me!
Oh! My Lord Jesus, the One who has set me free!*

II. Darkness, Cloud, and Obscurity (verses 11-14)

¹¹ “Then you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain,

Exodus 19:17 says, “And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.” It can be assumed that this means “all the people,” including women and children.

The entire congregation was brought out and stood before the Lord. Before this, however, they were given explicit instructions –

“You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, ‘Take heed to yourselves *that* you do *not* go up to the mountain or touch its base. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. ¹³ Not a hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot *with an arrow*; whether man or beast, he shall not live.’ When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come near the mountain.” Exodus 19:12, 13

That alone would have been terrifying to the people, but the awesome sight they beheld would have been even more so...

11 (con't) and the mountain burned with fire to the midst of heaven,

The Hebrew is much more expressive, saying, “and the mountain was burning with fire to the heart of the heavens.” It is as if a continuous raging burning reached up beyond the eyesight of the people. The display of a mountain actually burning would be beyond the ability of the people to mentally grasp.

The thought of the fire here is that of judgment burning up everything that approaches it. The law is given, and thus infractions of it bear a deserved penalty. It is the opposite of the picture seen in the coming of Christ –

“Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”

-John 4:13, 14

Though the law burns with fire, that can be quenched through the fountain of water which comes through the grace of God in Christ. But at the giving of the law, there was more. The fire came...

11 (con't) with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness.

khoshek anan v'araphel – “darkness, cloud, and obscurity.” The imagery here is that of being completely unable to see. The Lord, and everything about Him, is totally hidden from the eyes. This, even though they strain with all intent to obtain the slightest view. It is exactly the opposite of what John writes about concerning Christ –

“And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.”

-John 1:5

The idea of the word John uses is that the darkness is unable to overtake the light. Though the law brings complete darkness, the grace of Christ brings complete light. Paul speaks of that in 2 Corinthians 4 –

“For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2 Corinthians 4:6

Until the coming of Christ, however, the people were faced with the overwhelming yoke of knowing that the same Lord who presented Himself in judgment and total obscurity did so with accompanying words...

¹² And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire.

The fire of judgment, with implied ceaseless and complete destruction, is where the Lord speaks from. The eyes were unable to see anything in the gloom and darkness which would allow them to know the Lord behind it.

Instead, they only knew Him through the words of law which bring forth death, and that from the midst of the fire of judgment. What a terrible prospect to consider. The display resulted in what I mentioned a few minutes ago. From Hebrews 12 –

“For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, ¹⁹ and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard *it* begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. ²⁰ (For they could not endure what was commanded: ‘And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow.’ ²¹ And so terrifying was the sight *that* Moses said, ‘I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.’). Hebrews 12:18-21

The people were terrified at what they beheld. And even their leader, who represented them before the Lord was left utterly afraid at the giving of the law. What a marked difference to that which Christ left His people at the giving of the New Covenant –

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” John 14:27

¹² (con’t) You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; you only heard a voice.

The lesson of the law is found in these words. The law speaks, it speaks words of bondage, expected judgment, and that – then – leading to death. The only place to appeal a violation of the law is to either precepts within it, or to the unseen Lord who gave it in the first place.

The Lord will tell them in the coming verses that because they saw no form, they were not to make any image of anything in order to worship it, serve it, petition it, pray to it, or call it a god. A person under the law was only to worship the unseen Lord.

But for those after the first generation, this means a completely new dynamic is introduced. Without seeing the Lord, or a representation of the Lord, one must have faith that the Lord actually exists.

Such a state will lead to one of a few inevitable paths a person can follow. The first is to believe in the Lord and to follow Him in some measure – be it wholeheartedly, partially, or failingly. The second would be to not believe in the Lord and ignore the commandments of the law. Another would be to not believe in the Lord and obey the law anyway. And so on.

None of these are unlike the state of the believer in Christ today. We have not seen Jesus, and – like those under the law – all we have are the accounts which tell us of what occurred in the past. Either way, whether under the law, or in Christ, the key to a right relationship with the Lord is through faith. David understood this after having violated the law –

“For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give *it*;
You do not delight in burnt offering.
¹⁷ The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit,
A broken and a contrite heart—
These, O God, You will not despise.” Psalm 51:16, 17

The law demanded sacrifices for sin, but David knew that a sacrifice was only as good as the heart attitude behind it. Thus, we can see that the same day that the law was introduced a spirit of self-worth, because of the law, was also introduced.

For those who looked to the law for their justification, it wasn't because they took to heart the terrible display of judgment which came with the giving of the law. If they did, they too would quake and fear at their infractions of it. Rather, they look to the allowances within the law, or even beyond the law, for their justification.

“Yes, I may have sinned, but this goat will take care of that. And further, the more perfectly I adhere to the law, the more God will favor me.”

This is the principal error of what we might call Pharasaim. It comes from the self-righteous attitude which springs forth from going through the motions of the law without a care about having offended the One who gave the law in the first place. It is what Jesus stated to the people in Luke 18:10-14 –

“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ ¹³And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ ¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Whether the Pharisee believed in God at all or not, he did not look to God as the source of his righteousness. Rather, he looked to the law, additions to the law, and his observance of those things as his righteousness. The tax collector, like David, looked beyond the law to the Giver of it. “This law cannot forgive me, but You can.”

Unfortunately, the same spirit which filled the Pharisee fills much of the church today. The grace of God, and His tender mercies, are set aside by and through law observance. None of us deserve the grace and mercy of God which is found in Christ Jesus. And we prove that point in one of two ways –

- 1) We can trust in Christ and only in Christ for our justification, thus proving that we are saved by Christ.
- 2) We can trust in our adherence to certain precepts within the Law of Moses, thus showing that Christ’s grace does not matter to us.

We cannot have it both ways. The giving of the law of which the Ten Commandments is the basis, demonstrates this to us...

¹³ **So He declared to you His covenant**

Here it says *berito* – “His covenant.” There is no exchange between the Lord and the people. It is solely the Lord’s pronouncement. Nothing can be added to it by them. They are words of law coming from an unseen Source, and in a terrifying display of power.

But the display is not the Lord. The display is simply that – an effect produced by the Lord. But the words are a reflection of the Lord. And, as the words form the covenant, then the covenant itself is a perfect – even if incomplete – reflection of the Lord.

If the people were told to not approach the mountain lest they die, then what a greater horror could be expected if they violated the words of His covenant! This is all the more poignant because these were not mere admonitions – “Try to do these things.” These were unalterable commandments...

13 (con't) **which He commanded you to perform,**

The display of power was to impress upon the people the terror they should feel at violating the covenant. It was spoken by Him, it was imposed upon them, and they were to understand the consequences for failing to adhere.

13 (con't) **the Ten Commandments;**

asereth ha'devarim – “ten the words.” What would happen if the Lord never said, “You shall not murder”? Then murder would not be a violation of the law. And what happens in one’s mind when the words, “You shall not murder” are spoken?

The mind makes a mental image of doing just that. Thus, it shows that we know what murder is. And what is it that we do when we get in an argument with someone and we really hate him. It may be that in our mind, we form an image of killing him, just as we did when we were told to not murder.

This is what Jesus was referring to when He spoke of committing adultery, one of the Ten Words –

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’²⁸ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” Matthew 5:27, 28

This is what the law does. It condemns us through mere thought. And this is what Paul writes about in Romans 7 –

“I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.¹⁰ And the commandment, which *was* to *bring* life, I found

to *bring* death. ¹¹ For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed *me*.” Romans 7:9-11

It is certain that every person standing there receiving the Ten Words did exactly this as the Lord spoke them out. He said, “You shall have no other gods before Me,” and some of the people’s minds went to the gods they had set up in their tent, or to a god they once worshipped in Egypt.

He said, “Honor your father and your mother,” and some of them at that very moment thought in their minds, “My father is a loser and my mother is pathetic.” On down the line of the Ten Words, each one brought to mind a thought which caused some person to violate it, even while he was receiving it.

This is the infection in us known as “sin.” And it is what Paul refers to. The commandment, which was to bring life, brought death because sin took the occasion by the commandment, deceived them, and killed them, even while they stood there receiving them. But it didn’t end there. The commandment which brought death was made permanent...

¹³ (con’t) **and He wrote them on two tablets of stone.**

This is what Paul wrote about in 2 Corinthians 3 – the letter, meaning the tablets of stone, kills. Only the Spirit can grant life. The entire history of Israel is given to show us that we need Christ, and that without Him, we will remain in a state of death.

Stone is unyielding and when something is written on it, there it remains. Thank God for the Stone of Israel, Jesus Christ, by whom those commandments were fulfilled, and whose body was then broken for us so that we might be brought out from such bondage and terror and into new life and a heavenly hope.

¹⁴ **And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments,**

There is an emphasis in the words in regard to Moses – “And me Yehovah commanded at that time.” This is certainly stated this way because of the people’s reaction after hearing the Lord speak out the law –

“Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw *it*, they

trembled and stood afar off. ¹⁹Then they said to Moses, ‘You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.’” Exodus 20:18, 19

The display was sufficient to accomplish its intended goal, and so from then on, Moses was given the words of the Lord which he then passed on to the people as instruction to prod them along.

These statutes and judgments began immediately after that in Exodus 20, and they continued on through Numbers. They now resume once again in the book of Deuteronomy. And this instruction was so...

***14 (fin) that you might observe them in the land which you cross over to possess.**

The intent of these statutes, judgments, commands, ordinances, and so on, was to lead the people through their lives in Canaan. They are a unique and perfect form of instruction – if the people adhered to them. But even from the first days after having crossed the Jordan, they began to violate them.

During the first battle to subdue the land, even during the battle itself, one of the people violated the tenth commandment, coveting, and he also violated other precepts which had been laid down in the forming of the government as well.

This pattern continued all the way throughout the time of the law, and it continued through the time of the coming of Christ as well. And, it continues on in the world today. Where law is given, law is violated. And with the violation of law, there is the imputation of sin.

The only way to be freed from this bondage is to be freed from the law. And in order to be freed from the law, one must be given grace. The law and grace are mutually exclusive. Either one is under law, or he is under grace.

Not only has Israel had innumerable laws laid upon them already, but Moses is going to heap more on them in the many chapters ahead. There is nothing wrong with the law though, Paul says that the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. The problem does not reside in the law. Rather, the problem is in us.

In order to correct this problem, God sent His Son into the world to do what we could not do – live out the law as God expects. The remarkable thing about it is that the law itself proclaims its own ending in Him.

That was seen in our text verse today, and it will be confirmed in our closing verse. For now, please understand that if you are caught up in a church that asks you to come under the precepts of the Law of Moses, you are excluding God's grace by doing so.

Come to God through Christ and be reconciled to Him through His fulfillment of this terrifying law which was given by an infinitely holy God. His justice must be satisfied, and it will either be through Christ's fulfillment of it on your behalf, or your failure of it being reckoned to you. Choose wisely. Choose Christ.

Closing Verse: *"And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."* John 1:16-18

Next Week: Deuteronomy 4:15-24 *Can you shape it with stone, metal, or a wood board? ... (The Form of the Lord) (15th Deuteronomy Sermon)*

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

That They May Teach Their Children

And what great nation is there
That has such statutes and righteous judgments, please do say
As are in all this law
Which I set before you this day?

Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself
Lest you forget the things your eyes have seen; all that has been
And lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life
And teach them to your children and your grandchildren

Especially concerning the day you stood
Before the LORD your God in Horeb, when the LORD said to me
Gather the people to Me
And I will let them hear My words spoken plainly

That they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth
And that they may teach their children
-----of their incomparable worth

Then you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain
And the mountain burned with fire during my address
To the midst of heaven
With darkness, cloud, and thick darkness

And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire
You heard the sound of the words all around
But saw no form
You only heard a voice; one that shook the ground

So He declared to you His covenant
Which He commanded you to perform; these He made known
The Ten Commandments
And He wrote them on two tablets of stone

And the LORD commanded me at that time
To teach you statutes and judgments; to you them I did express
That you might observe them in the land
Which you cross over to possess

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 4:15-24 (The Form of the Lord)

The day I typed this sermon is the day that Florida was removed from lockdown status. Remember that? It seems like eons ago, doesn't it? In the morning, I posted my usual sunrise photo (a really beautiful sky), and I made a comment on it saying –

“Florida is off lockdown. If you're still stuck at home - be adventurous. Get in your car and c'mon down. The weather is here. We wish you were beautiful. Join us at the beach.”

I was thoroughly amazed at the number of negative comments that came in. People horrified that we were freed from the bondage we had been in, and what an unwise decision it was to do this. Others cautiously said, “Be safe, Charlie,” as if I was now going to change my daily routine from what it had been.

But the fact is, I never changed it – even a bit – from before the lockdown, and so there was nothing to change back to. There are all types of bondage in the world. There is forced bondage, there is incarceration, there is self-imposed bondage, and so on. And, within these, there are countless subdivisions.

But the word “bondage” always signifies “not free.” Why anyone would want to continue in the bondage of fear – of a virus which proved as undeadly as a mild flu, or bondage to a government that salivated at the chance of taking away the freedoms of its people? It is hard to figure. But this is what was evident on the morning of 4 May 2020.

Text Verse: *“For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.” Romans 8:15-17*

Paul very well may have been thinking of this passage from Deuteronomy when he wrote these words to those at Rome. He speaks of bondage, adoption, and an inheritance. These things are found in today's passage as well, and it is certain that they did not come through the Law of Moses.

This is seen, again, in today's verses as well. Moses repeats that he will not cross over Jordan and into the inheritance. As Paul shows in Romans 8, the law has no part in the inheritance. Only in coming to Christ is that made possible.

These verses today will also close out our chiasm which began in verse 3:25. That truth is seen laid out quite clearly in it...

Deuteronomy 3:25-4:22 - Call upon Him.
Israel's Instruction (11/07)

a 3:25 Moses wants to cross Jordan

b 3:26 Lord angry with Moses

c 3:27 "Lift your eyes toward the west, the north, the south, and the east."

d 4:3, 4 Example of apostasy (idolatry)

e 4:5 Taught statutes and judgments

f 4:6 Be careful to observe them (judgments)

g 4:7 Great nation

x 4:7 Call upon Him

g 4:8 Great nation

f 4:9 Diligently keep yourself (judgments)

e 4:10-14 Taught statutes and judgments.

d 4:15-18 Warning of apostasy (idolatry)

c 4:19 "Lift your eyes to heaven."

b 4:21 Lord angry with Moses

a 4:22 Moses must not cross over the Jordan

Where are you placing your trust? In self-imposed bondage? In a government which can't balance its own budget? In a bottle of Clorox and a face mask? What is it that will make you safe and keep you that way? The answer is Jesus Christ. The law was given to lead us to Him. Therefore, use the law wisely – not as bondage leading to death, but as a tutor to lead you to Christ.

This is an invaluable lesson which is found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Out of the Iron Furnace (verses 15-19)

¹⁵ "Take careful heed to yourselves,

This is a new section of Deuteronomy 4 which builds upon what Moses has already expressed. First, in verse 4:9, he said to the people *raq hishamer lekha u-shemor naphshekha meod* – “only take heed to yourself and keep yourself exceedingly.”

When he said that, it was in the second person singular. Moses was speaking to each individual which made up the collective whole. Thus, he was speaking to Israel collectively. Now he says, *v'nishmartem meod l'naphshotekhem* – “and take heed exceedingly to yourselves.”

The words are in the second person plural. He is speaking to all the people collectively. The first stressed personal responsibility leading to national acceptability. The second stresses national responsibility which is derived from the obedience of all people.

Moses is ensuring that the nation understands that it cannot blame the individuals for failing, and he is ensuring that the individuals cannot blame a national failure for their own failings.

To get this, imagine a family where the father is arrested. They are in a culture that looks to family responsibility in a collective manner. He cannot say, “My family is out of control, and so it is their fault.” And if the whole family is arrested, they cannot say, “It is dad’s fault because he is out of control.”

Moses tells all of Israel that they are to take heed, individually and as a nation. If this is not the case, breakdown in society is inevitable. This is the very reason for these words coming in Deuteronomy 17:1-5 –

“If there is found among you, within any of your gates which the LORD your God gives you, a man or a woman who has been wicked in the sight of the LORD your God, in transgressing His covenant, ³ who has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, either the sun or moon or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded, ⁴ and it is told you, and you hear *of it*, then you shall inquire diligently. And if *it is* indeed true *and* certain that such an abomination has been committed in Israel, ⁵ then you shall bring out to your gates that man or woman who has committed that wicked thing, and shall stone to death that man or woman with stones.”

That subject matter from Chapter 17 is exactly what Moses has spoken about and what he will again speak about now. The contents of what he says ahead are new even if parts of it are substantially a repeat of what he just said in verse 12 –

“And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; *you only heard a voice.*”

Some of that repetition begins with the next words...

¹⁵ (con't) **for you saw no form**

lo reitem kal temunah – “no saw you any likeness.” Of these words, Adam Clarke incorrectly states –

“Howsoever God chose to appear or manifest himself, he took care never to assume any describable form. He would have no image worship, because he is a Spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in Spirit and in truth. These outward things tend to draw the mind out of itself, and diffuse it on sensible, if not sensual, objects; and thus spiritual worship is prevented, and the Holy Ghost grieved. Persons acting in this way can never know much of the religion of the heart.” Adam Clarke

Christians worship Jesus Christ because Jesus Christ is God. Not only this, but God is pleased when we worship Him. Jesus says this explicitly in John 5:23 and John 12:26. Paul confirms it, saying –

“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

-Philippians 2:9-11

Further, Moses has already recorded that the Lord *did* appear in a form – in the likeness of a man. That is actually first recorded in Genesis 3, where it says that Adam and Eve “heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden.” If the Lord God walked, he had feet. The implication is that there was a form. This is seen again in Genesis 18 –

“Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. ² So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw *them*, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, ³ and said, ‘My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant.’” Genesis 18:1-3

These, and other, manifestations of the Lord – the eternal Christ – had already been revealed to the people through Moses’ words, but when the law was given at Sinai, the Lord set about to impress upon the people’s minds that the Lord extends beyond mere human form, and indeed beyond any form.

Because this is so, no image can fully represent Him. This is why Isaiah wrote these words to the same people who were so prone to going astray in their hearts –

“The craftsman stretches out *his* rule,
He marks one out with chalk;
He fashions it with a plane,
He marks it out with the compass,
And makes it like the figure of a man,
According to the beauty of a man, that it may remain in the house.

¹⁴ He cuts down cedars for himself,
And takes the cypress and the oak;
He secures *it* for himself among the trees of the forest.
He plants a pine, and the rain nourishes *it*.

¹⁵ Then it shall be for a man to burn,
For he will take some of it and warm himself;
Yes, he kindles *it* and bakes bread;
Indeed he makes a god and worships *it*;
He makes it a carved image, and falls down to it.

¹⁶ He burns half of it in the fire;
With this half he eats meat;
He roasts a roast, and is satisfied.
He even warms *himself* and says,
“Ah! I am warm,
I have seen the fire.”

¹⁷ And the rest of it he makes into a god,
His carved image.
He falls down before it and worships *it*,
Prays to it and says,
‘Deliver me, for you *are* my god!’” Isaiah 44:13-17

People who say that worshipping the Lord Jesus is idolatry make the fundamental mistake that the Jews made and then have passed on for two thousand years. God had already revealed Himself in human form, since the very beginning of man’s time on earth, and throughout the times of the Old Testament.

Not only is that clear, but the worship of Him in this form already has precedent. Abraham clearly called the Lord as such, saying *Adonai*, or my Lord (meaning Yehovah), and he bowed himself to the ground before Him. Joshua will, in the very near future, worship this same Person –

And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, “Are You for us or for our adversaries?”
¹⁴ So He said, “No, but *as* Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.”
And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, “What does my Lord say to His servant?”

¹⁵ Then the Commander of the LORD’s army said to Joshua, “Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand *is* holy.” And Joshua did so.

Joshua 5:13-15

A similar incident will occur in Judges 6 with Gideon and the Lord, and again in Judges 13 with the parents of Samson. Some of the prophets will have visual manifestations of the Lord appear to them as well. Thus, the unseen God has clearly chosen to reveal Himself in a Person, even before the coming of Jesus – and yet it was Christ the Lord who came to them.

What is being revealed to Israel now is a lesson concerning idolatry, but it is not to be – nor can it be – considered as idolatry to worship the Man who is the Lord. “No form, then, signifies no thing which man can create or devise which could failingly resemble the Lord God.

An image of a man cannot reveal anything beyond itself, whereas Jesus can. It is He who reveals the unseen God to us. Israel needed tutoring before that could happen, and so God gave no form or likeness when He spoke out the law. Moses repeats that now for Israel’s instruction. That instruction came...

¹⁵ (con’t) **when the LORD spoke to you at Horeb**

Rather than “when,” the Hebrew says, *b’yom* – “in the day.” In other words, it was one day, and one day only, that the Lord so spoke to Israel. After that, Moses stood between them, receiving the Lord’s word and passing it on to the people.

¹⁵ (con’t) **out of the midst of the fire,**

Again, this was seen in verse 12. The Lord was demonstrating His holy nature, and that He alone was to be served and worshipped. Thus, speaking out of the fire was a deliberate note to Israel that His word is one of judgment. For a violation of it, the expectation was to be that of punishment.

The lesson of the voice is that of worship – properly directed worship. There is nothing that man can imagine or produce that is, or ever could be, a substitute for God. If this is so, then making something – be it a household idol, or an artificial intelligence computer, or any other thing in creation – it cannot suffice to represent God.

Therefore, no such thing was to be made and then bowed down to. To do so is to pervert the lesson of the voice, it is to diminish the glory of God, and it is to diminish the value of the person who so commits such a crime. That is revealed in Moses' next words...

¹⁶ lest you act corruptly

The Lord is holy, and He demands holiness in His people. To act corruptly is to act in an unholy manner. This was unbefitting of a person who had been redeemed by the Lord, and who was considered one of the people of the Lord.

But further, this corruption extends in another way. To make an image of God is to make it out of something which is corruptible. But God is incorruptible. Therefore, there is an infinite disparity between the two. It equates something worthless with that which cannot be valued.

Moses next defines how this could come about, beginning with...

^{16 (con't)} and make for yourselves a carved image

A portion of the chiasm which has spanned the verses of our last few sermons begins to be defined here.

d 4:3, 4 Example of apostasy (idolatry)

d 4:15-18 Warning of apostasy (idolatry)

In verses 4:3, 4, Moses referred to the idolatry of the people. It was an example of apostasy for the people to remember.

The incident concerning Peor is found in Numbers 25. The men of Israel were enticed by the women of Moab, they fell into harlotry with them, and they then fell into idol worship with their gods. Moses reminded them of this in order to warn them of it now.

One cannot call on the Lord, the central thought of the chiasm, if his mind, heart, or eyes are focused on a god which is no god at all. No form was seen at Horeb, and therefore, no *pesel*, or carved image, of any form was to be made.

But, again, because we are slow to learn, we can – and indeed we should – consider the Lord Jesus in our every prayer. To do so is not idolatry. He is the incarnate Word of God. He is our Mediator between this physical world of people and the unseen God.

Because God has revealed Himself to us in this way, it would not only be inappropriate to worship God apart from Jesus, it would be an affront to Him. As Jesus said, “all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him” (John 5:26).

The difference between that which man has made, and the body which God prepared for Christ, is infinite in scope. Until Israel learns this, they must remain under this law which forbids any image to be made or worshipped. Moses further defines this as...

16 (con't) in the form of any figure:

temunath kal samel – “form of any figure.” Moses introduces a new word here, *semel*. It signifies “to resemble,” and thus it is a figure or image. It is a word which will only be seen again in 2 Chronicles 33 (twice) and Ezekiel 8 (twice). The powerful significance of this word will be seen before we end today. For now, Moses speaks on...

16 (con't) the likeness of male or female,

tavnith zakar o neqevah – “pattern after male or female.” This explains what was just said – “the form of any figure.” The word *tavnith*, or “pattern,” comes from the word *banah*, “to build.” Nothing was to be constructed into such a form.

The Hebrew words signify the form of the sexes. Thus, it includes the male or female form. Though not stated, this clause certainly speaks of a human man or woman.

The Lord has already, in the books of Moses, revealed Himself in such a way, and so the Lord is making a complete distinction between what He has done and what man can do. The unseen voice reveals no form for Israel to emulate.

Logically, this cannot mean that Israel could not worship the Man, who is the Lord. This is evident because Joshua will do so within about one month's time from the words Moses now speaks. The words hinge on the thought that one is God's revelation of Himself while the other is man's attempts at creating a god in his own image and calling it the Lord. Next, Moses continues...

17 the likeness of any animal that *is* on the earth

tavnith kal behemah asher ba'aretz – “pattern *after* any beast which *is* on the earth.” The words of this clause, and the next, take us back to Genesis 1:1. It is God who created those things, and thus they are not gods.

Further, they are things God had purposed for the benefit of man. For man to worship and serve them is not only to deny the Creator, but it is to turn upside down the order of His creation by exalting over man that which was for man's enjoyment and benefit.

This is what the Egyptians had done. But the Lord had brought judgment on those, and all the other, false gods of Egypt.

17 (con't) or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air,

This again returns us to Genesis 1. In fact, the word *uph*, or “flies,” hasn't been seen since then. It also takes the reader back to Israel's time in Egypt where birds, such as the ibis and the falcon were worshipped. These or any bird of wing were not to be patterned into an idol. And Moses continues...

18 the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground or the likeness of any fish that *is* in the water beneath the earth.

Moses rounds out the list from Genesis 1 of created species, but which had become objects of worship throughout Egypt. They worshipped both creeping animals like the scarab beetle, and the fish-goddess Hatmehyt, along with many other such creatures.

In the Genesis account, the creation of the living beings is in a different order. There, the creatures are noted in order of creation – fish, bird, beast, creepy, man. Here, it appears Moses is ordering them in likeliness to be worshipped – Man, beast, bird, creepy, fish.

But it is noted that all categories were worshipped in Egypt – from Pharaoh the man, all the way down to the crocodile, and everything in between. Israel is strictly forbidden from fashioning any such image in order to set it up and worship it.

However, there is more that was worshipped in Egypt, and that is also worshipped in the land of Canaan where Israel was heading. And so, Moses begins a new category of such things...

¹⁹ And take heed, lest you lift your eyes to heaven,

u-pen tisa eneka ha'shamaymah – “And lest you lift your eyes to the heaven.” Heaven is singular. It is where God is seen to dwell, such as in Genesis 28:12, where Jacob saw a ladder set up on the earth and which reached to heaven. The Lord stood above the top of the ladder.

They are words of caution. This is something that everyone does. We all look to the sky, both in day and in night, but Moses warns that trouble could be lurking in our minds when doing so.

In other words, what he will warn about does not indicate anything wrong with what is up there, but how we treat what is up there...

¹⁹ (con't) and when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars,

This is something that most people do every time that they are out. They look up and check things out – the sun and how its light dances around, the moon and how it bathes the night in a soft glow, and the stars which capture our imagination for a multitude of reasons. Indeed, they are each a part of...

¹⁹ (con't) all the host of heaven,

kol tseva ha'shamayim – “all the host of the heavens.” Here, the singular “heaven” of the previous clause is now rendered in the plural. The Lord is in heaven, but these things are the host of the heavens.

They are created things, as are the heavens, just as was explicitly stated in Genesis 1. As they are created, they are not gods, but are rather things which exist and are sustained by His direction and power. But man has devised many schemes in his imaginings...

19 (con't) you feel driven to worship them and serve them,

Here is a new word to Scripture, *nadakh* – to impel, compel, be led, driven away, etc. There is a force which moves something, and that force here is to impel a person to do what is against the proper order expected by God.

Here the verb is reflexive, meaning “you allow yourself to be drawn away.” Man’s own mind moves him from the proper worship of the Creator to the improper worship of the creation.

19 (con't) which the LORD your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage.

asher khalaq Yehovah elohekha otam l'kol ha'ammim takhat kal ha'shamayim – “which divided Yehovah your God to all the peoples under all the heavens.” It is a fascinating and, at first, perplexing statement.

Scholars argue over what is meant, some saying that God has divided the other nations, allowing them to worship these bodies, but Israel was to worship only the Lord. That is a rather perverse way of looking at it.

Cambridge lessens the force of that and says it is “An interesting attempt by the writer to reconcile his great truth that Jehovah is God alone with the fact that the other nations worship other gods.” As justification for that, they cite Deuteronomy 29:26 which speaks of Israel doing exactly this –

“...for they went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods that they did not know and that He had not given to them.” Deuteronomy 29:26

But this is an error in thinking. The Lord did not give these things to Israel, or anyone else, as gods. The verse says that the Lord has divided these heavenly bodies “to all the peoples under the whole heavens.” It is inclusive of Israel.

What Moses is saying is that no nation can claim any or all of these heavenly bodies as its own. The same sun that shines on Shiloh, Israel also shines on Wang Chung, China.

Egypt claimed the sun god Ra as their own. But it is not a god. It is the sun, and the Lord has divided it among all the peoples of the earth.

These things were never intended to be objects of worship. This is evident because the sun is found over Japan at one time, but over England at another. The same is true with the moon and the stars. The heavens, being plural, means any and every view of the sky by man at any point in time.

At one time, a part of the people enjoys one aspect of them, at another, others do. If these were gods, they would always be present. Thus, the Lord has divided them among the peoples because He is the Creator of them, and the One who appoints their seasons.

Therefore, the evident truth is that the Lord God gave these, as is recorded in Genesis 1 to serve man, not that they should be served by men. Man was the anticipated guest. All of these things – the animals, birds, creeping things, fish, and the host of the heavens were all created before man was. And man was created to worship and serve the Lord God.

*Do not worship anything, but Me alone, says your God
In doing this, you will do well
I will keep you safe on this earthly path you trod
And will open to you heaven, instead of opening hell*

*I am the Lord your God, so you are to worship only Me
And I will lead you in paths of righteousness for My name's sake
I will guide you each step, watching over you tenderly
If you will follow Me – may this be the path you take*

*Forget the idols of the nations, which are only vanity
Don't bow to the heavenly host, and you will do well
Don't allow yourself to be pulled into idolatrous insanity
And I will open to you heaven, instead of opening hell*

II. A Jealous God (verses 20-24)

²⁰ But the LORD has taken you

v'etkhem laqakh Yehovah. It is emphatic, “And you, has taken Yehovah.” Egypt pictures bondage to sin. They were caught up in worshipping and serving everything Moses just mentioned – all of it. But the Lord brought them out of that...

²⁰ (con't) **and brought you out of the iron furnace,**

These words are unfortunately taken completely out of their intended context by many. This is not saying Israel was forced to work in iron furnaces. It is also not speaking of any other forced labor that Israel suffered under.

It is certainly true those things literally happened, but the context is that of idolatry. Moses said that the Lord spoke to the people at Horeb from the fire. Iron represents strength, be it in binding together, in government, in hard service, in bondage, etc.

But iron can go into a furnace, which is now a new word in the Bible, *kur*. It signifies a pot or furnace – something dug out in order to form a place for smelting. It is kin to the word *kir*, found only in Leviticus 11:35. It is a place of divine testing and purification.

In an iron furnace, the strength of iron is removed and cohesion is lost through the heat of the fire. In idolatry, there is no cohesion and strength of worship toward God. Rather, there is a purposeless state of futility. This iron furnace is next described as...

²⁰ (con't) **out of Egypt,**

Egypt, or double distress, is the iron furnace. Being brought out of that implies that the iron can be shaped and strengthened by the Lord for His purposes. This is exactly seen in Isaiah 48:10 where the *kur*, or furnace, is noted –

“Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver;
I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.
¹¹ For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do *it*;
For how should *My name* be profaned?
And I will not give My glory to another.” Isaiah 48:10

The Lord sent Israel to Egypt to be tested and refined. The purpose of this was because Israel was...

²⁰ (con't) **to be His people, an inheritance, as you are this day.**

Israel was morally prepared in Egypt to be a people who were to know the difference between idolatry and true worship. This selection was typologically given to prefigure the church – the people of God in Christ – be they Jew or Gentile. Paul states this in Ephesians 1 –

“...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.”

-Ephesians 1:17, 18

²¹ Furthermore the LORD was angry with me for your sakes,

v'Yehovah hitaneph bi al divrekhem – “And Yehovah was angry with me for your words.” This is the third time that Moses has substantially repeated this. However, each time Moses has changed the wording concerning *why*. The first time, in Deuteronomy 1:37, he used the word *galal*, or roll. The Lord was angry with Moses because the words of the people *rolled* back upon him.

The second time, in Deuteronomy 3:26, the word *maan*, meaning intent or purpose, was used. It was the Lord's *purpose* that Moses (picturing the law) would not cross the Jordan. Now, for the third time, he says it is because of the people's words that he cannot enter. It again looks to Christ.

How does one enter into the promise? Is it by faith – displayed in words – or is it by deeds of the law? The words of the people kept them out of the inheritance. They didn't believe and their words reflected that. Now, the people's words will be words not of law, but of faith. The law cannot bring the people into the inheritance. Only the word of faith can do so –

“But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Romans 10:8-10

²¹ (con't) and swore that I would not cross over the Jordan, and that I would not enter the good land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

This is not recorded anywhere else. But it is a statement of fact, relayed by Moses, and which points directly to the consequences of being led by the law and not by following Christ through faith.

Moses led the people, the people failed to believe – thus indicting Moses for failure to lead the people – and so the Lord swore that he would not enter. There is nothing unfair about this. If a president fails to lead his people properly – think of Jimmy Carter and his famous malaise speech accompanied by a malaise administration – there are consequences for that failure.

It may have been, and it certainly was, an indictment upon the people by the Lord, but it was also a failure of Moses to inspire them to words of faith, because the law is not of faith, but of deeds. This is the truth which Moses presents to the people and the consequences of that are once again stated by him...

²² But I must die in this land,

ki anokhi met ba'arets ha'zot – “For I die in the land the this.” Translations using the word “but” reduce the impact of the clause. It is a statement of fact, an affirmation, that Moses is to die outside of the promise.

The symbolism is absolutely clear. The Lord swore that Moses would not enter for he is to die in the land outside of the inheritance. The law died when Christ died. Those under law will die with the law. Those who died to the law, with Christ, will live with Christ. They will cross over. As for Moses, meaning the law...

^{22 (con't)} I must not cross over the Jordan;

One is either under law and outside the promise, or one dies to the law and crosses over the Jordan (the Descender), meaning Christ. This same thought has been stated at least seven jillion times, or close to that. The emphasis on this cannot be overstated. The law can bring no one into the inheritance. However...

^{22 (con't)} but you shall cross over and possess that good land.

v'atem oberim vi'rishtem – “And you shall cross over and inherit.” With the law dead, the people can enter. One plus one will always equal two in proper theology. As long as one is under law, there is no inheritance. When the law dies, the inheritance is possible.

The law died in Christ, and therefore only in Christ can one cross over to possess the good land the Lord has in store for His people.

²³ Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God which He made with you,

The words are words of law, but of what timeframe is Moses speaking of? Obviously, he is speaking of the time after having crossed the Jordan. It is speaking of the nation of Israel, under the law, not of a typological picture of Christ.

The covenant was cut, and the people were to pay heed to it. Despite the typology Moses is fulfilling in his death east of Canaan, there is the continued existence of Israel under the law which must be lived out in order to give the world an understanding of its need for grace.

That covenant, and its many laws and prohibitions, says further...

²³ (con't) and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of anything which the LORD your God has forbidden you.

Here, the Hebrew actually says, “which the Lord your God has commanded you.” That is referring to the negative command of Exodus 20:4, 5 –

“You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; ⁵ you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.”

Those words of Exodus 20 are then immediately followed by exactly the same thought. Moses begins that now...

²⁴ For the LORD your God *is* a consuming fire,

ki Yehovah elohekha esh okelah, “For Yehovah your God fire consuming.” The symbolism of this was seen by the people in Exodus 24 –

“The sight of the glory of the LORD *was* like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel.” Exodus 24:17

The appearance of the Lord's glory was a representation of the Lord's character and being. It was to impress upon the people that what they saw was reflective of who the Lord is. And more than just this outward display reflecting his nature also comes the final, terrifying, words of today's passage...

*24 (fin) **a jealous God.**

hu el qanna – “He God Jealous.” It is an emphatic statement which describes His very character. After giving the commandments concerning idolatry, the Lord said this in Exodus 20 –

“For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me, ⁶but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.” Exodus 20:5, 6

God is Jealous. The word is *qanna*. This doesn't indicate jealousy of success in another. Rather, it speaks of a defense of His honor and glory. When one bows to another god, the Lord isn't jealous of that false god receiving worship. His jealousy is directed to the violation of depriving Him what He is justly due. As He says in Isaiah –

“I *am* the LORD, that *is* My name;
And My glory I will not give to another,
Nor My praise to carved images.” Isaiah 42:8

This is the fourth use of this adjective, *qanna*. It will be used only two more times, both in Deuteronomy, and it is always used in relation to the Lord. As I said in verse 16, however, the word introduced at that time, *semel*, is one used only four more times.

It is seen in 2 Chronicles 33, where Manasseh, king of Israel, set up such an image in the house of the Lord. Because of that, and the other things Manasseh did, the Lord said he would no longer forgive Israel. Thus, He thrust them from His presence. But the word is also used in Ezekiel 8. There, it says this –

He stretched out the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my hair; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the north gate of the inner *court*, where the seat of the image of jealousy *was*, which provokes to jealousy. ⁴And behold, the glory of the God of Israel *was* there, like the vision that I saw in the plain.

⁵Then He said to me, “Son of man, lift your eyes now toward the north.” So I lifted my eyes toward the north, and there, north of the altar gate, was this image of jealousy in the entrance. Ezekiel 8:3-5

The image erected at the temple is called “the image of jealousy.” The Lord was deprived His rightful worship because of this image, and the consequences of this, and the other violations of the law which are outlined there, resulted in death for those who followed those practices.

Though we are under grace, it is of note that John closes out his first epistle with these words, “Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen” (1 John 5:21).

Idolatry is no less serious under the New Covenant, even if its consequences in this life are not as terrifying. But the same Lord, whose name is Jealous, rules over us today. His hand of grace upon our lives does not negate His jealous nature when we worship other gods.

One thing we must do, then, is to ensure that our hearts are always directed to Him, and that we are not swayed away from a close walk with Him because of those things which are temporary, corruptible, and which have no value in the life we have been called to live.

Let us carefully evaluate our lives, from day to day, and let us endeavor to always put the Lord Jesus first. With this, the Lord our God will be pleased. And, as the trial of the Coronavirus lockdown is behind us, let us remember to not walk in this life with a spirit of fear.

The Lord has ordained our days, He had them set before the moment we were conceived, and our worries and anxieties will not change that one iota.

Israel saw no form of the Lord, because they were to focus on the Lord – and nothing else. We have something far better. What is the form of the Lord? It is the form of a Man – our Savior, Jesus. Paul says as much in 2 Corinthians –

“For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2 Corinthians 4:6

Jesus – He is the Lord, the eternal God. Let us entrust our souls to Him, be confident and encouraged in Him, and be a light to others – both in how to conduct our lives properly, and in how to bear up in a positive way during those times which bring fear to the hearts of men. May they see our lives and say, “I want what they have. I want Jesus.” To the glory of God the Father.

Closing Verse: *“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. ²⁹ For our God is a consuming fire.” Hebrews 12:28, 29*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 4:25-31 Something to do always as on this earth you trod... (Seek the Lord Your God) (16th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Form of the Lord

Take careful heed to yourselves
For you saw no form; nothing visible to admire
When the LORD spoke to you
At Horeb out of the midst of the fire

Lest you act corruptly
And make for yourselves a carved image – yes even of a whale
In the form of any figure
The likeness of male or female

The likeness of any animal that is on the earth
Or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air
The likeness of anything that creeps on the ground
Or the likeness of any fish that is in the water beneath the earth
-----No! Don't you dare

And take heed, lest you lift your eyes to heaven
And when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars
All the host of heaven

You feel driven to worship them and serve them
-----even the planet Mars

Which has given the LORD your God
To all the peoples as a heritage under the whole heaven
-----wherever man does trod

But the LORD has taken you
And brought you out of the iron furnace; a place not bright and gay
Out of Egypt, to be His people
An inheritance, as you are this day

Furthermore the LORD was angry with me for your sakes
And swore that I would not cross over the Jordan
-----for me there is no such chance
And that I would not enter the good land
Which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance

But I must die in this land
I must not cross over the Jordan, thus I was made to understand
But you shall cross over
And possess that good land

Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant
Of the LORD your God which He made with you
And make for yourselves a carved image in the form of anything
Which the LORD your God has forbidden you to do

For the LORD your God – please give me an understanding nod
Is a consuming fire; a jealous God

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown

Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 4:25-31 **(Seek the Lord Your God)**

In the passage today, there is lots of bad news for Israel if they disobey, and Moses seems to take it as an axiom that they will – in fact – disobey. This isn't the beginning of such bad news. There have been numerous warnings and promised punishments for disobedience already, and more are forthcoming in the chapters ahead.

And yet, at the same time, the great themes of mercy, grace, forgiveness, and covenant faithfulness are seen in just these few verses. The Lord has spoken such words, and Moses confirms them here in Deuteronomy.

But one problem with Israel, and it is a problem with all of us, is that we often tend to rely a bit too heavily on the good stuff while ignoring the warnings. Some years ago, I heard a Jewish rabbi speaking on some show about how religions and denominations anticipate forgiveness.

He kind of flippantly said that for Jews, they just acknowledge they did wrong and that's it. There was no sense of any offense having been made. Kind of an uncaring, "Yeah, I did wrong." He then shrugged his shoulders and that was it.

The key point is that every religion that was interviewed all acknowledged that wrongdoing exists in our actions. If that is so, someone must be offended, or it can't be wrong. If the offended One is God, and if we get the means of obtaining forgiveness wrong, that becomes hugely problematic.

Text Verse: *"Where can I go from Your Spirit?*

Or where can I flee from Your presence?

⁸ *If I ascend to heaven, You are there;*

If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there." Psalm 139:7, 8 (NASB)

Whenever I come to this passage in Deuteronomy, and I get to verse 28 where it speaks of serving gods that are the work of men's hands, it always brings back the memory of my time owning a retail business. I imported and sold things from Asia, a large percentage of the things were idols – everything from Buddha and Krishna to Hanuman and Lakshmi, and anything else that would sell.

Of course, at that time, I was as brain dead as the people that bought the things, trading the truth of God for worthless images, but it never ceased to surprise me the number of

Jews who would come in and buy them. The Jewish population of Sarasota is not that big, but they all seemed to have this in common.

I always thought of them as a religious people, being obedient to their God and faithfully observing their law. How absolutely wrong I was. It didn't take long to know that the outward appearances, and the boasting in the heritage, has nothing to do with a sound relationship with the Lord.

Until I really came to know Christ, and to understand what it means to be a true Jew, I had no idea that almost all Jews do not qualify for that title. Rather, they perfectly fit the prophetic words of Moses here, even those who appeared to be observant perfectly match what he says.

In other words, they are no different than the people among whom they live, despite living separately from the people among whom they live. The difference between them and the others is that they are bound under this covenant in a unique way.

Any who are not in Christ are condemned. The Bible makes that absolutely clear. But the Jews face a kind of double trouble. This is because they bear the name of the Lord, even when they don't acknowledge the Lord. And in that, there are responsibilities and consequences.

We will see this again today. In the end, everyone needs Jesus, but the Jew needs Him individually and in a collective manner as well. Hence, the past 2000 years have not been very friendly to them. This is a truth which is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. I Call Heaven and Earth to Witness (verses 25 & 26)

In the previous passage, Moses began to speak of idolatry. The people saw no form of the Lord, and therefore the Lord is not to be worshiped through a form – a representation of who He is. But more, a form of any other god is a form of no god at all, and they likewise were not to be set up and worshipped.

With that understood, Moses will continue with that thought for a moment, and then he will turn to the penalty for doing such things, including the greatest penalty for the people, exile. Moses explains, in advance, what will happen in exile, and what will bring them to restoration from it.

But Moses will also confirm one major point of Israel’s punishment, destruction, and exile – that a covenant exists between the Lord and Israel. No matter what happens, even in the breaking of the covenant by Israel, God will remember it and keep His side of it. This is the scope of what will now be seen...

²⁵ **“When you beget children and grandchildren**

The words of this verse are in the singular – you. It is speaking to all of Israel as a single entity, even if every Israelite is included. The Hebrew reads, “When you beget sons and son’s sons.” The words here call to reminder what Moses had just said in verse 4:9, using the same expression –

“Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren, ¹⁰ *especially concerning* the day you stood before the LORD your God in Horeb, when the LORD said to me, ‘Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and *that* they may teach their children.’” Deuteronomy 4:9, 10

The admonition was given first, “Take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget.” Moses now takes it as an axiom that the people will not only fail to take heed, but they will also forget. That begins to be implied in the next words...

²⁵ (con’t) **and have grown old in the land,**

v’novoshantem ba’arets – “And have slumbered in the land.” The word is *yashen*, and it needs explanation. It comes from a root which signifies to be slack, or languid. By implication, it means to sleep, even a figurative sleep of death, or to grow old, stale, etc.

Here, it certainly isn’t speaking of the people’s age, but of their time in the land. However, it is not necessarily an extended period there. Most translations say, “have grown old in the land,” or “have lived long in the land.” But this is not the correct idea as is evidenced by the early turning away from the Lord to idolatry. Immediately after Joshua’s death, even in Judges 2, it says –

“Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals; ¹² and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from *among* the gods of

the people who *were* all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger. ¹³ They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. ¹⁴ And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel.” Judges 2:11-14

The idea of Moses’ use of this word cannot be separated from the idea of sleep, which is how it is usually translated. Of this, Charles Ellicott rightly states, “Prosperity often sends true religion to sleep, and brings conventional, or fashionable, religion in its stead.” This is exactly the thought Moses now conveys.

In the forming of Eve from Adam’s rib, it says that “the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam and he slept.” Two different words are used in that verse for “sleep.” The second, “and he slept,” is the word Moses now uses.

The idea then is that Israel won’t be attentive. Instead, they will slacken in their responsibility to pay heed and keep themselves. This is akin to what Paul says in the New Testament, such as in 1 Thessalonians 5 –

“You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. ⁶ Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.” 1 Thessalonians 5:5-7

It is this that Moses warns them of, slumbering. In this inattentive, sleeping state, they will forget the Lord their God...

²⁵ (con’t) **and act corruptly and make a carved image in the form of anything,**

This is just what Moses warned against only two verses earlier –

“Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of anything which the LORD your God has forbidden you.” (vs 23)

Moses just warned them of this, he noted that it was a part of the covenant, and that it was a forbidden part at that. Immediately after that, he said that “the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.”

And yet, he – just one verse later now – assumes that the people will actually do this thing, and they will find out what it means concerning this aspect of the Lord. He knows they will, in fact, break the covenant...

²⁵ (con't) **and do evil in the sight of the LORD your God**

There is an article before “evil” in the Hebrew. It is the specific deed – the evil, or that which is evil – which Moses is referring to. The stress is there because such idolatry inevitably leads to countless other problems. It is also that which is seen directly in front of the eyes of the Lord...

²⁵ (con't) **to provoke Him to anger,**

l'hakiso – “to provoke Him to anger.” It is a new word, *kaas*, coming from a primitive root meaning “to trouble.” Thus, by implication, to be angry or provoke to anger. This is exactly what it meant when Moses said the Lord is a jealous God.

As this is so, and as He is also described as a “consuming fire,” the implication is obvious. The Lord isn’t just going sit and stew. Rather, their provoking Him to anger will then bring upon them what is expected of One who is jealous. Moses therefore explains exactly what that means, starting with the next words which begin with a summons for witnesses...

²⁶ **I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day,**

haidoti bakem hayom eth ha'shemayim v'et ha'arets – “I call to witness against you this day the heavens and the earth.” The words here go from the second person singular to the second person plural. In essence, “I call these witnesses against you all.”

The meaning of Moses’ words is not that of judgment. In other words, in Leviticus 26:19, the Lord says concerning disobedient Israel –

“I will break the pride of your power;
I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze.”

That is a consequence of disobedience. Moses is not calling for judgment, but for witnesses that will testify to the just nature of any coming judgment and punishment. That is why he refers back to the first sentence of the Bible, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

In this, the heavens and the earth are being likened to the surety of the covenant. Just as God is the Creator and Sustainer of the heavens and the earth, He is the Initiator and Monitor of the covenant.

In other words, it is not speaking of those who dwell on the earth and those who dwell in heaven to be witnesses. Rather, it is saying that even the heavens and earth *are* the witnesses.

As evident as these are to remind us of the existence of God, so shall it be the same when judgment comes. Thus, Israel should then rightfully say, “As sure as I am standing on the ground, and as surely as the heavens are above my head – both created by God – so is my punishment deserved.” They speak out the obvious reality of what has occurred in Israel’s punishment, which Moses next speaks of...

²⁶ (con’t) **that you will soon utterly perish from the land**

ki avod tovedun maher meal ha’arets – “perishing, you will perish quickly from the land.” Moses uses an adjective seen just once so far, *maher*. It isn’t an especially rare word, but the previous time it was used was in Exodus 32:8 where the people turned aside quickly out of the way the Lord commanded them. In this, they made a golden calf to worship during Moses’ absence.

The people quickly turned from the Lord, and there were dire consequences because of it. Moses promises now that if they do evil in the land, the Lord will just as quickly turn His favor from them and punish them, removing them from the land...

²⁶ (con’t) **which you cross over the Jordan to possess;**

asher atem oberim eth ha’yarden shamah l’rishtah – “which you cross over the Jordan to possess.” The verb translated as “cross over” here is identical in spelling to the noun “Hebrew.” It gets its meaning based on the structure of the sentence, just as a homograph in English.

Without stretching the intent too far, it almost appears to be a pun. Moses is speaking to the Hebrew people, “You (Hebrews) are crossing over the Jordan, but if you don’t pay heed, then you aren’t true Hebrews, because what you crossed over to possess you will be dispossessed from.”

If this is subtly the intent, it is well reflected by a similar thought from Paul in Romans 2–

“For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, nor *is* circumcision that which *is* outward in the flesh; ²⁹ but *he is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God.” Romans 2:28, 29

The Hebrew word for Jew means “praise.” Thus, Paul was making a pun concerning the nature of a true Jew. A true Jew has crossed over the Jordan, a picture of Christ, and is circumcised in the heart by the Spirit. Likewise, for the Hebrews to fail to adhere to the covenant, they would prove themselves false Hebrews. Thus...

²⁶ (con’t) **you will not prolong *your* days in it,**

Moses is speaking to all the people. In this, it is not speaking immediately about long life for each person, but a long continuance in the land for the people. However, this does not negate the thought of a shortened life for each person.

If the land is attacked, and if the people are exiled, it will mean that for many, the days of their lives will be cut short. As people and as individuals they will not continue...

²⁶ (con’t) **but will be utterly destroyed.**

hishamed tishamedun – “in being destroyed, you will be destroyed.” The word *shamad* gives the sense of extermination. Thus, the people, collectively and individually can expect being cut off. The words here are reflective of the similar warning coming from Moses in Deuteronomy 30 –

“I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;” Deuteronomy 30:19

However, even in the prospect of extermination, and even in the horror which continues to be relayed in the next verse, there is in it also to be found a note of covenant faithfulness by Lord...

*Heaven and earth are witnesses today
Of the words I now call out to you
Be circumspect on the path as you wind your way
Because the words are sure, and the warnings are true*

*You must be obedient to the Lord your God
Pursuing His precepts always, never shall you stray
Let your feet not depart from the path that you trod
Be circumspect on the path as you wind your way*

*Fix your eyes on the One who has gone before you
Fix your eyes on the Lord Jesus, and you will never stray
Should you wander off the path, He remains faithful and true
He will be with you on the path as you wind your way*

II. The Lord Your God Is a Merciful God (verses 27-31)

²⁷ And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples,

The words remain in the second person plural – “I will scatter you all.” To be scattered among the peoples implies being alive. The very fact that this is recorded indicates that the Lord is aware of those who remain, even if they are further punished in the land of their exile. Which is what is to be expected based on what the Lord has already said.

In these verses, Moses has called the words of the covenant to remembrance. In Leviticus 26, the Lord said –

“I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you;
your land shall be desolate and your cities waste.” Leviticus 26:33

Here Moses repeats, and yet amends, that thought saying, *v’hepits Yehovah etkem ba’amim* – “and will scatter you Yehovah among the peoples.”

In Leviticus, the Lord used the word *zarah*. Here Moses uses *puts*. Both convey the same basic meaning, but the root of the word Moses uses carries more force, meaning “to dash in pieces.” The people would be dashed to pieces and what was left would fly off in all directions. In this, Moses says...

²⁷ (con’t) and you will be left few in number

The Hebrew reads, “men of a number.” It is an idiomatic expression indicating that there will be so few, that it will be no effort to count them. The once-great nation would be so greatly reduced that there would be little left.

And yet, to be left few in number implies... being. The hand of the Lord may be heavy upon the people, but the people remain. The intent of Haman in Esther was to destroy all of the Jews. The exile of Israel, and the punishment they received among the nations at that time were self-inflicted wounds.

However, Haman didn't simply want punishment, but annihilation. The Lord intervened, and the people – even if few in number – were spared.

Again, Hitler didn't simply want the Jews kicked out of Germany. Rather, he wanted them exterminated. The woes of Israel for the previous 1900 years were brought upon them through their rejection of Christ – another self-inflicted wound. But through their punishment, they remained a people.

This is the intent of the words of both Leviticus 26 and of what is seen, and what will continue to be seen, here in Deuteronomy. To be left few in number, as tragic as that is, is a note of covenant faithfulness, not by Israel, but by the Lord, even...

²⁷ (con't) **among the nations where the LORD will drive you.**

Moses withholds nothing. It is Israel who will break the covenant, and it is the Lord who will execute the judgments of the covenant. Of this verse, Charles Ellicott again rightly states –

“Our familiarity with this fact in history must not blind us to its force when uttered as a prophecy. The fact that the Jews were taken captive for idolatry, and dispersed for the rejection of JESUS, is a remarkable proof that the real reason why they were brought into Canaan, and kept there, was to be witnesses for Jehovah.” Charles Ellicott

Having died in 1905, he said this long before Israel was returned to the land in 1948. Thus, he had no knowledge that what he said was true, not only in the past, but in our present.

Israel was placed in the land to testify of the Lord. Israel was exiled to testify of the Lord. There would be no exile if Israel obeyed, and there would be no horrors in exile if the people took heed to the word.

But both occurred because the people willingly disobeyed, and they failed to heed. Thus, Moses here uses the word *nahag*, meaning to drive. John Lange notes that the

word itself, and the form in which it is used “indicates ... not a gentle leading, but a driving and urgent pressure.” Israel sinned; Israel is punished.

But the obstinacy of Israel is seen when even with the obvious nature of what has occurred – meaning the heavens and the earth are witnesses to it, and thus Israel should have known better when it occurred – they would still fail to accept the Lord’s correction and turn from their sin...

28 And there you will serve gods, the work of men’s hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell.

It remains second person plural – “There you all will serve.” The senselessness of serving dead idols is well summed up as a contrast to the nature of the Lord. First, Moses calls them *elohim*, or “gods.” This does not mean that they are actually gods, but that they are people’s gods, and thus false gods.

In this, Moses then contrasts them to the Lord. He says they are *maaseh yede adam*, “work (of) hands man.” Moses has appealed to the Ten Commandments in verse 13. The fourth of those commandments says, “For *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day” (Exodus 20:11).

As He created the heaven’s and the earth, and as He created man from the earth, the contrast is absolute. The God of Israel is THE GOD, and anything else is a false god.

Next, he says, “wood and stone.” In verses 12 and 15, it noted that the people saw no form. Here, form is implied. Thus, there is THE GOD without form, and anything else is a false god bearing form.

Next, he says, “which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell.” In verse 7, it said that Israel’s God could be called upon for any reason. It implies that He hears. In verse 25 it says the people would do evil *b’ene* – in the sight, or literally, in the eyes of the Lord. It implies that the Lord sees. And finally, in verse 24, it said that the Lord is a consuming fire, using the word *akal* – to eat. It implies that the Lord can devour as a mouth would.

Thus, in this one chapter, Moses has woven into his words a complete contrast to the false gods, meaning the idols Israel would serve in the lands of their dispersion and punishment.

With that thought in mind, there are at least two ways to view what “serve gods” means. The first is that the people would serve these gods, meaning that they would be in bondage to them. The people of those gods would rule over them and thus they would serve those people and, thus, those gods.

The second is that it would mean that Israel will serve those gods, giving them worship and devotion. The Jewish commentator Rashi over-piously chooses the first meaning, as if in their exile they never actually served idols.

It was and has been true that Israel served other peoples who served their own false gods. However, that is hardly the intent of Moses’ words. He is quite clear that they are serving (meaning worshiping) the gods. This is certain for quite a few reasons.

First, it is the reason for their exile in the first place. The warning against this was seen in verses 15-19 and it was then repeated in verse 23. The acknowledgment that it would actually come to pass is seen in verse 25.

Since then, Moses has been telling of the effects upon the people for doing this. They worshipped and served idols in the land, having rejected the Lord and the covenant. Thus, they were exiled.

Secondly, it doesn’t say that they would serve the people of other gods, it says that they would serve other gods. This is repeated in Deuteronomy 28 –

“Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known—wood and stone.” Deuteronomy 28:64

The words, “which you nor your fathers have known,” would be superfluous unless it meant that they were worshipping new gods – false gods. But this type of idolatry goes beyond carved images. It extends to gods which Israel is abundantly known to serve. This is stated by the scholar Keil who, in turn, cites the scholar Schultz –

“The more refined idolatry of image-worship leads to coarser and coarser forms, in which the whole nature of idol-worship is manifested in all its pitiableness. ‘When once the God of revelation is forsaken, the God of reason and imagination must also soon be given up and make way for still lower powers, that perfectly accord with the I exalted upon the throne, and in the time of pretended 'illumination' to atheism and materialism also’ (Schultz)”.

Atheism, materialism, communism, humanism, and a plethora of other isms are the main staple of secular and religious life among the vast majority of Jews in the world, even to this day. They follow these gods with reckless abandon, having forsaken the Lord God. And thirdly, the words of the next verse imply that this is referring to active worship of false gods...

29 But from there

In the previous verse, it said, “there (*sham*) you will serve gods.” Now it says, “But from there (*mi’sham*) you will seek the Lord your God.” The context is the same and the two words correspond to one truth.

They are in exile for serving other gods (among other things), and in their exile, they continued to do so, even to the point where they no longer retain a knowledge of the true God, Yehovah, as is confirmed by the words...

29 (con’t) you will seek the LORD your God,

It is second person plural – “You all will seek.” One only seeks that which one does not possess. I will seek after one of my dogs because it has flippantly ignored my calls and run off to annoy one of the neighbors. I no longer possess my wayward furry friend, and I must go seek after him.

If Israel possessed Yehovah, as their God, they would not need to seek Him. But the truth remains that He is, in fact, the Lord their God, as Moses acknowledges right in these words. They have forgotten Him, but He has not forgotten them. To Israel, He remains “the Lord your God.”

29 (con’t) and you will find *Him* if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.

Remarkably, the words here now change, in the middle of the verse, to the second person singular – you will find; you seek; your heart; your soul. Each individual forms into a collective whole. Not all may find, but those who are of the collective who do, will find.

The Lord will be found when He is sought with the heart, meaning the seat of intellect and reason, and the soul, meaning the place of inner yearning and desire in the animated life.

To seek the Lord with the intellect and not the with a yearning desire is to seek after an understanding of who God is, but not caring about Him personally. This would be the scholar who is so busy learning about God, that he never gets to know Him.

To seek the Lord with the soul but not the intellect is to, most probably, find a relationship without a sound basis for it. This is the Jehovah's witnesses etc., who *think* they have a relationship with God, but who failed to do the due diligence only to discover they have called on a false god.

Moses assures Israel that after their exile, they will find the Lord their God when they search for Him with all of their heart and with all of their soul. This promise will be restated and built upon in Chapter 30 –

“Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call *them* to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you, ² and you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, ³ that the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you. ⁴ If *any* of you are driven out to the farthest *parts* under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. ⁵ Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. ⁶ And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.”
Deuteronomy 30:1-6

Of this verse, Adam Clarke – who died in 1832, a time in which it was unimaginable to most of the world that Israel would be reconciled to God – asked, “Is not this promise left on record for the encouragement and salvation of lost Israel?”

The foresight of Clarke was lost to the vast majority of scholars prior to him, contemporary with him, and even of those who continue to teach replacement theology to this day.

Having died over a hundred years before the reestablishment of Israel, he picked up his Bible, accepted it at face value, and rejected the theology of those who rejected Israel

as a people bound by the covenant of the Lord, and thus still under the care and watchful eye of the Lord.

Despite this, there is the truth that Israel of today has not met the demands of these words of Moses. They have not sought the Lord, they are still immersed in idolatry, and they remain under the law and apart from Christ.

Therefore, the words, remain anticipatory for them. Even though the land has been returned to them, many of them have not returned to the land, and most of them have not returned to the Lord. Therefore, the continued words of the passage still ring true...

³⁰ When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you

The second person singular continues here. The word “when” is not in the Hebrew. It more closely reads, “In distress you are, and find you all these words.” The “words” are things, but they are based on Moses’ words. In other words, what he says here is what will happen. They will be found in the state prophesied here.

Despite possessing the land, Israel does not – at this time – possess the Lord. They are His possession, but they are not yet His people. Moses prophesies that this would be the case...

³⁰ (con’t) in the latter days,

b’akharit ha’yamim – “in end the days.” The words here can be paraphrased as “a time of messianic completion.” If one was to assume that this is speaking of the completed work of Christ, he could then argue that this is referring to the initiation of the church age and thus the entire church age.

From both a Hebrew and a Mosaic Covenant perspective, these would both be incorrect. For a Gentile-led church age, that argument could be made based on Paul’s words of 1 Timothy 4:1 where he speaks of the “latter times.” But that has nothing to do with Moses’ words here now.

It is speaking of a time, at the end of the age, when the messianic promises will be realized in Israel. Q: Has this ever occurred in history. A: No. They began to be realized, but the nation as a whole rejected Him. Thus, this has a future fulfillment to us now. That is seen in the words...

30 (con't) **when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice**

The words, as noted, are in the second person singular. Each individual who comprises the collective whole is addressed, and thus it is speaking to all as one. However, the translation is lacking. The word is *shuv* – to return, or to turn back.

Saying “turn” could lead a person to think this might be speaking of the church, turning to Christ, rather than Israel returning to the Lord. But Moses is speaking to Israel, and he has noted that they have departed from the Lord. Therefore, it signifies more than a *turn* to the Lord, but a *return* to Him.

With this in mind, it should be noted that several great scholars of the past rightly pinpoint this as speaking of Israel, though the details from them vary on what it means to return to the Lord. Does it mean to the law, or what the law anticipated – meaning Christ?

But they agree that it is Israel, and it will be a return to the Lord. However, many other scholars make the galactically incorrect leap to indicate that this is referring to the church. For example, John Lange says –

“The condition and the time for the return of Israel are arranged in parallel clauses, (Deut 4:30), i. e., when the distress, the curse of the law, is completed, then also will the time of Israel be completed, then will be the end of days, and as the threatening will be fulfilled, so also the promise, the return to the Lord. Thus there is revealed a future of Israel, when through its returning obedience to the law, (and hearkening to his voice, Deut 4:30, Matt. 5:17; 7:24 sq.) it makes effective in humanity, the peculiar idea of its nationality, see Deut 4:6 sq. (comp. upon 2:25). Since salvation comes from the Jews, (John 4:22), the national Israel may be considered a spiritual, which in that respect is the completion of Israel, when through the ingrafted fulness of the Gentiles in the place of the hardened portion, which takes place more and more, ‘all Israel shall so (in this way) be saved,’ Rom. 11:26.”

The error of this thinking goes on and on. First, it ignores that there is a people in exile and under punishment for having rejected the Lord. This can never be applied to the Gentiles as he states. The Gentiles never had the Lord, and so the punishment and dispersion cannot apply to them.

Secondly, the repeated changing in point of view from the singular to the plural would make absolutely no sense if it was applied to Gentiles. Moses is speaking to Israel and

changing the perspective to show individual and combined character within the nation as well as national character.

Thirdly, regardless as to whether Moses is speaking of a return to the law, or to what the law anticipates, meaning Christ, the Gentiles were never under the Law of Moses. Christ's fulfillment of the law, on our behalf, does not set this aside.

It may be God's standard, because Christ is the embodiment of the law, but Moses cannot ascribe to the Gentiles aspects of a law which has never applied to them. He has referred to the law, and he will continue to do so throughout Deuteronomy. But the law applied to Israel, and only to Israel.

One more logical argument will suffice, and that will be reviewed before we complete the next verse...

³¹ (for the LORD your God is a merciful God),

ki el rakhum Yehovah elohekha – “For God compassionate, Yehovah your God.” The word is *rakhum*. This is only its second use. It is an adjective seen 13 times in the Old Testament. It is always used when speaking of the Lord.

It is from the same root as *rekhem*, meaning “womb.” One can see how just as a mother cares for the child in her womb, so the Lord is compassionate. Though the word is referring to the Lord and His character, the loving care of Israel is clearly seen in it. The context is Moses speaking to Israel concerning the Lord being Israel's God. That same thought continues with...

³¹ (con't) He will not forsake you nor destroy you,

The word translated as “forsake” is *raphah*. It gives the sense of letting go. In Exodus, Pharaoh accused the Hebrews of being, *raphah*, lazy. The Lord will never fail Israel by letting go of them, nor would He actively destroy them, meaning utterly wipe them out. They would remain as a people, even if individually they were wiped out. Plus, there is one more promise which will close out our words today...

***³¹ (fin) nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.**

Moses promises that the Lord will not forget the covenant made with Israel's fathers, as it says, “which He swore to them.” This is an obvious reference to the covenant which

the Lord swore to Abraham, and then to Isaac, and then to Jacob, as He said in Exodus 33 –

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Depart *and* go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘To your descendants I will give it.’”

-Exodus 33:1

There is no doubt that this is what is being referred to. In fact, he repeats that sentiment in Leviticus 26 –

“...then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember; I will remember the land.”

-Leviticus 26:42

The covenant promises are repeated in the very chapter where the blessings and curses are spoken, which Moses’ words here now refer to. The promises, as noted, go beyond Abraham to include both Isaac and Jacob. And, they are inclusive of the land.

For this reason, this cannot be speaking of the Gentiles. This is for two reasons. The first is that no land promise is ever recorded for the Gentiles. Secondly, the promise of Messiah for Gentiles, which Paul appeals to, is one which is only inclusive of Abraham and his faith. It says nothing of Isaac or Jacob.

Though these points could be argued or spiritualized, Leviticus 26 does not end on that note. Rather, after saying this, it then goes on to appeal to the Mosaic Covenant –

“But for their sake I will remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I *am* the LORD.” Leviticus 26:45

The Lord, after citing the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which included a land grant, lastly appealed to the covenant of Israel’s ancestors, who He brought out of the land of Egypt. In other words, He is looking forward in time and referring to the covenant He was in the process of giving.

That is this covenant, having started at Sinai, and which is continuing to be made right now through Moses, to which the Lord – in the end of days – would remember.

Therefore, the “covenant of their ancestors” there in Leviticus refers to the Mosaic Covenant. The Lord’s words speak of the people far in the future but looking back to this time – as Moses speaks. It cannot refer to the Gentiles because they were never brought out of Egypt and given a covenant to live by.

This same point is bound to be reviewed again while we are in Deuteronomy, but it is a point that cannot be reviewed enough. God made a covenant with Israel. That covenant has not yet been ended, even though it is fulfilled in Christ.

The reason it has not ended is because even though individuals of Israel entered into the New Covenant, Israel the nation did not. Until that happens, they remain under the confines and the bondage of the Old.

But this is exactly why they have been kept as a people. The Lord covenanted with them that they would remain, and remain united, until and after they entered into the New Covenant.

During their time of exile and punishment, however, the Lord has not wasted time. Any person, Jew or Gentile, can receive what Israel missed. They can accept what God has done in Christ, they can be saved through His shed blood, and they are – at that time – granted eternal life.

God’s gifts and His calling are irrevocable. Israel was called, and Israel shall be granted what they have missed for so long. This is the faithful God we serve, and this is the marvel of His faithfulness to His unfaithful people – meaning the Jew first, but also the Gentile. Thank God for the compassion of the Lord which is fully displayed in the giving of Jesus Christ.

Closing Verse: *“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹² Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.” Jeremiah 29:11-14*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 4:32-40 This is true; take it to heart, brother.. (There Is No Other) (17th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Seek the Lord your God

When you beget children and grandchildren
And have grown old in the land – pay heed, this is no joke
And act corruptly and make a carved image in the form of anything
And do evil in the sight of the LORD your God
-----to anger Him you provoke

I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day
That you will soon utterly perish from the land
-----which you have so enjoyed
Which you cross over the Jordan to possess
You will not prolong your days in it, but will be utterly destroyed

And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples
And you will be left – pay heed my word is true!
Few in number among the nations
Where the LORD will drive you

And there you will serve gods
The work of men's hands – if described in a nutshell
Wood and stone
Which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell

But from there you will seek the LORD your God
And you will find Him – the One written about in the scroll
If you seek Him with all your heart
And with all your soul

When you are in distress
And all these things come upon you in the latter days
When you turn to the LORD your God
And obey His voice – yes, obedience pays

(for the LORD your God is a merciful God)
He will not forsake you nor destroy you
Nor forget the covenant of your fathers
which He swore to them; this He will never do

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 4:32-40 (There Is No Other)

In Romans 9-11, Paul speaks of the situation with Israel in relation to the Lord. He speaks of their rejection of Christ, he speaks of what the state of those who rejected Him is, he speaks of God's sovereignty over what occurred and what their rejection of Him means for Gentiles and for individual Jews who believe in Him.

He then continues with how their rejection came about, their need for the imputed righteousness of Christ rather than relying on deeds of the law, and how they too can be saved – even despite their continuing hardheartedness.

At the beginning of Chapter 11, Paul opens with, "I say then, has God cast away His people?" His answer, "Certainly not!" He then further explains what their rejection of Christ means for the Gentiles, but he also goes on to say what their acceptance of Christ will mean. He finishes out that portion of his epistle with the following words which form our text verse –

Text Verse: *For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶ And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:*

*"The Deliverer will come out of Zion,
And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;*

*²⁷ For this is My covenant with them,
When I take away their sins."*

²⁸ Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. ²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰ For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, ³¹ even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. ³² For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all. Romans 11:25-32

Paul speaks of Israel being beloved for the sake of the fathers. It is exactly what Moses will refer to in our passage today. He then says that the gifts and the calling are irrevocable. For replacement theologians, as well as for those unable to learn what Paul means (but I repeat myself), it is a word meaning, "not able to be changed, reversed, or recovered."

God has promised, he has called Israel, and that will not change. Israel's unfaithfulness to the Lord will not in any way affect the Lord's promises and His faithfulness. This is a great lesson for each of us who has been saved by Christ, but who struggle with all of the things we as humans struggle with. We may be unfaithful, but God will never revoke what He has granted to us through a simple act of faith.

If you have never received Jesus, stick around for the next forty minutes or so for a great sermon (yes, it will be great – because it is based on God's word), and at the end, I'll tell you the simple path to salvation. But in case your meeting with God is less than forty minutes away, I'll give you a short and quick preview – believe that Christ died for your sins and accept that.

This is the central point of all of Scripture – JESUS. The law of Moses is merely a steppingstone leading to Him. It's all to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. From One End of Heaven to the Other (verses 32-34)

The words of Deuteronomy 4:32-40 are a summary thought for Israel to consider and to live by. It is an amazingly profound portion of Scripture which would be appropriate to copy by every member of the assembly, and to then place in a centrally located part of the house where everyone who came in could see it, reflect on it, and pay heed to it.

Moses is going to reiterate many of the thoughts that he has presented to Israel so far in Chapter 4. He has conveyed to them the need to keep the commandments of the Lord. He will repeat that in verse 40. He has shown that the Lord destroyed many in Israel for idolatry. He will warn that they can expect more of this also in verse 40.

He has spoken of the great wisdom to be found in the statutes and judgments of the Lord. In keeping these, they may call upon Him when needed, because He is near to them. He will refer to this bond in verse 34.

He spoke of the receiving of the law and what it was like when it was received. He will refer to this again in verse 36. He warned against idolatry among the people and the consequences of not paying heed. He will speak of the contrast of that in verse 39 – that the Lord is God, and that there is none other.

He has referred to being brought out of the bondage of Egypt. He will refer to this again in verse 37. And, he has spoken of the faithfulness of the Lord, despite the anticipated unfaithfulness of Israel. He will speak of this unbreakable covenant bond (at least on His side of it) again in verse 34.

In just nine verses, Moses will open up a panorama of thought which extends from the creation of man even through all of the future history of the world. And, it extends out from Israel in all directions over the entire earth.

What is said speaks of the eternal nature of God, and – therefore – of the eternal and irrevocable nature of God’s dealing with this particular people, regardless as to how they respond to Him. In these words, are the magnificent concepts of love, mercy, grace, and also of warning...

³² **“For ask now concerning the days that are past,**

ki sheal na l’yamim rishonim – For inquire, I pray, to days first. Moses begins the thought imploring his audience – and therefore anyone who ever reads his words – to inquire, into the events of time itself. That word is *rishonim*, and it signifies the former, first, or beginning.

The idea here is that Moses is imploring his audience to diligently seek, even to the first times that were. But the context of what he is saying is based on the first word, *ki*, or “for.” The idea is connected to everything in the previous verses. If we start with verse 26 until this verse, we can get the idea of what Moses is conveying –

“I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you will soon utterly perish from the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess; you will not prolong *your* days in it, but will be utterly destroyed. ²⁷ And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you. ²⁸ And there you will serve gods, the work of men’s hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. ²⁹ But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find *Him* if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. ³⁰ When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice ³¹ (for the LORD your God *is* a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.” Deuteronomy 4:26-31

Moses has let Israel know that they are prone to wander, and in that state, they will be dispersed. They will be in a state of complete denial of the Lord, but in their distress of those times, they will seek Him, and He will be found by them. And that, for two reasons – 1) He is merciful, and 2) He has made a covenant with their fathers.

This is what Moses' words are now based on, imploring Israel to seek even to the foundations of the world for a comparison to the proposition he will set before them. O Israel, seek to the days...

32 (con't) which were before you,

asher hayu lephanekha – “which have been before you.” Israel is sitting before Moses, and before entry into Canaan. They are the same people who had been brought out of bondage and offered Canaan many years earlier.

They are the same who rejected that, and who were thus rejected. They are the same whose fathers had perished, and who were now free from the stain of their guilt. However, Moses asks them to not only consider these times, but of all of the times before their calling, even...

32 (con't) since the day that God created man on the earth,

l'min ha'yom asher bara Elohim adam al ha'arets – “from the day which created Elohim man on the earth.” Moses' words now take his audience back to both the first page of Scripture and to the sixth the day of creation, where it is recorded –

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ ²⁷ So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” Genesis 1:26, 27

The intent of the words is that if one could, they were to inquire of every human that ever existed since God created Adam and his wife. This is the diligence of the search that Moses is calling forth for those he is speaking to. And not only in a certain stream of men from Adam is this call made. Rather...

32 (con't) and ask from one end of heaven to the other,

u-l'miqtseh ha'shamayim v'ad qetseh ha'shamayim – “and to from end of the heavens and to end of the heavens.” The translation “heaven” is incorrect. It is not referring to the place of God’s dwelling, but the places of man’s dwelling. The term means from anywhere on the planet – from north, south, east, or west.

Any location where man has been or is. The search is to be made from all men at any time and at any place in all of that time. Moses is speaking in absolute and all-inclusive terms for an answer to the proposition he now puts forth...

32 (con't) **whether *any* great *thing* like this has happened,**

hanihyah ka'davar ha'gadol ha'zeh – “has happened like this manner, the great, the this.” What has ever come into being which is comparable to what I am asking you about now? Such a great thing as this! Tell me, please. I want to know...

32 (con't) **or *anything* like it has been heard.**

o ha'nishma kamohu – “or has been heard like *it*.” Not only is the thing which has come to pass great, but there is nothing even comparable to it. Ear has not heard of such a thing. The sentiment is almost identical to what Paul says in 1 Corinthians when referring to the gospel in 1 Corinthians 2:7-9 –

“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God ordained before the ages for our glory, ⁸ which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

⁹ But as it is written:

‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,

Nor have entered into the heart of man

The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’”

Paul was not speaking of what lies ahead for the believer. Rather, he – like Moses – was referring to what God had done. God had sent Christ to die for the world in order to call out a people for Himself, even from Israel and even from the Gentiles.

Moses, however, speaks not of the New Covenant in Christ and those who are a part of it, but rather of the Sinaitic Covenant between the Lord and Israel. Of that covenant, and the events which surrounded it, Moses now questions the people.

The questions he will ask are based on the proposition he just set forth – has anything such as this ever happened, at any time since creation, and among any people within creation...

³³ **Did any people ever hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire,**

ha'shama am qol Elohim m'daber mitok ha'esh – “Heard people voice of God speaking from midst the fire?” The intent of the words is probably, “Did any people hear the voice of ‘a god.’” In other words, what occurred at Sinai between the people and the Lord is completely unknown.

No other people heard the voice of a god because there is no other god than the Lord God. And, the people of Israel did, in fact, hear the voice of the Lord God out of the midst of the fire.

Looking back on the record from Genesis, one would consider the visitation of God to be one of judgment. The earth was flooded at Noah’s time, and all but eight perished. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed and only the family of Lot was spared. Nothing is recorded of God speaking. But His visitation was evident.

Later, God appeared to Abram, to make a covenant with him. In the cutting of that covenant, it said a smoking oven and a burning torch passed between the pieces of the animals when the covenant was made with him.

At that time, the Lord spoke to Abram concerning the promise of the land. That event established the baseline of the land covenant with him and his descendants, but more revelation from God would come at Sinai. It is that which Moses is now referring to.

When the Lord appeared to Israel at Mount Sinai, and as was further detailed in verse 12 of this chapter, He spoke out of the midst of the fire. They heard the voice, they were given the words of law, and they saw the terrifying sight of pending judgment which could be anticipated from violating the law. And yet...

³³ (con’t) **as you have heard, and live?**

ka'asher shamata atah va'yehi – “as has heard you, you, and live?” One can feel the emphasis in Moses’ words, “You heard it – even you – and yet you are still alive! Has such a thing ever happened before? I think not, and yet it has happened to you.”

But as important as the emphasis on the addressee is, there is also the fact that his words are in the second person singular. Moses is speaking to each individual personally, even though it is to Israel as a collective. They are being set in complete contrast to any other people group.

Knowing this, a point of immense importance can be elicited from what Moses is conveying. The people heard the words of the Lord God from the fire and they lived. But the same words are conveyed in what Moses recorded.

They are words of law. The law doesn't change because of the visible manifestation of the Lord or because of its lack. It is the same law that carries the same penalties. This is why the use of the second person singular is so important.

Even if those of Israel die because of the law – and indeed many had died, and many would continue to die because of it – Israel would continue to exist. It is a note of absolute surety for the collective in the face of the expectation of certain disaster for many individuals.

³⁴ Or did God *ever* try to go *and* take for Himself a nation from the midst of *another* nation,

o hanissah Elohim lavo laqakhat lo go miqerev go – “Or did try God to come take for Himself nation from midst nation.” As before, this is more likely saying, “Did a god try.”

The Lord God is again being set against the false gods of all other nations. It is a rhetorical question concerning them. Thus, it demands a negative response. No other god has done such a thing. And next, to show the superlative nature of what Yehovah did, Moses speaks on...

³⁴ (con't) by trials,

Moses begins a list of seven descriptors concerning their past. The first is *massah*, meaning testing or trials. It is a new word, being derived from the word *nasah* which was just used in the previous clause where it asked, “...did God *ever* try.”

It is probably referring to the trials of the people prior to Moses' arrival. They were in hard bondage, they were afflicted and tested, and it said in Exodus 2 –

“Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage. ²⁴ So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. ²⁵ And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged *them*.” Exodus 2:23-25

³⁴ (con't) **by signs,**

The *othoth*, or signs, are things given to represent something else. The Lord gave Moses three signs to give to Israel – the rod which turned into a snake, the leprous hand, and the water which turned to blood. He also gave signs to Pharaoh concerning what would come upon them as the Lord accomplished His work. Next...

³⁴ (con't) **by wonders,**

u-b'mophtim – “and in wonders.” The *mopheth*, or wonder, comes from *yaphah*, or beautiful. Thus, it speaks of that which is conspicuous and amazing. The word “wonders” gives us the right sense. It speaks of the plagues which came upon the land. And yet, it also speaks of the fact that Israel was spared at the same time. While Egypt was destroyed, Israel survived through the plagues – each time, it was a wonder in itself.

³⁴ (con't) **by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great terrors,**

These are what the Lord brought upon Egypt and the Egyptians, especially after the Exodus. Each of them speaks of the power and splendor of the Lord through His great workings. He fought the battles, it was his strength that worked against Egypt, it was his reach which devastated them while Israel remained safe, and it was His actions that brought terror upon the foe. All of this was...

³⁴ (con't) **according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt**

It is in the second person plural, the only plurals in this section. The Lord is the God of the people, and He accomplished His work on their behalf accordingly. And He did it...

³⁴ (con't) **before your eyes?**

It returns to the second person singular. The collective eyes of the people are spoken of as one person. Israel beheld the marvels wrought by Yehovah his God.

*There is no other God; I know not one
Search in the highest heavens and there will be only Me
Search below the earth until your days are done
And no other god shall you see*

*I alone am the Lord your God
And to Me alone shall you give your thanks and praise
Wherever on this earth you trod
Only Me you shall honor for all your days*

*Trust in Me, and I will give you rest
I will lead you on soft paths, lush and green
In your soul, you shall be forever blessed
Because you have no other gods; to you only I am seen*

II. Consider it in Your Heart (verses 35-40)

³⁵ To you it was shown,

The words are emphatic: *atah hareeta* – “You, it was shown to you.” Israel, no other, beheld the things which brought them to where they now are. The past is being called to testify that the Lord did these things to Israel, and to no other. This was so...

³⁵ (con’t) that you might know that the LORD Himself *is* God;

The words are again emphatic: *la’daath ki Yehovah hu ha’elohim* – “that you might know that Yehovah, He, the God.” As your Bible failed to put an article before the word “God,” please pen it in, and give your translation 1 demerit in the margin.

This is the whole point of the Lord contrasting Himself to the other gods, and it is why the term “a god” should have been used in the previous verses. Any other god is a false god. None has done what Yehovah has done.

Therefore, Yehovah – He – is THE GOD. He did these things so that Israel (it is again in the second person singular) would know that He alone is God. By extension, then, His identification with, protection of, and continued faithfulness to, them is so that all the world will know that He, Yehovah, is THE GOD.

Their faithfulness or unfaithfulness to Him has no bearing on who He is. But His faithfulness to them is for the specific and particular purpose of demonstrating to all that He is God, and...

³⁵ (con't) **there is none other besides Him.**

ain od milbado – “None other beside Him.” That there is one God can be logically determined without knowing who that God is. The twelve First Principles logically and undeniably demonstrate this. But just because a person can logically think that through, it does not mean that he knows this God except as can be perceived through what He has created.

But, God can – and Has – specifically revealed Himself in various ways. Here in Deuteronomy 4, He has shown us one of those ways. It is through Israel and what He has done for and through, them. Such things have not been seen in any other nation. Israel was to know this, and they were to then understand that there was, in fact, no god besides Him.

³⁶ **Out of heaven He let you hear His voice,**

min ha'shamayim – “from the heavens.” The idea is that the people looked up, but the sounds did not come from any discernible place. They heard the voice, saw the fire, but could not discern the location of where the voice came from. This was so...

³⁶ (con't) **that He might instruct you;**

Here the word *yasar*, or instruct, is used. It comes from a primitive root signifying “to chastise.” Thus, it usually gives the sense of punishment for corrective instruction. The terror of hearing the voice of God was intended to do this. The instruction is multi-layered. He instructed them in the law.

He instructed them in seeing that He had no discernable form, and thus He was not to be worshipped through any created thing. He instructed them that He was above them, and yet He was willing to speak to them without destroying them.

He instructed them that He is, because a voice comes from somewhere, and words convey intelligence and meaning. Such things as these, and certainly many more, were provided for their instruction. Further...

³⁶ (con't) **on earth He showed you His great fire, and you heard His words out of the midst of the fire.**

v'al ha'arets – “and on the earth.” In Exodus 20:18, it said, “Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire.” Fire consumes and fire destroys. The manifestation was to instruct the people that the Lord is a consuming fire and that they were to heed Him.

And yet, it was also to instruct them that He could contain the fire as well. It extended to where He wished it to go, but it could be contained – signifying restraint and even mercy.

Also, the fire extended from the earth to the heavens. It was a demonstration that Yehovah is not limited to one aspect of His creation.

As it says in Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” He is transcendent over His creation. He can manifest Himself nowhere in it, or He can manifest Himself in one location or another in it, or He can extend Himself between locations – as He did at Sinai.

Despite manifesting Himself, however, the source of the voice could not be determined because it was enveloped within the midst of the fire. All of this was for the instruction of Israel. But it was based upon His faithfulness to those who came before them...

³⁷ **And because He loved your fathers,**

v'takhat ki ahav eth avotekha – “And instead, because He loved your fathers.” The word *takhat* means “under,” and thus signifying “instead.” The idea is that when one comes under another, he replaces the one he comes under. Thus, this is referring to Egypt.

Israel was in the midst of Egypt, a people greater and more numerous than Israel. But the Lord chose Israel instead of Egypt to display Himself to the world. It is reflective of Paul's words to those at Corinth –

‘For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*.²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;²⁸ and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which

are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence.³⁰ But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—³¹ that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.’” 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

The Lord chose the underdog to display His glory, but more than that, it was because of His love for their fathers – meaning Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He had made the covenant promises to them, and He would fulfill them through Israel. As Moses says...

³⁷ (con’t) **therefore He chose their descendants after them;**

v’yivkhar b’zarow akharav – “and He chose in his seed after him.” The word “seed” is singular. The fathers had other descendants at times, but it is this particular seed, in this particular line, that was chosen by God to reveal Himself in this unique way.

Interestingly, a verse parallel to this is seen in Deuteronomy 10:15, but there, the word “seed,” and the pronouns in the verse, are all plural –

“The LORD delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as *it is* this day.”

The interchange of the singular and plural throughout these verses is complicated, but purposeful. It shows minute specificity which is, sadly, overlooked by almost all translations. Moses is making theological points about the people who are Israel, and about those people of whom Israel is comprised.

In this clause, we see that Israel was specifically chosen. In this selection, the Lord set them apart from all others. This thought was seen in our text verse today where Paul spoke of Israel’s gifts and calling being irrevocable. The same thought is seen later in Deuteronomy –

“Remember the days of old,
Consider the years of many generations.
Ask your father, and he will show you;
Your elders, and they will tell you:

⁸ When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations,
When He separated the sons of Adam,
He set the boundaries of the peoples
According to the number of the children of Israel.

⁹ For the LORD's portion *is* His people;
Jacob *is* the place of His inheritance." Deuteronomy 32:7-9

Samuel repeated this during the time of the judges –

"Then Samuel said to the people, 'Do not fear. You have done all this wickedness; yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. ²¹ And do not turn aside; for *then you would go* after empty things which cannot profit or deliver, for they *are* nothing. ²² For the LORD will not forsake His people, for His great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you His people.'" 1 Samuel 12:20-22

The same thought is found throughout the Old Testament. The Lord was and remains (according to Paul) unwilling to reject Israel, even when they had forsaken Him. It is His honor that is tied up in the preservation of this people.

Though there is overlap in the Lord's way of dealing with the church, it does not negate His continued faithfulness to Israel. But that is the classic and appalling error made by replacement theologians.

³⁷ (con't) **and He brought you out of Egypt with His Presence, with His mighty power,**

Here, it literally says, "in His face." Thus, it means He personally went with them and led them out of Egypt. It was also a promise given to Moses in Exodus 33:14, where the Lord said, "My Presence will go *with you*, and I will give you rest."

Israel did not come out alone, but rather they had the Presence of the Lord with them. They had His great power to guide them, feed them, sustain them, and ensure they would make it to their final destination.

As Exodus 33:14 says that their final destination is being granted their rest, it is a promise that must come to pass. However, Hebrews tells us that Israel did not enter its rest, neither at the time of Joshua, nor at the time of David. As this is so, then the rest which is promised to them – and which is realized in their collectively coming to Jesus – is yet ahead of them, even today.

This is certain because Exodus 33 says I will go with you (plural) and I will give you rest (singular). The Lord will continue to go with the people of Israel, until Israel the people are given rest. At the time of Moses' words now, he says the Lord has been...

³⁸ driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land *as* an inheritance, as *it is* this day.

It is the Lord who accomplished the act. He was the One who gained the victory for Israel over Sihon and Og, the Amorite kings dwelling east of the Jordan.

Despite their great size and strength, they were dispossessed, or disinherited, from the land so that Israel could then possess it as an inheritance. Because of this, all of these great wonders which the Lord had displayed before Israel, Moses again implores them...

³⁹ Therefore know this day, and consider *it* in your heart,

The Hebrew is more expressive: *v'yadata ha'yom va'hashevota el l'vavekha* – “and know this day and return it to your heart.” The people are to consider everything that they had seen and then been reminded of, and then they were to take that knowledge and return it to their heart.

As always, the heart in the Bible is the seat of reasoning and understanding. Therefore, it is like our saying, “Think it through and then tuck it away in your mind.” They were to never forget this. By returning it to their heart, they could contemplate it continuously. So, Israel was to do with the knowledge...

³⁹ (con't) that the LORD Himself *is* God

The same emphatic form is brought forth again: *ki Yehovah, hu, ha'elohim* – “for Yehovah, He, the God.” Again, there is an article before “God.” The emphatic “He,” along with the highlighted nature of Yehovah being “the God,” is intended to reveal His uniqueness. Be sure to put the article before God in your Bible and make a 1 demerit margin note.

The uniqueness of Yehovah continues to be highlighted, again, in the next clause as He is THE God...

³⁹ (con't) in heaven above and on the earth beneath;

ba'shamayim mi'maal v'al ha'arets mi'takhat – “in the heavens from above and on the earth from under.” It is an important statement to include. In verse 36, it said that the Lord spoke out of the heavens, and that on the earth He showed His great fire. He is not limited to any part of creation.

He fills any and all of creation without distinction. And He can manifest Himself in any way He chooses, such as at Sinai. If someone said the stars from the heavens were gods, that would be false. If someone said the volcanoes from the earth were gods, that would be false.

Such things will be seen as we progress through Scripture, but Israel is being instructed now that those things are false. And yet, they will be the downfall of Israel numerous times because they failed to pay heed to what Moses is now telling them. There is one God and...

³⁹ (con't) **there is no other.**

ain od – “no other.” The word *od* signifies continuance or going around. It is widely translated as again, more, yet, still, else, and so on. There was none, there are none still, and none will be coming around. Yehovah is God and He alone...

⁴⁰ **You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today,**

This verse returns to the opening verse of the chapter, substantially repeating it, but it has now been supported with the reason it is to be so from these previous verses –

“Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you.” Deuteronomy 4:1

Moses has methodically given precise reasons why they are to keep the Lord’s law. These reasons were summed up with the thought that Yehovah is God, and He alone. As this is so, then He is to be obeyed as such.

He has chosen His people, He has revealed Himself to them, He has made them promises in the land they are going to enter, He has given them warnings for disobedience, and Moses has shown that what has occurred is unique in all of the history of the world. God has come to be among a particular people, and they are thus expected to be obedient to His law. In this, Moses says...

⁴⁰ (con't) **that it may go well with you and with your children after you,**

The word translated as “that” is *maan*. It speaks of a purpose or intent. Moses shows that obedience to His commands isn’t simply an authoritarian edict by a tyrant, but that it will serve a good and noble purpose, which is that it will go *yataav*, or pleasing, for them.

The Lord intends that the people will prosper if they are attentive to Him and if they do as He instructs. The implication is that if they are not obedient, things will go contrary to them, and they will suffer a self-inflicted wound in the process.

Moses then explains what “go well with you and your children after you” means by saying...

***40 (fin) and that you may prolong *your* days in the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time.”**

The people are, as we have seen before, tied to the land – meaning Canaan. By observing what the Lord commands, they will continue in the land. The implication is that if they do not, then they will be taken out of the land. It doesn’t need to be said to be understood.

Despite that, however, Moses finishes the section with the words *kal ha’yamim*, or “all the days.” There is no qualifier to the land grant. It is given to Israel forever. The qualifier is not in whether the land is theirs, but whether they can live in it. It is the Lord who determines if the agreement is sufficiently met by Israel.

When Israel is obedient, they may live in the land. When Israel is disobedient, they may not live in the land. Either way, the land is the Lord’s, and He has given it to Israel as a possession forever.

What has been seen, and what will continue to be seen, is that the law actually points to its own replacement. Israel was never obedient to the law, and they retained the land for an extended period of time before they were finally exiled.

Israel was returned to the land according to the Lord’s calculations of giving the land rest during Israel’s exile – seventy years. They returned and remained disobedient to the Lord throughout that time as well. Eventually, Christ came and fulfilled the law – an act intended to give life to Israel, but they rejected that and were exiled again.

They have been returned again, and they are promised seven more years to find an end to the Mosaic Covenant in Christ. The time of that final seven years is not far off. Eventually, it will come. To be obedient to the laws laid out here by Moses means to be obedient to them all.

We are progressing through Deuteronomy and we will see how this will be possible for them. Suffice it to say that their observance of the law in order to be right with God has nothing to do with their own efforts, but in trusting the Lord who gave the law in the first place.

Until that happens, the prospect of things going well for them and prolonging their days in the land cannot come to pass. But it will. Some wonderful day after much hardship and suffering, it will come to pass. For those of us who have understood what Israel missed, we have a marvelous hope set before us.

The Lord is coming for His people to deliver them from what lies ahead. He has a home prepared for His people, and the rest which we entered when we received Jesus will be realized in its fullness. It is a blessed hope. If it is something you have not yet received, you can do it today, even right now...

Closing Verse: *“Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel,
And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:*

‘I am the First and I am the Last;

Besides Me there is no God.

⁷And who can proclaim as I do?

Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me,

Since I appointed the ancient people.

And the things that are coming and shall come,

Let them show these to them.

⁸Do not fear, nor be afraid;

Have I not told you from that time, and declared it?

You are My witnesses.

Is there a God besides Me?

Indeed there is no other Rock;

I know not one.” Isaiah 44:6-8

Next Week: Deuteronomy 4:41-49 Places of safety for anyone, including Steve, Tom, or even Gordon... (On the East Side of the Jordan) (18th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

There Is No Other

For ask now concerning the days that are past
Which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth by His spoken word

And ask from one end of heaven to the other
Whether any great thing like this has happened
-----or anything like it has been heard

Did any people ever hear
The voice of God (If so, please their name to me give)
Speaking out of the midst of the fire
As you have heard, and live?

Or did God ever try to go and take for Himself a nation
From the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders
-----please to me apprise
By war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm
-----and by great terrors
According to all that the LORD your God did for you
-----in Egypt before your eyes?

To you it was shown, that you might know – you and not another
That the LORD Himself is God; there is besides Him none other

Out of heaven He let you hear His voice
That He might instruct you; to obedience you should aspire
On earth He showed you His great fire, and you heard His words
Out of the midst of the fire

And because He loved your fathers
Therefore He chose their descendants after them
And He brought you out of Egypt with His Presence
With His mighty power He brought Egypt mayhem

Driving out from before you nations
Greater and mightier than you
To bring you in, to give you their land as an inheritance
As it is this day; His word is faithful and true

Therefore know this day, and consider it in your heart
That the LORD Himself is God
In heaven above and on the earth beneath
There is no other; anything else is a fraud

You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments
Which I command you today, that it may go well with you
-----all will be sublime
And with your children after you, and that you
-----may prolong your days
In the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 4:41-49 **(On the East Side of the Jordan)**

Four times in today's nine verses the east side of the Jordan is mentioned, and each time it is given a description of the side to ensure we understand that it is referring to the east side. The east side is outside of the inheritance, and yet there is hope throughout the verses.

In the first three verses, it speaks of the cities of refuge – a clear allusion to Christ as we saw when the main passage of the cities of refuge was analyzed in Numbers 35. There is a place for those who had remained outside of the inheritance to go in order to be safe. What a wonderful promise that is.

And in the last six verses, the victories of Israel's recent past are again highlighted, and once again give minute detail concerning the layout of the land. Yes, it is all east of the Jordan, but the Jordan is there, and the Land of Promise lays on the other side. And yet, the law is highlighted at the beginning of those six verses. Why would the Lord structure these passages the way He has?

Text Verse: *"Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. ²² But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. ²³ But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor."* Galatians 3:21-25

Every single word of the word has meaning. Every verse is perfectly placed. Every passage has been carefully laid out through the wisdom of God. And for sure – nothing said in this word is superfluous. We may not understand why things are the way they are, but that is what study is for.

That is what meditating on the word of God is for. And, that is what prayer concerning the word is for. If we study and meditate on the word and we still don't understand what we are being told, we shouldn't give up. Rather, we should come to the Lord with our desires.

He expects us to do our part, but He also really wants the word revealed. Paul says the law was a tutor to bring us to Christ. That is true in several ways. First, it is a

steppingstone in the redemptive plan; teaching us about the nature of God – His perfection.

Secondly, it is given to show us how far we fall short of the standard. As Paul says, it is so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. These, and other such things are obvious, and they are explicitly stated in the New Testament.

However, the law is also given to show us types and pictures of other things. These can then help us to understand why certain passages are repeated, or why they are positioned in seemingly incorrect locations. In understanding the typological pictures, we find out that they are not. And, in understanding those pictures, we can also discern how the law is a tutor to bring us to Christ.

I could be wrong, but I don't think it's going to be the overt nature of the law which is going to lead Israel to the Lord. I think it is the typological pictures that will. Israel has had the law and the prophets for 2000 years, and they have failed to come to Christ.

Someday, they will see the typology back here in the Old Testament, maybe even in just the first five books of Moses, and it will suddenly dawn on them that the Lord has been there revealing Himself to them all along. I could be completely wrong, but it is what seems likely to me.

The pictures fill in what can't be seen on the surface. Such marvelous truths as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Three Cities of Refuge (verses 41-43)

So far, Deuteronomy has been a long recounting of what occurred, from the time after leaving Sinai until the point where Israel is presently at. Moses also reminded the people here in Chapter 4 of what they beheld at the giving of the Ten Commandments, and which established them as the Lord's covenant people at that time.

Interspersed into all of that have been exhortations and instructions concerning the statutes and judgments which have been taught, and which will be repeated and expanded upon in the chapters ahead. With all of this introductory information now recorded, and before Moses returns to the giving of the Ten Commandments in Chapter 5, this short section is carefully placed here.

The land east of Jordan has been acquired, the instruction for those who will dwell in this land concerning the conquest of Canaan have been given, and the surety that Moses will die outside of the promise has been settled. With all of that recorded, an aspect of the law which has already been given must now be settled. This then, explains the reason for the placement of this passage here. The last words of the last passage we reviewed last week said –

“You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong *your* days in the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time.” Deuteronomy 4:40

Because the land is subdued, and what lies ahead concerns the land of Canaan, this point of law must be settled now. If it were not so, then Moses could be accused of failing to keep the very statutes and judgments of law which he has exhorted Israel to keep.

But, being prompt and obedient to his duties, Moses does what the law expects him to do. That is introduced with the words of verse 41...

⁴¹ Then Moses set apart three cities

az yabdil Mosheh shalosh arim – “At that time set apart Moses three cities.” The verse begins with *az*, a demonstrative adverb which gives the sense of, “At that time.” It indicates that this passage is placed here, between two separate and independent dialogues, to complete the necessary details of law in accord with the word of the Lord. That was first stated in Numbers 35:9-16 –

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁰ ‘Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, ¹¹ then you shall appoint cities to be cities of refuge for you, that the manslayer who kills any person accidentally may flee there. ¹² They shall be cities of refuge for you from the avenger, that the manslayer may not die until he stands before the congregation in judgment. ¹³ And of the cities which you give, you shall have six cities of refuge. ¹⁴ You shall appoint three cities on this side of the Jordan, and three cities you shall appoint in the land of Canaan, *which* will be cities of refuge. ¹⁵ These six cities shall be for refuge for the children of Israel, for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them, that anyone who kills a person accidentally may flee there.’”

In Moses' words, the verb "set apart" is in the imperfect tense. Thus, it has the sense of, "Moses began to set apart three cities." The reason is certainly because the land grant is still conditional. It will only belong to these tribes "if" they perform according to Moses' words of Numbers 32 (and as repeated in Chapter 3) –

"If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben cross over the Jordan with you, every man armed for battle before the LORD, and the land is subdued before you, then you shall give them the land of Gilead as a possession. ³⁰ But if they do not cross over armed with you, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan." Numbers 32:29, 30

If they perform according to the word, these cities will be formally consecrated at that time. What is said here, and understanding all it entails, is actually more important than may seem. If everything concerning the designation of these cities of refuge isn't taken properly, it appears that there is an error in the word.

Indeed, this is how Cambridge views it. Without directly citing their woefully incoherent argument, they say that what is said in Numbers 35, here, in Deuteronomy 19, and in Joshua 20 demonstrates that some various obscure people compiled the accounts.

They say this because Moses could not have known that three cities would be designated on the other side of the Jordan as is indicated in Deuteronomy 19 –

"When the LORD your God has cut off the nations whose land the LORD your God is giving you, and you dispossess them and dwell in their cities and in their houses, ² you shall separate three cities for yourself in the midst of your land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess. ³ You shall prepare roads for yourself, and divide into three parts the territory of your land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, that any manslayer may flee there."

-Deuteronomy 19:1-3

But that fact was already stated by the Lord in Numbers 35. The Lord told Moses the exact details of all of the borders of Canaan in Numbers 34. The claim of Cambridge implies that the Lord, and what He said, cannot actually be the word of the all-knowing Lord. Cambridge then says that the actual designation of these cities didn't occur until Joshua 20, where it says –

“The LORD also spoke to Joshua, saying, ² ‘Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘Appoint for yourselves cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses.’” Joshua 20:1, 2

A few verses later, it then says –

“So they appointed Kedesh in Galilee, in the mountains of Naphtali, Shechem in the mountains of Ephraim, and Kirjath Arba (which *is* Hebron) in the mountains of Judah. ⁸ And on the other side of the Jordan, by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness on the plain, from the tribe of Reuben, Ramoth in Gilead, from the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan, from the tribe of Manasseh. ⁹ These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel and for the stranger who dwelt among them, that whoever killed a person accidentally might flee there, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood until he stood before the congregation.” Joshua 20:7-9

In these accounts, Cambridge makes several points to justify their reasoning. It is that Numbers 35 states it (1) far more elaborately, (2) in a different vocabulary, and (3) with some differences of substance. And that in Joshua 20 this is stated again, but with some different terms. Their conclusion then is –

“This is the only fair interpretation; if the law Deuteronomy 19:1 ff. had meant three cities in W. Palestine in addition to the three already set apart by Moses on the E. of Jordan, it would surely have alluded to the latter. The law was obviously made in consequence of the institution of the single sanctuary and without regard to any historical tradition of what Moses or Joshua had done.” Dolts at Cambridge

First, the difference in vocabulary is exactly why these accounts are written where they are and as they are. Secondly, the form of the verb given by Moses in this verse which is in the imperfect tense is exactly why it is so.

Numbers 35 gave the law for designating the cities of refuge. Deuteronomy 4 obediently designates the three cities in accord with that word. Deuteronomy 19 is Moses’ reiteration that the law for cities of refuge must also be adhered to when the other tribes cross into and subdue Canaan. And Joshua 20 finalizes that law for both sides of the Jordan.

Moses “began” to appoint the cities. But the appointment is conditional based on these tribes east of the Jordan helping the tribes west of the Jordan. Until that happens, the appointment is not settled.

Further, Moses says to *badal*, or separate, these cities for this purpose. It is simply an acknowledgement that these cities will, in fact, be the ones given for the set purpose. That same word is used by Moses in Deuteronomy 19 concerning the other three cities west of Jordan.

Then, in Joshua 20:2 the Lord says to *nathan*, or give, the cities of refuge to the tribes. This is the formal grant of the cities to Israel for the set purpose of refuge. In Joshua 20:7, it then uses the word *qadash* – to set apart or consecrate. Once the cities were given, they were then consecrated for the purpose.

Finally, in Joshua 20:9, a word used only once in Scripture, *muadah*, is seen. It signifies “to appoint,” and it is the final note concerning the obedience of the command of the Lord which began all the way back in Numbers 35.

The very thing that Cambridge uses to claim the words of Deuteronomy are a hodgepodge of later scribal insertions, coming hundreds of years after the account, is the thing that fully supports that it is one unified whole which was received by Moses and then Joshua at the times the Bible carefully records what occurred.

All of this detail, which took several hours for me to compile, is so that you can be certain of the fact that the word is reliable, without error, and it is exactly what it claims to be – the word of God. Concerning the three cities now being discussed, Moses says...

⁴¹ (con’t) **on this side of the Jordan,**

b’ever ha’yarden – “in side the Jordan.” It should not say, “this,” but rather “on the side of the Jordan.” Where the account is written is irrelevant. The word always is in relation to Canaan, regardless of which side is being spoken of. In order to then define which side is referred to, Moses then says...

⁴¹ (con’t) **toward the rising of the sun,**

mizrekah shamesh – “toward rising sun.” This explains what was lacking in the previous clause. The word *mizrakh* signifies the place of the rising of the sun. It comes from *zarakh*, which means “to rise” or “come forth.” That, in turn, comes from a root

signifying “to shoot forth beams.” Thus, it speaks of the place from which the sun rises, and therefore the east.

It is east of the Jordan that these cities are now first designated for a particular and important purpose. It is so...

⁴² **that the manslayer might flee there,**

lanu shamah rotseakh – “That might flee there the manslayer.” As described in detail in Numbers 35, the word is *ratsakh*. It signifies the unsanctioned taking of a human life – whether it is intentional or unintentional. Whichever it is, it makes no difference. If the death was unsanctioned killing, the avenger of blood had the right – and indeed the responsibility – to take the life of the slayer.

However, the Lord determined that if the slaying was unintentional, the slayer could flee to one of these cities and be given protection from the avenger of blood. If he was a true murderer, or even if he was innocent, but he didn’t flee to one of these cities, his life was to be taken by the avenger. The cities then were for a person...

⁴² (cont) **who kills his neighbor unintentionally,**

The Hebrew reads, “who slays another without knowing.” In Numbers 35, a different word was used, signifying a mistake, or in ignorance. Either way, both accounts signify that he did not realize that his actions would lead to the death of another person.

He may have been building a brick wall and accidentally dropped a brick on another person’s head (making him dead). He may have been playing baseball, hit the ball, broke the bat, and the broken bat flew into the head of someone watching from the sidelines. And so on.

It is an unintentional slaying of another human, but it was not sanctioned killing – such as in war, a judicial execution, and so on. Despite being unintentional, he is a slayer and the avenger had the right and responsibility to then take his life. The reason for the killing is irrelevant, as is seen in the next words...

⁴² (cont) **without having hated him in time past,**

The Hebrew here contains an idiomatic expression, *mi’temol shilshom* – “yesterday, three days since.” It is a way of saying “before,” or “in the past.”

There was no animosity toward the person at any time. They could have been complete strangers or even good friends. Whatever the case, the person slayed another human without it being legally sanctioned. In this, he had only one choice open to him, a provision granted by the Lord for his protection...

⁴² (cont) **and that by fleeing to one of these cities he might live:**

Here, the Hebrew is very specific, *akhat min he'arim ha'el* – “one from the cities the these.” He could flee to any one of these cities, but it had to be one of them. He could not flee to just any city and take up residence.

If he were equal distance between two of them, he could choose which one he would go to. And he would need to choose well because he could, ostensibly, be spending the rest of his life within the walls of that city. And those cities were...

⁴³ **Bezer**

All three cities to be named are introduced into the Bible in this verse. The first is Betser. The name comes from *batsar*, meaning to enclose or make inaccessible, and so it means “Fortress,” or “Defense.” However, it is identical to the word *betser*, which means “precious ore.” That is seen only in Job 22 –

“Then you will lay your **gold** in the dust,
And the *gold* of Ophir among the stones of the brooks.
²⁵ Yes, the Almighty will be your **gold**
And your precious silver.” Job 22:24, 25

The idea is that the ore is what people use as a defense or a protection, but the person would put away this protection and trust in the Lord as his gold – meaning his protection – instead.

⁴³ (con't) **in the wilderness on the plateau for the Reubenites,**

More correctly, it reads, “in the wilderness, in *the* land *of* the plain.” The *midbar*, or wilderness, is a place of God’s grace and of closeness to God, but it is also a place of testing. Next, *ha'mishor*, or “the plain,” is a word which signifies a level place. Thus, it figuratively speaks of uprightness. It is “the place of uprightness.” Reuben means, “See, a Son.”

43 (con't) Ramoth

Ramoth comes from *rum*, meaning “high” or “exalted.” Thus, it signifies “Heights,” or “Lofty Place.”

43 (con't) in Gilead for the Gadites,

Gilead is prefixed by an article, and it means, “The Perpetual Fountain.” Gad means, “Troop,” or “Fortune.” It signifies “a fortune for which a troublesome, invasive effort is made” (Abarim).

43 (con't) and Golan

Golan comes from *golah*, meaning “Exile.” The NET Bible also defines it as “Their captivity: Their Rejoicing.”

43 (con't) in Bashan for the Manassites.

The Bashan means something like “The Place of Fertile Soil.” Manasseh means “He shall Forget.”

These are the three cities of refuge, and they each are beautifully named to highlight the purpose of the city. In turn, each city highlights the One who these cities represent.

Bezer – The manslayer can run to the Defense, laying aside his own “gold” or protection, coming to the One who will protect him with Himself. This is in the place where God’s grace is displayed, and it is the place of the uprightness. As Paul says, “For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes” (Romans 10:4). It is the state that one possesses when he comes to Christ.

That is found in the territory of Reuben, or “See, a Son.” It refers then to the Defense of Christ, God’s grace, and it is in a place of uprightness.

Ramoth – The manslayer can run to the Lofty Place. Though his actions deserve death, in Christ, God is willing to accept the one who comes to Him through Christ. As Peter says, “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time” (1 Peter 5:6).

In this, the person comes to The Perpetual Fountain and is granted eternal life. Being in the land of Gad, it signifies a fortune for which a troublesome, invasive effort is made. In other words, it acknowledges the trials Christ went through in order to bring him to this fortunate spot of favor.

Golan – The person who flees into exile is the freest person of all if it is captivity in Christ. As Paul says, “...bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5). This is said to be in the Bashan, or “The Place of Fertile Soil.”

This then speaks of the fertile soil of the word of God. As Paul says, “So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). This is in the land of Manasseh, or “He Shall Forget,” signifying that Christ shall forget the past deeds of the person who has come to Him. He is secure in the place of refuge, meaning Christ.

Without expanding on his thoughts at all, Adam Clarke curiously tossed out the following concerning these cities –

“As the cities of refuge are generally understood to be types of the salvation provided by Christ for sinners; so their names have been thought to express some attribute of the Redeemer of mankind.” Adam Clarke

A simple study of the words shows that what Adam Clarke surmised is exactly what the Lord is conveying to us in these three remarkable locations.

*Where can I go to save my life?
How can I get free from what I have done?
I killed a man, but not by strife
In innocence have I slain this one*

*But the avenger of blood waits for me
To take my life for what I have done
Is there a place to where I can flee?
Is there a place to where I can run?*

*Who will save me from what has come about?
Who can rescue me from what I have done?
Is there a chance for me? How will it come about?
Lord, my only hope is that to You I run*

II. After They Came out of Egypt (verses 44-49)

⁴⁴ **Now this *is* the law which Moses set before the children of Israel.**

v'zot ha'torah asher sham Moseh liphne bene Yisrael – “And this, the Torah, which set Moses before the sons of Israel.”

The first main discourse of Deuteronomy – that going from verse 1:1 until verse 4:40 – is complete. As there was an introductory statement which led into the first discourse, so there is now one which leads into the second.

In other words, what is said here looks forward to Chapter 5. It is an anticipatory statement concerning the law that Moses will speak out to the people. He then next further defines what that means...

⁴⁵ **These *are* the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments**

The Torah, or law, is subdivided by Moses into several categories which are variously translated. Using the NKJV, as I do for all sermons, this is the breakdown of the Torah that Moses uses –

- The testimonies – *ha'edot*. It is the word *edah*, a witness or testimony, coming from the word *ed*, meaning a witness or testimony. One could think of something set out for the well-being of God's people.
- The statutes – *ha'khuqim*. It is the word *khoq*. It signifies something prescribed or owed, and thus a statute. It comes from *khaqaq*, which means to cut, inscribe, or decree. One could think of a written precept that is to be obeyed.
- The judgments – *ha'mishpatim*. It is the word *mishpat*; a judgment, determination, verdict, etc. It comes from *shapat*, meaning to judge or govern. A judge will put down a ruling which is legal and is to be obeyed. The Lord is the ultimate Judge. His rulings are to be followed.

These divisions of law, which together form the Torah, or law, are those...

^{45 (con't)} **which Moses spoke to the children of Israel after they came out of Egypt,**

The Hebrew says, *b'tsetam mi'mitsraim*, "in their coming out from Egypt." It speaks of the entire time of their coming out, even until the present time. Egypt means "double distress." They were brought out of that and to Sinai. The Lord spoke out some of these words at Sinai – such as the giving of the Ten Commandments, which will be seen in the next chapter.

However, there are differences which will be seen in the Ten Commandments between Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. There are other words of law which have not been spoken before – such as the details of what to do with the annual tithes in Chapter 14.

Therefore, the words, "in their coming out from Egypt," are an all-inclusive statement which brings them up to the moment in which Moses is now speaking. All of this is the Torah, or law, which Moses revisits and expands upon now...

⁴⁶ **on this side of the Jordan,**

b'ever ha'yarden – "In side the Jordan." It is the same phrase as verse 41. It is an expression which requires further explanation, and so Moses next provides it...

⁴⁶ (con't) **in the valley opposite Beth Peor,**

The word for "valley" here is *gai*. It comes from *gevah*, meaning exaltation. Figuratively, at times, it speaks of arrogance or pride. That comes from *gaah*, exaltation or triumph.

⁴⁶ (con't) **in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon,**

This goes back to Numbers 21 and the repeated story in Deuteronomy 2. Sihon means "Tempestuous" or "Warrior." Amorite comes from *amar*, meaning to utter or say. Therefore, the name signifies being spoken of, and thus "Renowned."

Also, the word *kheshvon*, comes from *khashav*. It is a word which signifies to consider, calculate, or devise. Therefore, it signifies an explanation of things, or "Intelligence." This is the land where they are now, and what occurs here is included in the thought of the previous verse – "in their coming out from Egypt."

They have come out of Egypt, but they have not yet entered into the promise. In this location where they are, we then read...

⁴⁶ (con't) **whom Moses and the children of Israel defeated**

The defeat of the kings on the east side of the Jordan has been highlighted several times already. It is a statement surely given to bolster the confidence of those who will cross over and enter into the promise. These great foes were defeated, and so how much more will the Lord defeat the foes Israel would face once they entered into the Promise.

Although this is speaking of Israel collectively, the truth applies to any who have come to Him. We have had enemies we faced before coming to Christ, and Christ defeated them. How much more then should we trust that in our life in Christ, He will defeat any and all foes who come our way!

The repetition for Moses is a call to us as well. He has defeated sin and the power of the devil in our lives. How much more will He defeat death, though it may come, through the power of His own resurrection. We are to be confident in our walk with the Lord, trusting Him from beginning to end. For now, Moses goes on...

⁴⁶ (con't) **after they came out of Egypt.**

It is the same expression used in the previous verse, *b'tsetam mi'mitsraim*, "in their coming out from Egypt." This shows that the entire process of coming out is what is spoken of here. It is an ongoing statement which has even now not been fully realized.

⁴⁷ **And they took possession of his land and the land of Og king of Bashan,**

Sihon is mentioned first in this because it is the land taken from him in which Israel is currently dwelling. He was also the first king defeated, followed by Og. It is in this land that they wait out their final moments, receiving the words of Moses and looking forward to their long-awaited entrance into Canaan.

As was seen in Numbers and Deuteronomy, Og comes from *uggah*, which is a round baked cake. That comes from *ug*, to bake. The Bashan signifies "The Place of Fertile Soil." Together, these two are jointly described as...

⁴⁷ (con't) **two kings of the Amorites,**

shene malke ha'emori – "two kings of the Amorite." In verse 46 and here the word Amorite is singular. It speaks of the people group as a whole. Each king had his own sphere of rule, but they ruled over the same ethnic group of people.

⁴⁷ (con't) **who were on this side of the Jordan,**

It is the same phrase already seen three times in our few verses today. It speaks of a side of the Jordan without any particular distinction of which side. The indicator of which side is affixed by the subsequent clause. Which is, as closely stated in verse 41...

47 (con't) toward the rising of the sun,

Place of rising sun, meaning “eastward.” The repetition of these verses throughout the past chapters, and even in this chapter, is given for specificity, it is given for a reminder of the past, it is given for encouragement in the future, and it is given as a testimony that what is written actually happened.

It occurred at a specific place, at a particular point in time, and it is in a location that was settled based on the events which preceded what is being conveyed now. All of the repetition is an important note of surety to Israel, and to the reader of Scripture, and yet, Cambridge flippantly states the following –

“This part of Deuteronomy 4:46 and Deuteronomy 4:47 are [Sic], of course, superfluous after chs. 2 and 3.” Cambridge

Can you imagine calling a part of the word of God “superfluous,” as if God had wasted His breath in specifically detailing everything He has given us in His word? The arrogance of such an attitude is astonishing.

At times, I will say during a sermon something like, “The words here seem almost superfluous,” and then I go on and explain why they are not. To simply state that it is so without any qualification is a damnable offense against the word, and thus against the One who gave us this wonderful treasure.

But enough of that for now. Moses continues with his description of the land which was previously possessed by these two kings...

48 from Aroer, which is on the bank of the River Arnon,

As has been seen, Aroer means “Stripped,” “Bare,” or “Naked.” The word translated as “bank” is *saphah*. It signifies a border as in a lip, edge, or bank like in the lip of a river, a garment, the mouth, etc. Thus, it also means speech, language, etc, because that is where language proceeds from.

The noun meaning “river,” is *nakhal*, and it implies a wadi which flows during the times of rain. The word is from the verb *nakhal* which speaks of obtaining as an inheritance or possession. And, Arnon means “Rejoicing.” This large expanse of land then extends...

48 (con’t) even to Mount Sion (that is, Hermon),

This is the only time that name Mount Sion is used in the Bible, but it is explained as being Hermon. The name Sion may be a shortening of the name Sirion which was given in Chapter 3, but it is said to come from the word *siy*, which means “loftiness.” That comes from *nasa*, to lift up, or carry. Hermon means “Sacred.”

These borders describe the southernmost and northernmost areas of the land that Israel had conquered. This land is then further described...

49 and all the plain on the east side of the Jordan

The word *aravah*, translated as “plain,” goes back to a word signifying a pledge, and thus it speaks of a guarantee. This plain is again described as being on the east side of the Jordan and it stretches...

49 (con’t) as far as the Sea of the Arabah,

It is the same word, *aravah*, which was just translated as “plain” in the previous clause. This is why some translations will call the plain “the plain of the Arabah,” or some will call the sea “the sea of the plain.” This is translator’s preference and one shouldn’t get confused by any reading because of this. Finally, we come to...

***49 (fin) below the slopes of Pisgah.**

The word here translated as slopes was first seen in Chapter 3. It comes from a word signifying a foundation or bed. That then comes from a root meaning an outpouring. Therefore, it means either springs or slopes – both of which pour out. As *ha’pisgah* or the Pisgah is a mountain with a cleft in it, it probably means “slopes.”

The words of these six verses first spoke of the Torah, or law, and all of its testimonies, statutes, and judgments – spoken out by Moses. Moses means, “He who draws out.” Here as is seen elsewhere, he pictures Christ. It is He who draws out the will of the Lord and who embodies that will.

There is the note that this is spoken in the coming out of Israel from Egypt. Egypt, or “double distress,” speaks of the land where man lives. He is born in sin, and he cannot redeem himself. Thus, he is in double distress.

The words are ongoing and speak of the process of bringing Israel out. It is not “after” they came out of Egypt, but “in their coming out.” Christ has accomplished His work, but Israel never accepted it, and so the narrative is ongoing.

Hence, there is the continued stress – saying it again and again in different ways – that they are still on the eastern side of the Jordan, meaning the Descender – which pictures Christ. They are in the *gai*, or valley opposite Beth Peor, or the House of the Opening.

Peor comes from *paar* which is used in Isaiah 5 when speaking of Sheol, the pit of death, opening its mouth beyond measure to receive those who reject the Lord.

When under law – whether trusting in the law for righteousness, or in rejecting the law and satisfying one’s own desires – the inevitable outcome is death.

It is a reminder of their previous failure of falling into idolatry. But being in the *gai*, or valley opposite it, this speaks of the triumph over that. They are in this place of exaltation, right on the border of the Jordan or Descender, picturing Christ. It is a way of showing that they can go in either direction – toward Beth Peor, or toward the Jordan and into the promise.

It then noted that this is the land of Sihon and Og with all of the specificity connected to their names – meaning their titles and the land which they ruled. But it notes that they were defeated, again using the term “in their coming out of Egypt.”

Previous sermons have shown that they pictured the Antichrist and the False Prophet. The foes are defeated – these two great kings of the Renowned. After mentioning them, the land was again described. Aroer means, “Stripped,” “Bare,” or “Naked. It is what Hebrews refers to –

“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.” Hebrews 4:12, 13

Aroer is said to be on the *sephat*, or lip, of the *nakhal*, or River, Arnon – signifying the inheritance of Rejoicing. This land then extends all the way from there to Sion, or Loftiness, also known as Hermon, or Sacred Mountain – a picture of heaven.

After noting that entire expanse, it then mentioned *ha'aravah*, or the plain, and the sea of *ha'aravah*. The word, as we saw, comes from a root signifying a pledge, or guarantee.

The whole area – from the inheritance of rejoicing, all the way to heaven itself, as well as the plain, is given as a picture of what is offered to Israel. The same word *aravon*, which is the root of *aravah*, is also found in the New Testament – *arrabon*. It is used to describe the pledge or guarantee when one believes in Christ.

In Paul's letter to the Ephesians, one can see a summary of what Moses is relaying to us now in just two verses –

“In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” Ephesians 1:13, 14

There is the inheritance, there is the guarantee, there is the praise, there is the rejoicing, there is the attainment of the heavenly place. And all of this is summed up with the final words, “below the slopes of Pisgah.” It is the Outpouring of the Cleft.

It is the spot where in Numbers 21 it was said to look down on the wasteland. That would be to the east. In Deuteronomy 34, it is where Moses will ascend to before he dies in order to look to the west – towards Jericho. The wasteland signifies what is past, Jericho and the Land of Promise signify what is ahead.

It is an offering to Israel to speak the word, receive the inheritance, obtain the guarantee, and enter the promise. But one must pass through Christ to do so. They can look back to the past or forward to the promise.

This is what is being presented here as an introductory passage which will reiterate the law – the impossible body of requirements that will be set before Israel. That body of law must die outside of the promise, and the inheritance must be received by faith.

The enemies are defeated, access to the promise is right there awaiting the people, the cities of refuge have all been named, and they all point to Christ. The layout of the land

speaks of Christ, of the inheritance, and of the promise, but the law must first be repeated to the people once again.

The reason for this is that the law itself will call out for its own ending. It did not get them into the promise the first time, and it cannot get them into it the next time.

Having said that, this is all typology. Israel will, in fact, enter Canaan. And when they do, they will be under law. That will continue for the next 1400 years until Christ comes and completes His work.

The typology is given to show us Christ and His work, but the actual narrative is given to show us true history of what occurred with Israel under the time of the law.

We can't miss this particular point. The failings of Israel under the law are as important in revealing Christ as are the pictures of Christ within the law. They could not have known these things at that time, because the law was to be a tutor to the world of what the pictures only anticipate.

However, since Christ's coming, these things are known, and they are explained in the word. The problem is that Israel rejected Christ, and they rejected that word. Thus, the very lives these people lived have become a picture of their own exile, punishment, and future reconciliation.

I think this is probably why the same names, places, and descriptions have been given so many times in Numbers and in Deuteronomy. It is to alert them to inspect the words, see the patterns, and then respond to what is presented.

And though we are not Israel, we are all expected to do the same. The word – this beautiful self-confirming word – has been given to show us again, and again, and yet again, that God has sent the Messiah. He has sent Christ. And we are under obligation to respond to that.

Let us be responsible and act accordingly, calling out to Jesus, leaving the barren wasteland of our past existence, and accepting the inheritance which is pictured in our passage today. Jesus Christ is our place of refuge, and He is the One who will guard us as His possession until the day He brings us home to glory. Yes, let us pay heed and respond according to that wonderful call.

Closing Verse: *"...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come."* Ephesians 1:17-21

Next Week: Deuteronomy 5:1-6 *It's like going from a miry bog and into a swampy pondage...* (From Bondage to Bondage) (19th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

On the East Side of the Jordan

Then Moses set apart three cities on this side of the Jordan
Toward the rising of the sun, is where they shall be
That the manslayer might flee there
Who kills his neighbor unintentionally

Without having hated him in time past, these cities he did give
And that by fleeing to one of these cities he might live

Bezer in the wilderness on the plateau for the Reubenites
Ramoah in Gilead for the Gadites
And Golan in Bashan for the Manassites
These were those three sites

Now this is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel
This is the law which he to the people did tell

These are the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments
Which Moses spoke to the children of Israel
After they came out of Egypt

On this side of the Jordan as well

In the valley opposite Beth Peor, in the land of Sihon
King of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon
Whom Moses and the children of Israel defeated
After they came out of Egypt, by the Lord's hand alone

And they took possession of his land
And the land of Og king of Bashan, two kings of the Amorites
Who were on this side of the Jordan
Toward the rising of the sun
-----where starts the day and ends the nights

From Aroer, which is on the bank of the River Arnon
Even to Mount Sion (that is, Hermon) – Hallelujah!
And all the plain on the east side of the Jordan
As far as the Sea of the Arabah, below the slopes of Pisgah

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 5:1-6 (From Bondage to Bondage)

How many here have read the entire Old Testament? In the Law of Moses, there are said to be 613 individual laws. Can anyone here remember all of them? Has anyone here fulfilled all of them? If you didn't answer, but are listening and thinking, "Yes, I've fulfilled them all," then you are sorely deceived.

First, you would have to know all 613 of them, which you don't. And secondly, many of them cannot be fulfilled today. It is impossible, because there is no temple and no sacrificial system, among several other reasons of varying significance.

But, if you are one of the people of Israel who has not come to Christ Jesus, or if you are one of the people who piously claims to adhere to the Torah, meaning the Law of Moses, you stand condemned for several reasons.

First, the law itself condemns you because of your failure to perfectly meet it, which is certainly the case. You cannot claim adherence to the law and, at the same time, claim atonement under the law. It does not exist.

Secondly, you have rejected the grace of God in Christ, having instead relied on works of the law. You cannot claim adherence to the law and, at the same time, receive the grace of Christ. The two are mutually exclusive.

Text Verse: *"How can a young man cleanse his way?*

By taking heed according to Your word.

¹⁰ With my whole heart I have sought You;

Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!

¹¹ Your word I have hidden in my heart,

That I might not sin against You." Psalm 119:9-11

The psalmist says that a young man can cleanse his way by taking heed to according to the word of God. That is true, but it is only true because the word of God anticipates the coming Redeemer. If a Redeemer is said to be coming, then it means....? Anyone? That there is a need to be redeemed.

How can that be for this psalmist, or for anyone in Israel? We see in today's verses that the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Elsewhere, that action is noted as an act of redemption, such as in Deuteronomy 7:8.

If they were redeemed, then why do they need to be redeemed? Didn't the one redemption take care of things? The answer is obviously, "No." How is that so? Well, stay awake and attentive for the next few minutes and we will discover exactly how it is so.

It is an important lesson which is clearly to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. A Covenant with Us in Horeb (verses 1-4)

¹And Moses called all Israel,

vayikra mosheh el kal Yisrael – "And called Moses to all Israel." There is the sense of the lifting of the voice of Moses beyond the state it has been in. He has been speaking to the people since Deuteronomy 1, but now he calls out to the people. It is reflective of what we see in John 7 –

"On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" John 7:37, 38

Jesus was speaking to the people in a more general manner, but He then raised his voice for any and all to hear. This is probably the same thing Moses does here. He has been giving a general discussion of the events of the past, of the expectations for the people, and so on. But now, he lifts his voice and openly calls out.

The recording of that act, regardless as to how many people actually heard him, is its own call to "all Israel," not just at that time, but for all time. When the reader comes to this passage and sees the words, *vayikra mosheh el kal yisrael* – "And called Moses to all Israel," it is to alert them. It is to mentally call to their minds the importance of the words which lie ahead.

¹ (con't) **and said to them:**

vayomer alehem – "And said to them." Rather than *davar*, or speak, it is *amar*, or said. As always, the change reflects a state of participation by the hearer. When *davar* is used, they are to listen as if a command is given. When *amar* is said, there is the sense of hearing and participating in the instruction. That begins with...

¹ (con't) **“Hear, O Israel,**

sh'ma Yisrael – “Hear Israel.” The words are in the singular only here. In the rest of the passage, they will be in the plural. Even if each individual is to hear, Israel as a single collective is addressed in order to hear and to heed.

The word *shama*, or hear, is not uncommon, but it should be explained. It means more than to simply “hear,” in such an instance. Rather, it implies attention and obedience is to be applied to what is heard. In this form, it will be used repeatedly in Deuteronomy – calling Israel to hear and to attend to what is said. In this case, it is to...

¹ (con't) **the statutes and judgments**

ha'khukim va'eth ha'mishpatim – “the statutes and the judgments.” These are the main areas of subject matter which comprise the instruction to follow. The first is similar to written precepts that are to be obeyed. They are laws requiring the attention and obedience of the people. The second is a matter which is prescribed, as a legal decision by a lawgiver, and thus it is to be obeyed.

This statement is given just prior to the repeating of the Ten Commandments, but they are more logically connected to what will be said after the repetition of those Ten Commandments, meaning all of the general statutes and judgments which will be spoken out to the people later.

¹ (con't) **which I speak in your hearing today,**

asher anokhi dober b'azenekhem ha'yom – “which I speak in your ears today.” To speak in the people’s ears implies that they will then hear. However, it does not mean that they will assimilate, respond, and perform. But that is what the word *sh'ma* that Moses spoke calls for, and so...

¹ (con't) **that you may learn them**

u-lemadtem otham – “and you may learn them.” The word is *lamad* which was introduced in verse 4:1. It signifies “to goad,” and thus to teach. The rod is used to instruct, and from that rod, instruction is remembered. That is reflected in Proverbs 10:13 –

“Wisdom is found on the lips of him who has understanding,
But a rod *is* for the back of him who is devoid of understanding.”

The idea is that Israel is, at this point – and as has been demonstrated by their fathers – devoid of understanding. But in hearing and heeding the instruction which lies ahead, understanding will be attained, and wisdom can then be applied to that understanding. The understanding comes from the learning. The wisdom is found in its application, as is next seen...

1 (con't) and be careful to observe them.

u-shemartem laasotam – “and be careful to do them.” One might not know the law at all. This is a person with no understanding. One may know the law and fail to do what the law says. That demonstrates understanding, but a lack of wisdom. And, one can know the law and do what the law says. It demonstrates a person with both understanding and wisdom. This is what Moses is conveying to the people.

The reason for the need for this is found in the explanation Moses will now carefully remind the people of...

²The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.

Yehovah elohenu karat immanu berit b'khorev – “Yehovah our God cut with us *a* covenant in Horeb.” The word “us” speaks of the nation, Israel. It is the people who descended from Abraham, through Isaac, and then through Jacob. It signifies the tribes of Israel. It is this group, and none other, that Moses is referring to. That this was a covenant is explicitly stated in Exodus –

“And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, ‘Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: ⁴‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine. ⁶ And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.’” Exodus 19:3-6

The fact that this is its own covenant is repeated in Exodus 24, Exodus 34, and then into the book of Leviticus. It is even implied in Numbers when referring to the Ark of the

Covenant. The ark was detailed and built at Sinai as a part of the instruction under the law. Thus, the Ark of the Covenant speaks of the covenant at Sinai (Horeb). Moses next continues to define what he is referring to...

³The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers,

lo eth avotenu kara Yehovah eth ha'berit ha'zot – “Not with our fathers cut Yehovah the covenant the this.” Who the “fathers” are is debated, but the debate is actually unnecessary. Charles Ellicott takes the “not” as meaning “not only.” In other words, it was with our fathers who were alive at Horeb and with us also.

This cannot be if the words include Moses himself, which they certainly do. He says, *avotenu* – “our fathers,” not *avotekhem* – “your fathers.”

Augustine says it refers to those who died in the wilderness. Calvin says it refers to the forefathers who dwelt in Egypt. Keil says it refers to Abraham.

It cannot be speaking of those who died in the wilderness. It is as obvious as the nose on one's face that those people died *because* of the covenant at Horeb. They were under the law, they failed to believe the Lord, and they suffered the penalty of the law. With the exception of Moses, Joshua, and Caleb, all of them were dead since leaving Horeb.

Therefore, the term is speaking of any fathers who preceded those who were there at Sinai at the giving of the law. It includes those who lived and died in Egypt, and it includes the fathers who were before them, meaning Isaac and Abraham. But it surely even extends to those before Abraham.

The reason for this is that no group of people, going all the way back to Adam himself, was included in the covenant that Moses is referring to. The importance of this is that this law has no bearing upon any people, anywhere in the world – and at any time to the present – except those of Israel who received it.

To understand this more completely, Paul speaks of the covenant to Abraham in Galatians 3. There he says –

“Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed,’ who is Christ. ¹⁷ And this I say, *that* the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the

promise of no effect. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance *is* of the law, *it is* no longer of promise; but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.” Galatians 3:16-18

Paul speaks of a different covenant, one of Promise, that was made with Abraham. He then notes that the law came 430 years after that covenant was made.

Therefore, the “fathers” of this verse in Deuteronomy first speaks of any of Israel’s ancestors reaching all the way back to the time of Abraham. All of them lived under Promise. By stating the time interval, Paul is demonstrating this. Further, in Romans 2, Paul refers to those “without law,” saying –

“For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law. Romans 2:12

By saying this, the words of Moses here then also extend to even those fathers before Abraham. Paul’s words show that the law only applies to Israel and to no other people – ever. The law may be, and it indeed is, God’s standard as is revealed in Christ, but it is only applied to those to whom it was given, meaning Israel.

The “fathers” in this verse are all in the line of Israel, all the way back to Adam, who are before the time of the giving of the law. The covenant was not made with any of them...

^{3 (con’t)} **but with us, those who *are* here today,**

There is an emphasis in the words. *ki itanu anakhnu elleh poh ha’yom* – “But with us – we – these here today.” The words here show that this is inclusive of the fathers who died in the wilderness. By stating, “us – we – these here today,” he is – by default – including himself.

As he was among the fathers, and as many of those with Moses now were at Sinai from birth up until nineteen years of age, it shows that Moses is referring to Israel – the people – as an “organic whole” (Keil). Though some had died, he refers to the people as a living unit – Israel. That is inclusive of...

^{3 (con’t)} **all of us who *are* alive.**

kulanu khayim – “all of us who alive.” The words are actually an exemplary note of continuance. Because most of those who were alive at Sinai were now dead, it shows

the binding nature of the covenant upon not only the children who were alive at the giving of the law, but even upon those who were yet to be born.

It is thus an all-inclusive statement which speaks of those who received it, and those who continue to receive it because of the agreement by their fathers. There is an almost tragic note to the words, however.

The law is binding upon Israel as long as Israel exists, and/or until the annulling of that law for the individual within Israel, or the annulling of the law for the collective who is Israel.

No person of Israel was exempt from the weight of the law, and the nation as a whole would remain yoked under the law until all is complete. For the individual of Israel, the law ends in acceptance of Christ as one's personal Savior –

“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

⁴ For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”

-Romans 10:3, 4

For the collective of Israel, the law will end in acceptance of Christ as their national Messiah –

“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶ And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:

‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion,
And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;

²⁷ For this *is* My covenant with them,
When I take away their sins.’” Romans 11:25-27

To more fully understand this aspect of the law, Hebrews 8 must be cited. There, the author says, while first referring to the covenant given at Horeb which Moses is now speaking of –

“For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. ⁸ Because finding fault with them, He says: ‘Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of

Israel and with the house of Judah—⁹ not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. ¹⁰ For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ¹¹ None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. ¹² For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.’

¹³ In that He says, ‘A new *covenant*,’ He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.” Hebrews 8:7-13

In this passage, the author of Hebrews first refers to the covenant at Horeb. He then, speaking to Israel – and no one else – cites Jeremiah 31 which speaks of a New Covenant, a covenant entirely different and separate from that which came at Horeb.

He then says that in this New Covenant, the first is obsolete. However, it is only obsolete so far as the New Covenant is accepted by those under the Old. Until that occurs, Israel remains under the Old. That is explained by the words “is becoming obsolete and growing old,” and “is ready to vanish away.”

If Christ’s work annulled it entirely, without regard to Israel’s acceptance of it, the author would not have written it in the present tense some 30 or more years after Christ completed His work. Rather, it is annulled for any in Christ, and it will be annulled for the collective body when they call on Christ as a nation.

The time of that occurrence, then, is referred to by Jesus Himself in Matthew 23. In that passage, Jesus speaks to Jerusalem, signifying the seat of power and authority in Israel –

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing! ³⁸ See! Your house is left to you desolate; ³⁹ for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed *is* He who comes in the name of the LORD!’” Matthew 23:37-39

Until this occurs, what Moses says here now in Deuteronomy 5 remains binding on this group of people – for all their generations, and to all of their people. The only way to

have the burden and the yoke of the law lifted from them is to come outside the camp and to the cross of Calvary – receiving the work of Jesus in completion of this law.

As you can see, a few seemingly insignificant words, tacked onto the end of a single verse, can – and do – have the most important impact on the lives, future, and destiny of an entire group of people – Israel. It is a right, a responsibility, and it is a burden which began at a particular point in time, and it commenced with an awesome display being revealed to the eyes of the people...

⁴The LORD talked with you face to face

panim b'panim dibber Yehovah immakhem – “Face in face spoke Yehovah with you.” The word “talked” is not appropriate. There was no back and forth conversation. The Lord spoke while Israel listened. Despite the closeness of the matter, seemingly almost personal, it was still a one-way communication. This is unlike what is recorded in Exodus 33 –

“So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.” Exodus 33:11

Rather than *panim b'panim*, or face in face, which is said here in Deuteronomy, there it said *panim el panim*, face to face. The difference between the two is immense.

The communication of the Lord to Israel was direct and “in their face.” The communication of the Lord with Moses was personal and as close as one having a dialog with a dear friend. And again, the communication to Israel was...

⁴(con't) on the mountain

ba'har– “in the mount.” It speaks of the entire area where Israel was, represented by the mountain itself. None of Israel was near the mount, under pain of death. Rather, they were on the plain which surrounded it, and the presence of the Lord was atop it, as described in Exodus 19 and again in Deuteronomy 4:11, 12 –

“Then you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire to the midst of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness. ¹² And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire.”

That is again confirmed by Moses with the words...

⁴ (con't) **from the midst of the fire.**

mitok ha'esh – “from midst of the fire.” It is rather surprising to read commentaries on this verse and find words such as –

“...personally and immediately ... plainly and certainly, as when two men speak face to face; freely and familiarly, so as not to overwhelm and confound you.” Matthew Poole

This is completely the opposite of what was either intended or what is shown to have occurred. The Lord spoke in their face words of law. They were conveyed while accompanied with thunderings, lightnings, a thick cloud, the sound of a trumpet that was so loud the people quaked, smoke as of a furnace, and the actual quaking of the mountain. And along with all of this, the words were spoken *mitok ha'esh*, from midst of the fire.

The entire display was not free and familiar, and its intent was to completely overwhelm and confound the people. The voice from the fire in this manner was to convey to the people that the word of law was a word which consumes, even to absolute, complete, and utter destruction.

This is the weight, the penalty, and the burden of the law. It is the yoke which is heavy and wearisome upon the people. There is nothing light and friendly about serving under the law. But rather there is terror, anxiety, worry, and futility –

“Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw *it*, they trembled and stood afar off. ¹⁹Then they said to Moses, ‘You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.’” Exodus 20:18, 19

This was the point of the display, and it is what accompanied the first ten of six hundred and thirteen laws which were eventually heaped upon the people. It was to terrify them concerning the nature of this-

GREAT
AWESOME
TERRIFYING
JEALOUS, AND
HOLY GOD

The people feared, and rightfully so. And it is perfectly evident in the seemingly contradictory words which immediately followed...

“And Moses said to the people, ‘Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin.’” Exodus 20:20

Moses told them “Do not fear!” No, the entire display is only a test so that you will fear (Him). He uses the verb and then noun form of the same word. First, *yare* – to fear, and next, *yirah* – a fear.

They were to have “a fear” of the Lord before them for a single purpose. And that is where the rubber of the action of man meets the road of the Law of God. “So that you may not sin” (man’s action) means “so that you do not break my law” (God’s standard).

Think of it! The law was given – a law which defines sin, and a law which brings forth sin in its very issuance, and the people are told that they were to fear the Lord so that they wouldn’t sin – which is what the law causes to occur. I pray – tell me please, how is this going to help?

*With the law there is death and condemnation
It is God’s standard, which no one can meet
Who is there from any people group or nation?
Who can claim that through the law, sin he did defeat?*

*Where can we go? This law stands against us
When we heard its words, death came through our door
O God! Please send the Messiah – send us Jesus
And through Him we shall live again, yes live forevermore*

*Only He can bring us to the Holy Mountain
Only He can bring us up to the very throne of God
From Him alone can come the cleansing fountain
So that for eternal days, in Your light can we trod*

II. I Am the Lord Your God (verses 5 & 6)

The words of verse 5 that we will look at today are actually chronologically – and most certainly – intended as a time marker coming after the words which finish this chapter and before the words which begin Chapter 6.

They don't actually belong there, but they identify the train of thought concerning the events which are being reviewed. They are perfectly placed here as a parenthetical statement.

The Lord spoke out the Ten Commandments, accompanied by the immense and terrifying display. After that happened, the people came and begged Moses, imploring him that the Lord would no longer speak directly to them.

The Lord heard their words and agreed to allow Moses to receive and pass on the Lord's word to the people. And so, with that understood, even if stated out of chronological order, Moses continues with his next words.

They are words which the KJV and several other versions rightly place in parenthesis, except the last word of it. Verse 5 is, as I said, a parenthetical statement to introduce what follows it, up until a certain point. When that point is reached, the narrative will resume. That narrative is defined by the words of verse 1 –

“And Moses called all Israel, and said to them: ‘Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them.’” Deuteronomy 5:1

From there, that narrative will begin again with the words which open Chapter 6 –

“Now this *is* the commandment, *and these are* the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe *them* in the land which you are crossing over to possess, ² that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.” Deuteronomy 6:1, 2

Those parenthetical words of Moses now begin with...

⁵I stood between the LORD and you at that time,

To stand between two parties means to mediate. Moses will act in that position now, but only in the sense of receiving the law, transmitting it to the people, and also passing the words of the people back to the Lord.

Though he performed some priestly functions which formally established the covenant, he did not perform the mediatorial roles of a priest *for* the covenant. That was delegated to Aaron and his sons after him. Such a role as Aaron's was an anticipatory step only, however.

He was restricted in his allowances in many ways, and he was bound by the same precepts of law as were the other people. However, even in this anticipatory step – looking forward to Christ – the role of Israel's high priest for sin, and of Moses for receiving the law, was what Job hoped for in his life lived apart from the law. As it says in Job 9 when speaking of God –

*“For He is not a man, as I am,
That I may answer Him,
And that we should go to court together.
33 Nor is there any mediator between us,
Who may lay his hand on us both.
34 Let Him take His rod away from me,
And do not let dread of Him terrify me.
35 Then I would speak and not fear Him,
But it is not so with me.”* Job 9:32-35

Job felt the terror of God apart from His revelation of Himself at Sinai. Job knew that moral law existed, and he knew that in that moral law there was terror. How much more terror should there be when that moral law is laid out in perfectly structured words which convey the nature of God.

When the people heard that law, they begged for relief from it. And so, Moses stood between the Lord and the people – acting as a mediator to hear and then convey what he heard to Israel. It was his job, as he says...

⁵ (con't) **to declare to you the word of the LORD;**

The word translated as “declare” is a common word, *nagad*. It comes from a root signifying “to front.” Thus, it signifies making something manifest or conspicuous.

The Lord has a word to convey to Israel. Israel did not like when that word was conveyed to them directly, but the word needed to be conveyed, and so Moses will make what is unknown open and conspicuous. He will do this because, as Moses relays...

⁵ (con't) **for you were afraid because of the fire,**

So, the fire scared the people. In fact, it terrified them. One must wonder how dull we are to assume that when the fire isn't visible, the Lord isn't threatening, terrifying, or angry?

The law says to not exceed 40 mph. It is first given to the people at a ceremony at the courthouse. There are police officers there with guns on their hips and uniforms ordained with handcuffs. Off to the left is the county prison. It is a sobering display of the law.

So, the people say, next time we pass a law, can we do it at the baseball field? And, instead of a judge, can we have Harpo Marx tell us what we are to do. The law is still passed by the same body, it is still enforced by the same police department, and its offenders will wind up in the same place. So, does the significance of the law change because of how it is conveyed to the people? Not at all.

But this is how we perceive things. If we are on a road where there is a known speed trap that we are aware of, we will be sure to drive 40mph. If we are on a road that rarely has a speed trap, we may or we may not drive 40mph. And, if we are on a road that we are certain to have no speed trap, we forget what the words "speed limit" mean.

A fear of the Lord and of violating His law only comes if one believes in the Lord, and if they perceive that the Lord is actually watching over infractions of it. Moses standing between the Lord and Israel only deadens the minds of Israel further in many respects.

The same is true with grace unless we remember and carry with us *always* the thought of what that grace cost in order for it to be granted to us in the first place.

At the beginning of the law, the knowledge of the Lord was keenly on the minds of the people. They saw, they heard, they felt, and they were afraid. Moses reminds them of this...

⁵ (con't) **and you did not go up the mountain.**

These words, though still a part of the parenthetical thought, are intended to tell the people that it was Moses, not they, who received the law from the Lord. They were warned in Exodus 19 that they should not go up to the mountain, not even touch it, under pain of death.

At the end of the chapter, the Lord spoke again to Moses to ensure that was abided by. Moses was granted a special dispensation to ascend the mountain. They were not.

Therefore, the same Lord who terrified them by His display had conveyed His intent through Moses. Because of this, what is said after the giving of the Ten Commandments carries the same weight and authority as do those Ten Commandments.

This is the purpose of this statement. For now, the words of the Lord that Israel *did* hear from the Lord will next be introduced...

⁵ (con't) **He said:**

lemor – “saying.” The parenthetical nature of the verse ended, and this word stands outside of the parenthesis. In other words, taking verse 4 and connecting it with this, it would say –

“The LORD talked with you face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire, saying...”

With that understood, Moses now repeats what the Lord said to the people. The words of Deuteronomy 5:6 are word for word and letter for letter, identical to Exodus 20:2...

⁶ **I am the LORD**

anokhi Yehovah – The words identify the Source of the terrifying display, and of the words being conveyed, as Yehovah, the self-existent Creator of all things. To more fully understand what the name Yehovah encompasses, you can go back and watch the sermon on Exodus 3:14. Suffice it to say that He is the One and only God, the true God, and yet despite that, He is not the only “god.” This is evidenced quite clearly in the next words...

⁶ (con't) **your God**

elohekha - Yehovah asserts the right to call Himself “your God” to the people gathered before Him – to Israel. They had agreed with their own mouths to receive Him as such in Exodus 19 –

"So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him. ⁸ Then all the people answered

together and said, 'All that the LORD has spoken we will do.' So Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD." Exodus 19:7, 8

Though He is the Creator of all things and the Lord of all in reality, He did not push Himself upon Israel, nor has He done so to the people of the world.

Both the Bible, and the world around us – even today – demonstrate there are many “gods.” However, there is only One true God. Based on Israel’s words of agreement, Yehovah established His right to exclusivity over them, saying, *anokhi Yehovah elohekha* – “I am Yehovah your God.”

It was, and thus it is, an individual address to *each person* as much as it is to the nation collectively. The singular is to the nation, but the nation is made up of individuals.

From that moment Yehovah claimed authority over each person of Israel and the collective body known as Israel. They now have their God and He now had peculiar people reserved for Himself. It is He, for this very purpose...

^{6 (con't)} **who brought you out of the land of Egypt,**

The Lord claimed the right at that time to be their God, not because He created them, but because He had redeemed them. It was they who were in Egypt, and it was He who brought them out. In bringing them out of Egypt and to Sinai, He then said that it was...

^{*6 (fin)} **out of the house of bondage.**

mi'beth abadim – “out of the house of slavery.” The word is *ebed*. It signifies slavery. Slavery signifies bondage. A slave bears a yoke, and the slave is in bondage. The three thoughts are all connected at one point or another.

Here, the Lord clearly tells the people that they were in bondage. Certainly, they were sold to sin and the worship of false gods. But even without that, they were under the oppression of the burdens of Pharaoh. They were unable to redeem themselves, and so the Lord intervened and redeemed them.

And yet, despite being brought out of the bondage of Egypt, they were actually brought into a greater and more terrifying bondage. What? How can anyone say that? Who would dare? In the New Testament, it begins with Jesus –

“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’”

³³ They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How *can* You say, ‘You will be made free?’”

³⁴ Jesus answered them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. ³⁵ And a slave does not abide in the house forever, *but* a son abides forever. ³⁶ Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.’”

John 8:31-36

At other times, the metaphor “yoke” is used. Jesus implored the people to take His yoke upon them. In that, they would find rest for their souls because His yoke, unlike the law, is an easy and light one. Peter understood what Jesus meant, calling the law a “yoke” in Acts 15 –

“Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? ¹¹ But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.” Acts 15:10, 11

Paul follows suit and repeatedly uses either the term “yoke” or “bondage” when speaking of the law. Israel had been brought out of one bondage, and they had been brought into another type of bondage.

Think of it! Who here fears when they fail the Lord Jesus? Who here wonders how upset He must be for the secret (or not so secret) things that you have done? Who feels the burden of his salvation slipping away because of the things you have done wrong?

Why do you feel this way? It is because of law, not because of grace! You have forgotten that your salvation was of grace, and it continues because of grace. By the law is the knowledge of sin. And by the knowledge of sin comes the penalty for sin.

If it were not so, there would be no need for such an awesome and terrible display on Mount Sinai. Rather, the Lord would have stood upon Mount Sinai in human form – something He is already recorded as having done in the book of Genesis.

And He would have come down from the mountain, maybe on a glittering fluffy cloud which radiated out the sound of birds chirping or little lambs bleating. And as He gave

out the law, He might have tossed out sweet-smelling flowers and raisin cakes to the people –

“I am Yehovah. You shall have no other gods before Me (here is a carnation for you). You shall not make any images that represent Me, even though you can see Me now (here is a raisin cake). Be sure not to take My name in vain (listen to the little lambs bleating)...”

This did not happen. The Lord was making a point. He brought them out of the physically punishing bondage of Egypt, but He brought them into a new and terrifying bondage.”

The precedent was set. The Lord’s nature, and the display which came with the giving of the Ten Commandments, was revealed. It doesn’t matter a single iota that Moses later transmitted the words to the people.

The same Lord gave the words to the people, and His character remained completely unchanged, despite the mediatorial role of Moses. Remember, the symbolism given as He spoke out the law was of wrath and condemnation, not salvation.

What was implied is that the law that was to be introduced could never bring salvation. Even the true Israelite who loved God's law could never fully meet the strict standards of it. Not one could meet them perfectly.

Were it not for provisions within the law for atonement, the law would only bring wrath and condemnation. Therefore, the giving of the law was actually messianic in nature. For Israel, there is either complete obedience to the law – something only God could accomplish, or there was atonement from the guilt of the law – again something only God can accomplish.

Therefore, the law anticipates Christ, and in Christ is the end of the law. As all men are bound under sin, and as sin is of the devil, then all belong under the power of the devil. As only God can redeem man from sin, then it follows logically that Jesus must be God.

Jesus’ appeal to the people of the world, like the appeal here in the giving of the Ten Commandments, is based on redemption, not creation. Israel was redeemed from the bondage of Egypt. Jesus redeems from the bondage of the law – by which sin is imputed.

We are saved by a Savior and redeemed by a Redeemer. As this is so, then Jesus must be Yehovah – The Lord God. Paul says this in Galatians 4 -

“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” Galatians 4:4, 5

If the law was given to Israel who had been redeemed from the house of bondage, and as they were given the law based on that redemption, then why would those who had been given this law still need to be redeemed from the law? There are at least four major reasons for this –

- 1) To show us God’s perfect standard.
- 2) To show us that no person could meet that standard; all are unqualified without God’s grace and mercy being bestowed.
- 3) To show us how utterly sinful sin is to God. And,
- 4) To show us our need for something else – that grace which can only come by Someone fulfilling this law on our behalf. And as only God can do that, He sent His Son, Jesus Christ – fully God and fully Man – into the world to do so. It is the grace which we, as human beings, cannot do without.

It doesn’t matter if you are under law or not, apart from Jesus you will either perish apart from the law, or you will perish under the law. This is the bondage which man is under. The law only highlights that bondage.

Closing Verse: *“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.” Galatians 5:1*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 5:7-16 *To find a rhyme, I had to go to lengths hilariously, but I gotter done...* (Learning Vicariously, Hopefully! Part I) (20th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

From Bondage to Bondage

And Moses called all Israel, and said to them:

Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments
-----which I speak in your hearing today
That you may learn them
And be careful to observe them, as to you I say

The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb
The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers
-----but with us
Those who are here today
All of us who are alive, and He spoke thus

The LORD talked with you face to face
From the midst of the fire, on the mountain was the place

I stood between the LORD and you at that time
To declare to you the word of the LORD, as I was led
For you were afraid because of the fire
And you did not go up the mountain. He said:

'I *am* the LORD your God who brought you out of the land
Of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; so you must understand

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 5:7-16 (Learning Vicariously - Hopefully!, Part I)

The word “vicarious” means to experience in the imagination or mind through either the feelings or experiences of another. Thus, the adverb “vicariously” signifies the action of such learning.

When I went around the US in 2010 and preached at all the capitols, one of my friends who had not been to all fifty states followed along on Facebook. He said, “I am living your life vicariously.” I appreciated that, knowing that he was actually a partner with me on my lonely drives and difficult trials.

He was able to see what I saw, and he was able to enjoy what I enjoyed, as long as I either wrote about it in the blog or took photos or videos of what I was seeing.

Whether we realize it or not, this is what Scripture has done for us. And we can, if we are willing to use that experience, learn a great deal. We can avoid many pitfalls, we can grow in spiritual wealth, we can find satisfaction, and we can prevent being chucked into the pit of hell – if we are simply willing to accept and act upon what we see.

Text Verse: *“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” Romans 15:4*

I don’t watch a lot of TV. There just isn’t time. But when I do, I like to live and learn vicariously. I like to watch Sergio and Rhoda’s videos because I can experience Israel. I like to watch real war, so I can experience what those men went through. I like to watch how things are made, because I can contemplate what must go on in the mind of people who developed the useful things we have all around us.

A lot of TV is just junk. When junk goes in, nothing is really added to the value of one’s life. I must admit that I do laugh when watching Get Smart or The Pink Panther. Laughter is good too. But I love to benefit beyond laughter in the few moments I get to watch things.

But the best application of vicarious learning one can find – by far – is found in the pages of Scripture. Although we will just be going through commands today, if we consider them in the greater plan of redemption, then we can truly learn a great deal from those of Israel who have gone before us.

Such wonderful lessons are to be found in God's superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Impossible Standards (verses 7-11)

Moses has reminded Israel of the covenant the Lord made with them at Horeb. He has reminded them of the way in which this occurred – having been a personal communication of His laws to the people in a direct and specific display, meaning from the midst of the fire.

And, so far, he has repeated to them the first words that the Lord spoke, "I *am* the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

With that remembered from last week, Moses will now repeat the words of law that the Lord has spoken out. These are the "ten words," or "commandments," which provide a basis for the entire law of Moses.

Much of what you will hear concerning these laws, meaning my analysis of them to you, is a close repeat of what you heard when we were in Exodus. There will be some important changes though. Concerning the repeating of these Ten Commandments, or Ten Words, the Pulpit Commentary rightly says –

"On these, as the basis of the covenant, the whole legislation rests, and therefore a rehearsal of them is a fitting introduction to a repetition and enforcement of the laws of the theocracy." Pulpit Commentary

Moses now repeats them, in order, starting with...

⁷ 'You shall have no other gods before Me.

lo yihyeh lekha elohim aherim al panaya – "No you shall have to you gods other upon my face." It is a word for word and letter for letter repeat of Exodus 20:3.

The first word. The command begins with an absolute negation – the word *lo* or "no." The majority of the commandments come in the negative form, stating the prohibition which is then explained. By stating them this way, the wholly forbidden nature of the act is set as the standard, from which there is to be no deviation at all.

What this signifies is that the desire to do, exactly what is forbidden in the command, already exists within man. In other words, by saying “No shall you have gods other,” the Lord understands that it is exactly what man is prone to doing.

From the first man, Adam, all the way through the ages, man has been consumed with finding every possible god that he can place in his heart before the Lord. Such commands, like the one given to Adam at the very beginning – “of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat” – point to our limitations.

Adam lacked the *knowledge* of good and evil; we lack the *ability* to properly exercise the knowledge of good and evil which we now possess. The laws then are given to us because of this. This is well explained by Paul in Romans 3 –

“There is none righteous, no, not one;
¹¹ There is none who understands;
There is none who seeks after God.
¹² They have all turned aside;
They have together become unprofitable;
There is none who does good, no, not one.” Romans 3:10-12

In the command, the verb “shall have” is singular, but the word “other” is plural. What this infers is that it isn’t speaking of just other gods, meaning deity, but other gods of any kind such as idols in thoughts, words, or deeds.

If a person was to make an idol of work, it would be a violation of this command. If a person made an idol of his intelligence, it would be a violation of this command. If a person made an idol of his personal strength, it would be a violation of this command.

Anything which is exalted by us before the Lord would be a violation of this command. As we previously saw in Exodus 20, Adam Clarke defines the sense of this first word, saying –

“This commandment prohibits every species of mental idolatry, and all inordinate attachment to earthly and sensible things. As God is the fountain of happiness, and no intelligent creature can be happy but through him, whoever seeks happiness in the creature is necessarily an idolater; as he puts the creature in the place of the Creator, expecting that from the gratification of his passions, in the use or abuse of earthly things, which is to be found in God alone. The very first commandment of the whole series is divinely calculated to prevent man’s misery and promote his happiness, by

taking him off from all false dependence, and leading him to God himself, the fountain of all good.” Adam Clarke

However, although this may be the intent, if we were to stop with this first word and go no further, we can see how clearly it brings wrath. No person can say that he has fully kept this one precept without breaking it. Not only are we not good because of our inclinations, we are not good because of our actions.

Each of us has set up an idol in our heart in one form or another during our lives. We have failed by attempting to find another source of joy instead of seeking the Lord. This law can never bring salvation. It can only bring condemnation. And, as James says towards the end of the Bible –

“For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all.” James 2:10

Concerning the words *al panaya*, or “upon my face,” it is a way of saying, anywhere at any time. As the psalmist said –

Where can I go from Your Spirit?
Or where can I flee from Your presence? Psalm 139:7

Just as we cannot flee from the presence of the Lord, so we are to never have a god upon His face – at any time or in any place. But we do, don't we? We all set up idols of one form or another before the face of the Lord. From the very first word, we are guilty of all of the law because we have broken this *one point*. How terrible it is to consider. As Paul says –

“I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. ¹⁰ And the commandment, which *was* to *bring* life, I found to *bring* death.” Romans 7:9, 10

Each individual of Israel agreed to this command, and thus each person, as well as the nation as a whole, violated it when they strayed from it. Many times, incidents of both personal and national violation are noted, but Jeremiah 2 gives a good example of Israel's failure to meet this law –

“But where *are* your gods that you have made for yourselves?
Let them arise,

If they can save you in the time of your trouble;
For *according to* the number of your cities
Are your gods, O Judah.” Jeremiah 2:28

As far as this first word is given, something else was needed to bring life. The first word only condemns; it cannot save.

⁸‘You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything

lo taaseh lekha pesel kal temunah – “Not you shall make for yourself a carved image any likeness.” With the exception of one letter, it is a word for word and letter for letter mirror of Exodus 20. The only difference is that in Exodus 20, it says, “and any likeness.” The conjunction “and” is left off here. We can put the thoughts side by side to see the difference –

You shall not make for yourself a carved image, and any likeness...
You shall not make for yourself a carved image, any likeness...

Exodus 20 thus separates the statement into two thoughts, a carved image and anything else which could be made into a likeness. Deuteronomy 5 has the words “any likeness” define what it means to not make a carved image.

By stating it both ways, it then ensures that someone cannot equivocate on what he claims to have been doing. The prohibition is all-encompassing concerning making a carved image of any likeness, or a carved image and any likeness.

The second word. The first command asserted the unity of God in Israel’s worship. This second command is intended to ensure that the first command is adhered to in a physical sense. Yehovah showed them no form of Himself and therefore no form was to be assigned to Him in worship.

Further, no form was to be worshipped as a god other than Him. As He is the Creator, then all else is created. Therefore, to worship any physical part of the creation was to worship less than the Creator. This command then shows what is to be considered unlawful worship.

The *pesel* is an “idol” or “image.” It comes from *pasal* which means “to cut” or “to hew into shape.” The next word is *temunah*. It signifies a “likeness” or “form.” These words combined thus signify any physical idol or image.

The command says *lo taaseh lekha* – “no make for yourself.” There is an important point to consider here. The Bible does not forbid the making of shaped things such as cherubim for the Ark of the Covenant. It prohibits shaped things for personal use as an idol and it will go further to explain this later.

It is an important point, because people who challenge the Bible say that the making of the things for the tabernacle is a violation of this commandment. This is not so. There is nothing contradictory between this command and the Lord’s other commands.

⁸ (con’t) **that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth;**

asher ba’shamayim mi’maal v’asher ba’arets mi’takhat v’asher ba’mayim mi’takhat la’arets – “which under the heavens from above, and which the earth from below, and which in the waters from below the earth.” It is an exact repeat of Exodus 20.

These words form a triple-division of the sphere of existence in the material universe. It is thus an all-encompassing statement concerning it, and it prohibits making anything resembling whatever exists in any of the spheres.

This goes from the sun, moon, and stars, to birds which fly in the sky. It goes from the plant and animal life on earth to fish in the sea or to any other part of the created order. Nothing in creation is to be likened to God, nor is any such thing to be likened as a god.

⁹ **you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.**

lo tishtakhaveh lahem v’lo taabedem – “No you shall bow down to them, and no serve them.” These words further define the words, “You shall not make for yourself.” When an image is made, the intent is that it will be bowed down to and served – either by the maker, or by someone else, or by both. This is forbidden.

Roman Catholics, when citing the Ten Commandments, will leave out this command. In order to maintain Ten Commandments, they then divide the tenth command concerning coveting into two separate commands. Adam Clarke poignantly sums this up –

“This corruption of the word of God by the Roman Catholic Church stamps it, as a false and heretical Church, with the deepest brand of ever-during infamy!” Adam Clarke

To manipulate the presentation of the Ten Commandments in this way is really a despicable offense. For Israel, they were certainly guilty of violating this command throughout their history. In fact, they openly sought to violate it time and again, but the Lord told them that they would suffer because of it –

“What you have in your mind shall never be, when you say, ‘We will be like the Gentiles, like the families in other countries, serving wood and stone.’”

-Ezekiel 20:32

^{9 (con't)} **For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God,**

ki anokhi Yehovah elohekha el qanna – “For I Yehovah your God; God jealous.” The Lord unambiguously claims that He is a jealous God. It is the word *qanna*.

This doesn't indicate jealousy of success in another. Instead, it speaks of a defense of His honor and glory. When one bows to another god, the Lord isn't jealous of that false god receiving worship. His jealousy is directed to the violation of depriving Him what He is justly due. His words in Isaiah show this –

“I *am* the LORD, that *is* My name;
And My glory I will not give to another,
Nor My praise to carved images.” Isaiah 42:8

This adjective, *qanna*, is only used six times – always in connection with the Lord, and only in Exodus and Deuteronomy.

^{9 (con't)} **visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me,**

poqed avon avot al banim v'al shileshim v'al riveim l'soneai – “visiting iniquity of fathers upon sons and upon third and upon fourth of those who hate me.” There are two interesting changes from Exodus 20. The word “fathers” is spelled differently here, adding in the letter *vav*. Also, a *vav* is added to the word “upon” here, changing it from “upon third,” to “and upon third.” I have no explanation to give you.

As far as the words themselves, although they are scorned by those who hate the God of the Bible, as if He is showing a vindictive nature, it is rather intended to show us consequences that naturally result from misdeeds. It shows nothing vindictive in the Lord. Rather it shows what is just.

Adam sinned and his sin continues to trouble us 6000 years later. If a person is punished for stealing, he may lose his estate and earnings. That certainly causes the next generation, and even many generations later, to receive the sentence of the offender.

The very person who dismisses God for being vindictive may sue another person for wrongdoing against him. If he does, then he will actually visit the wrongdoing of the one he sues on the subsequent generations in exactly the manner that is described here.

To argue against God who is infinitely just and righteous concerning his judgments is a small-minded thing to do for a person who probably lacks any true wisdom or knowledge at all.

¹⁰ but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

v'oseh khesed la'alaphim l'ohavai u-l'shomere mitsvoto – “And showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and to those keeping my commandments.” There is a difference in the written and spoken text here. The written says *mitsvoto*. However, when it is read aloud, the speaker says *mitsvotai*, as it is written in Exodus 20. I cannot explain to you why the text reads differently.

The “thousands” here are not speaking of the number of people, but the number of generations. Moses will explicitly define it that way in Deuteronomy 7:9. The length of this mercy, or loving-kindness, is for those individuals who love Him and keep His commandments. It doesn't mean the children *who don't*, but the individuals *who do*.

If a generation is conservatively said to be 40 years, then this would mean 40,000 years. As the Bible speaks of a 7000-year plan for the world we currently enjoy, then the term here is obviously meant to symbolize “forever” or “eternity.” This is demonstrated in the words of the 103rd Psalm –

“But the mercy of the LORD *is* from everlasting to everlasting
On those who fear Him,
And His righteousness to children’s children,
¹⁸ To such as keep His covenant,
And to those who remember His commandments to do them.” Psalm 103:17

However, as none are able to meet this standard perfectly, then none can be granted such eternal mercy apart from Christ who fulfilled the law on our behalf. All those who

came before Christ and trusted in the Lord's provision are covered by His *future* mercy. Only those who trust in Christ after His advent will be covered by His *present* mercy.

It was this mercy of the Lord that called for Christ to fulfill the law for fallen man. Israel individually, and as a whole, is seen throughout the Old Testament to fall short of this command. Even very quickly after the initial giving of it, the entire congregation violated it –

“And Aaron said to them, ‘Break off the golden earrings which *are* in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring *them* to me.’³ So all the people broke off the golden earrings which *were* in their ears, and brought *them* to Aaron.⁴ And he received *the gold* from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf. Then they said, ‘This *is* your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!’” Exodus 32:2-4

Of this command, Charles Ellicott rightly states, “As love in this verse is practical, so is hatred in the previous verse. To hate God is to disobey His commandments.”

Concerning this second word, something else was needed. The second word only condemns; it cannot save.

¹¹ ‘You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain,

lo tisa eth shem Yehovah elohekha lashav – “No you shall lift name Yehovah your God to vanity.” The words are letter for letter identical to Exodus 20.

The third word. The Hebrew here is ambiguous and can be taken to mean either forbidding false swearing only, or to include profane or vain swearing. Looking to Jesus’ words in Matthew 5, it appears that false swearing is what is being referred to. He says–

“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’” Matthew 5:33

The word “vain” in Hebrew is *shav*. It means falsely, lying, vain, etc. The intent is that one should never invoke the name of the Lord in a false manner. And should they presume to do so...

¹¹ (con’t) for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name in vain.

ki lo yenaqeh Yehovah eth asher yisa eth shemo lashav – “for not will hold him guiltless Yehovah who takes His name in vain.” It is letter for letter identical to Exodus 20.

These words do not mean that there will be immediate punishment on the offender. Rather, it is something that may come in this life as the perjured man is found out and punished, or it may be in the day of God’s judgment in the future. Malachi shows us this–

“And I will come near you for judgment;
I will be a swift witness
Against sorcerers,
Against adulterers,
Against perjurers,
Against those who exploit wage earners and widows and orphans,
And against those who turn away an alien—
Because they do not fear Me,
Says the LORD of hosts.” Malachi 3:5

Of the first three commandments, John Lange notes, “The sin against the first commandment banishes the name of Jehovah by means of idol names; the sin against the second obscures and disfigures it; the sin against this third one abuses it.”

Abusing God’s name is something that is forbidden. A transgression of this command is a violation of the entire law. And yet, the Bible demonstrates that Israel as a whole, individually and collectively, violated it –

“Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem;
See now and know;
And seek in her open places
If you can find a man,
If there is *anyone* who executes judgment,
Who seeks the truth,
And I will pardon her.
² Though they say, ‘As the LORD lives,’
Surely they swear falsely.” Jeremiah 5:1, 2

Concerning this third word, something else was needed. The third word only condemns; it cannot save.

*We have set our face before the Lord our God
To make request by prayer for what we do not deserve
We have sinned in our walk that we have trod
And the Lord our God we have failed to serve*

*O Lord, righteousness belongs to You
But to us belongs only shame of face
We have acted wickedly in all that we do
And upon Your glorious name, we have brought disgrace*

*And so, the curse and the oath has come upon us
But now we turn our hearts back to You
We call out for mercy through the Lord Jesus
And He will respond, because He is faithful and true*

II. Heaping Up Guilt (verses 12–16)

¹² **‘Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you.**

shamor eth yom ha’shabbath l’qadesh ka’asher tsivekha Yehovah elohekha – “Keep day the Sabbath, to sanctify it as commanded you Yehovah your God.”

A great change is seen between here and Exodus 20. There, it said, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” Here, Moses himself states what is to be done, and only then does he remind them that it was the command of the Lord. Further, Moses tells them to *shamar*, or keep, the Sabbath.

In Exodus 20, the Lord said to *zakar*, or remember, the Sabbath. One could argue semantics about the word *zakar*. However, by changing it to *shamar*, no semantics could be employed by the Sabbath-breaker.

The fourth word. Israel was given the Sabbath in Exodus 16, at the time of the giving of the Manna. Here, they are reminded to keep it, thus sanctifying the day. This means that they were to separate the day from all others and observe it as a unique and special day, consecrated to the Lord.

The word *shabbat* implies rest and cessation from labor. This cessation from labor for Israel looked forward to a different type of rest. It was to be a foretaste of the blessed

eternal rest which man lost. He was created outside of the Garden of Eden and was rested in the Garden to worship and serve His God. That was lost.

Everything from that point on has looked forward to the restoration of that day. And it finally arrived when Christ finished His work. In Him, the seventh day of rest is offered to all of God's people. This is why Hebrews 4, after the fulfillment of the law by Christ, says, "For we who have believed do enter that rest" (Hebrews 4:3).

¹³ **Six days you shall labor and do all your work,**

sheshet yamim taavod v'asita kal melaktekha – "six days you shall labor and do all your work." It is letter for letter the same as Exodus 20:9. It is an imperative. The week is divided into two sections, active work and active cessation from work. Man was not to be idle when he should be working, and man was not to be working when he should be at rest.

Things that needed to be done were to be done *before* the Sabbath so that no work was to be done *on* the Sabbath. This is, however, not to be taken as a command that one *must* work every day. If so, for example, it would violate the mandated feasts of the Lord when celebrated by Israel in Jerusalem. Rather, what should be done was to be done, but not on the Sabbath.

¹⁴ **but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God.**

v'yom ha'shevi' shabbath l'Yehovah elohekha – "and day the seventh Sabbath to Yehovah your God." It is letter for letter identical to Exodus 20:10.

This translation, following the KJV, is confusing and should rather read, "...but the seventh day is a Sabbath **to** the Lord your God." Otherwise, it seems like the Lord is even now working six days and taking the seventh off. Rather, they were to work and then rest to the Lord, honoring Him on this special day dedicated to Him.

¹⁴ (con't) **In it you shall do no work:**

lo taaseh kal melakah – "No you shall do all work." It reads the same as Exodus 20:10. The command is specific. The individual whom the Lord is speaking directly to shall not work on the Sabbath. The word "you" is singular.

¹⁴ (con't) **you, nor your son, nor your daughter,**

atah u-binkha u-bitekha – “you and your son and your daughter.” Nor were they to work their children, as if the lesser in the house were exempt from the requirement, or that the work of the stronger should now devolve to the weaker.

14 (con’t) nor your male servant, nor your female servant,

v’avdekha va’amatekha – “and your male servant, and your female servant.” The word “and” prior to “male servant” is not found in Exodus 20. It is a new addition here in Deuteronomy. One might try to play semantics if this “and” was not added.

Like the children of the house, the servants – both male and female – who certainly bore the majority of the burdens in the house during the week, were to be given rest. The unattended labors of the owner were not to devolve to another, even in one’s employ.

14 (con’t) nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle,

v’sorkha v’hamorekha v’kal behemtekha – “and your ox, and your donkey, and all your beasts.” This greatly expands on Exodus 20:10, where it only says, “and your beasts.” Moses is probably being more specific because of the wickedness of the human heart.

If Exodus 20 was allowed to stand, someone may say, “Beasts doesn’t include this animal or that.” And so, such a person may actually hook a yoke up to a kitty cat, sending it out to plow the field – poor Fifi. Thus, Moses gives two specific animals, and then adds in, “and all your beasts.” There will be no fudging with Fifi.

The question is, “What is implied if an animal is put to work?” Answer – “Someone is working the animal.” Rest is to be rest. Even if someone were to hook up an animal to a grinding mill, he would have to work to do so and he would continue to be profiting from the labors of the animal.

The Sabbath was made for man as a day to the Lord God. If he was thinking about the profit he was making while the cow was grinding grain, then he wouldn’t be thinking about the things of Lord.

Also, these words show that the animal who is a servant of man, was to be given a break from its labors. Further, throughout the Bible, care for animals is noted. Even the bird of the air that falls to the ground does not do so unnoticed by God.

¹⁴ (con't) **nor your stranger who is within your gates,**

v'gerekha asher bisharekha – “and your stranger who in your gates.” It is letter for letter the same as Exodus 20:10. The stranger within the gates implies someone not of Israel who has taken up permanent residence within a town.

This prohibition was certainly so that they wouldn't become a snare to Israel. If they saw strangers profiting and gaining advantage because they could work while others couldn't, it would become a problem for all.

Further, someone may hire a stranger to enrich himself. A stranger shows up and the man says, “We have a Sabbath, so I can't work, but my vines really need to be pruned. I'll pay you at the end of the day for getting that done.”

Or, he may simply buy something from visiting strangers who are selling things. This would be a violation of the intent of the Sabbath as well. This exact scenario is found in Nehemiah 13:16 –

“Men of Tyre dwelt there also, who brought in fish and all kinds of goods, and sold *them* on the Sabbath to the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem.”

¹⁴ (con't) **that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you.**

l'maan yanuakh avdekha v'amatekha kamoka – “to the purpose may rest your male servant and your female servant like you.” These words are not found in Exodus 20. They are an addition by Moses at this time.

It seems as if Moses skips over everyone mentioned in these previous verses except the male and female servants, but this isn't the case. What seems more likely is that the term is being used as an all-inclusive statement.

Whether one is a son or a daughter, a donkey or a cow, a hired hand or a stranger, all are considered one's servants when they are expected to perform a work. And more, if a person rests, but the animal doesn't, it means that someone tended to it in order for it to work – be it a son or a stranger. The addition of this is to ensure that nothing, and no one, is expected to labor on the Sabbath.

¹⁵ **And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt,**

v'zakarta ki eved hayita b'erets mitsrayim – “And remember for slave you were in land Egypt.” Moses’ reason for the giving of the Sabbath here in Deuteronomy is completely different than that given in Exodus.

There, it said, “For *in* six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”

The Lord based His commanding Israel to observe the Sabbath on Creation. However, Moses now bases it on redemption.

First, the creation of the heavens and the earth was done in a specific way for specific reasons. One is that it was to foreshadow the Sabbath day for man on the seventh day. God could have simply created all things at once, but he did it in a set way to picture something else.

And, the six days of the week followed by a Sabbath was ordained in order to show the redemptive pattern of history itself. The six days of the week prefigure the six thousand years of man working towards the reign of Christ, followed by the final thousand years of the millennium where Christ reigns; a time of rest on earth.

Now Moses says that they were to observe the Sabbath in order to remember their redemption from Egypt. They were forced into labor, but now they were to work and then remember that the Lord brought them out from that...

^{15 (con't)} **and the LORD your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm;**

In Deuteronomy, it assumes that God has not only created, but redeemed. As Israel missed Christ the first time, therefore, he focuses on redemption. It is a hidden key for Israel of today to understand that they actually missed the final redemption which is found in Christ.

Why is that? Because being redeemed into the law is to be redeemed into death. As we have seen many times, by the law comes the knowledge of sin. And through sin, only death can result. This is why the author of Hebrews says this –

“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had

the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Hebrews 2:14, 15

Under law, one remains in bondage. Being brought out of Egypt was only a picture of the work of the Lord Jesus – by His mighty hand and His outstretched arm – bringing us out of bondage of the fear of death...

¹⁵ (con't) **therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.**

Even though the accounts differ, creation and redemption, they are tied together. Israel is to understand that the Sabbath is a sign of God’s rest following His creative efforts, which had subsequently been lost in the Garden of Eden, but it is also a sign of God’s redemption in order to bring them back to paradise as well.

Thus, there is no contradiction between Exodus and Deuteronomy. One act leads to another. The fallen world could not be redeemed unless it had first been created and then fallen. Everything is looking forward to God’s rest; a rest which can only be found in Christ. As the law could only bring a curse, then the Sabbath was only a shadow, looking forward to Christ's fulfillment of it.

With His having fulfilled the law, we do enter God’s rest. The words of Jesus, Paul, and the author of Hebrews all agree that our true rest is found in Christ and in Him alone.

The Sabbath was only a picture of what was to come. Would Israel obey? The answer is, “No.” The book of Ezekiel, in particular, notes the continual profaning of the Sabbath by Israel. Concerning this fourth word, something else was needed. The fourth word only condemns; it cannot save.

¹⁶ **‘Honor your father and your mother,**

kabed eth avikha w’eth imekha – “Honor your father and your mother.” It is precisely the same as Exodus 20:12.

The fifth word. The Ten Commandments are divided up by scholars in several ways. Some see them as logically dividing between commands 1-4 and then 5-10. The first four showing love for God, the last six showing love for neighbor.

Others divide them 1-5 and 6-10. This would then show a distinction between filial and fraternal matters. The first five show obedience to the parent as children, the latter,

respect for others. As parents are the image of God to the child until the child can reason out who God is, then this second division makes more sense.

It should be noted that the father is placed first here, but the mother was placed first in Leviticus 19:3 when speaking of the mandated Sabbath. This shows that both are to be regarded with a like respect, even if there is a hierarchy within the home.

The honoring of the parents is reflective of the honoring of our true heavenly Father. If one is disobedient to his parents, it goes hand in hand that he will be disrespectful towards the Lord. With this repetition from the Lord, Moses now adds in his own words...

¹⁶ (con't) **as the LORD your God has commanded you,**

ka'asher tsivekha Yehovah elohekha – “as commanded you Yehovah your God.” Only in the repeating of the fourth and fifth commandments does Moses say this.

As all of the other commandments are negatives, “You shall not,” the reason for Moses’ inclusion of “as the Lord your God commanded you” must be because of that. They are positive commandments – observe and honor – just as the Lord your God has commanded.

At times, it certainly must be harder to remember to do something than to not do something. Therefore, Moses stresses the doing of these commandments. In the doing of this particular command, Paul notes in Ephesians 6 that it is the first command with a promise attached to it...

^{*16} (fin) **that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.**

Though the same general idea is expressed here as in Exodus 20, Moses expands on it. There it said, “that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.” Moses adds in, “that it may be well with you.”

As far as the command itself, some look at this as a national blessing for Israel. That if they were honoring of their parents, they would be nationally blessed with the land of Israel. This is incorrect. First, the word “land” here is not the usual term for the land of Israel, which is *eretz*. Instead, it is *adamah*. *Adamah* signifies the ground. It is the same as when cited in Ephesians 6.

Whatever ground the people possessed, they would possess it more fully if they were honoring of their parents. Second, the command is spoken in the singular to the individual, not in plural to all, just as it is in Ephesians 6 when Paul cites this.

And third, both here and Ephesians 6:3 explain the thought with words indicating long life. In essence, “That it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”

Thus, it is a general statement that one will prosper through the honoring of the parents. The world of man in which we live is governed by general laws of God, not by laws which are universal. This promised blessing is one that is therefore generally to be expected, but not necessarily universally received.

Despite being a simple command and one which is almost universally accepted as right, Israel failed to keep it. Both Old Testament and New shows the people’s failure to honor their parents. From Ezekiel 22 –

“In you they have made light of father and mother; in your midst they have oppressed the stranger; in you they have mistreated the fatherless and the widow.” Ezekiel 22:7

Concerning this fifth command, something else was needed. The fifth word only condemns; it cannot save.

As we have seen, out of just the first five commandments, Israel failed completely. But they had already failed in some of them since leaving Horeb. And, based on the Lord’s words to Moses later in Deuteronomy, He already knows that they will fail in them again, as we will see in our closing verse.

If this is so, and it certainly is, then the promise of life made in verse 4:1, is already nullified, even if it has to take place in reality for it to be so. The Lord’s knowledge of this, however, has to be played out in time and experience for us to know that it is so.

But when it does occur, we can then understand what Paul later will say with the words, “I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. ¹⁰And the commandment, which *was* to *bring* life, I found to *bring* death” (Romans 7:9, 10).

God already knows all things. One might think that He would just tell us those things in advance, and we would avoid the errors and heartaches. But... that doesn’t work either.

Don't you remember? Your mother told you not to touch the hot stove, and you did. Your father told you to watch your step on the wet floor, and you didn't. They even told you what would happen, and yet you did it anyway.

But more, the precedent of not listening was given in the first recorded words ever spoken by God to man –

“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” Genesis 2:16, 17

We are not geared to learn without being given actual examples to live by. If mom tells you and your older brother to not touch the stove, and he beats you to the stove as soon as mom walks out, it is he, not you, who will become the tangible lesson for both of you. You will see his pain, tears, and melted skin and say, “Whew, lesson vicariously learned!”

This is the purpose of Israel, and this is the purpose of the law. It is to teach Israel through experience that the law is an impossible weight to carry. And we can learn that lesson by watching and learning from our wayward brother.

Unfortunately for Israel, they not only burned their hand, but they did so, and they failed to learn. They will go through another attempt and another failure under the law. Let us not be so dull. Whether Jew or Gentile, let us learn the lesson from the word, and let us apply it to ourselves now.

Forget trusting in your attempts to be justified by the law. Instead, put your faith in Christ Jesus – the fulfillment and embodiment of this impossible weight for man to carry. He took the pain and punishment of the law so that you can hopefully vicariously learn from Him and live.

Closing Verse: *“And the LORD said to Moses: “Behold, you will rest with your fathers; and this people will rise and play the harlot with the gods of the foreigners of the land, where they go to be among them, and they will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them. ¹⁷ Then My anger shall be aroused against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them, and they shall be devoured. And many evils and troubles shall befall them, so that they will say in that day, ‘Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?’ ¹⁸ And I will surely hide My*

face in that day because of all the evil which they have done, in that they have turned to other gods.” Deuteronomy 31:16-18

Next Week: Deuteronomy 5:17-22 *To make this rhyme, one must almost act nefariously; it is true...* (Learning Vicariously, Hopefully!, Part II) (21st Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Learning Vicariously (Hopefully!)

⁷ ‘You shall have no other gods before Me.

⁸ ‘You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; ⁹ you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me, ¹⁰ but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

¹¹ ‘You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name in vain.

¹² ‘Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. ¹³ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁴ but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. ¹⁵ And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

¹⁶ ‘Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 5:17-22 (Learning Vicariously - Hopefully!, Part II)

We only evaluated five of the Ten Commandments last week, and we saw rather clearly how Israel failed at meeting them. Today, we'll look at the last five, and consider them in relation to Israel as well. And in doing so, we can consider them in relation to our own actions also. In fact, we would be stupid to not do so.

God has a standard, and that standard must be met. Even if we – meaning the people of the world apart from Israel – are not under law, we still have to meet God's standard of perfection. As we are born in sin, that won't be possible. But we can learn from Israel's failure that – just as they needed something more – we need Jesus.

It is He who embodies this law, and it is He who can impute the righteousness of it to us because He came under the law, He lived it out perfectly, and He died in fulfillment of it. And so, what He did is not only available to those of Israel, it is available to all who call out to Him in faith.

Text Verse: *"And now the LORD says,
Who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant,
To bring Jacob back to Him,
So that Israel is gathered to Him
(For I shall be glorious in the eyes of the LORD,
And My God shall be My strength),
⁶Indeed He says,
'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant
To raise up the tribes of Jacob,
And to restore the preserved ones of Israel;
I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles,
That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'" Isaiah 49:5, 6*

Israel thought, and they still think, they are the sole focus of God's attention, and yet, Isaiah showed them that this wasn't so. But consider it. Israel had the law. The nations of the earth did not. If this is so, and it clearly is, then it cannot be that the Servant of the Lord was coming to save Israel *because* of the law. Rather, He came to save them *despite* the law, and – yes – even *from* the law.

If He was going to “restore the preserved ones of Israel,” it had to be because of something other than the law. All of Israel had the law, and neither Israel collectively, nor any of Israel individually, was obedient to the law.

If people could just read the word properly, and from its intended perspective – meaning as given to us by God to show us the story of redemption – we could then put the law in its proper place. And, we could put Israel in her proper place. But in failing to do so, we mess both up, and the story of redemption – very quickly – becomes about us and about our efforts. Let’s not make this mistake. Or, if we already have, let us not continue to do so.

God’s story of the redemption of mankind is marvelous. And, it all centers on one Person – Jesus Christ. If we can keep that in mind, we will be in the sweet spot. Such glorious truths are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. I’ve Never Done That! (verses 17 & 18)

¹⁷ **‘You shall not murder.**

lo tresakh – “no you shall murder.” It is an identical match to Exodus 20:13.

The sixth word. Like the majority of the other commands, this one begins with an absolute negation, *lo*, or “no.” What follows then is utterly forbidden.

As we saw last week, these Ten Commandments are divided up by scholars in various ways. Some see them as logically dividing between commands 1-4 and then 5-10. The first four showing love for God, the last six showing love for neighbor.

Others divide them 1-5 and 6-10. This would then show a distinction between filial and fraternal matters. The first five show obedience to the parent as children, the latter, respect for others. Either way, as parents are the image of God to the child until the child can reason out who God is, then the fifth commandment is an excellent transition verse for either of these views.

In our interpersonal relationships, this sixth command, you shall not murder, is given because it respects the very life of those we are to love as ourselves. And, because this

command deals with interpersonal relationships, it also deals with our duties to God directly as well.

Genesis 1:26 tells us that man is made in the image of God. As this is so, then an attack against God's image-bearer is, therefore, an implicit attack against the One whose image he possesses.

As this is so, murder is not something that can simply be dismissed as merely being on a human level. It is rightfully considered an attack against God. But this command is still rightly considered under the precept of loving one's neighbor.

The word *ratsakh*, or murder, was introduced into the Bible at the giving of the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20. When we evaluated that, I cited Albert Barnes, who said, "This properly denotes taking the life of another with malice, or with an intention to murder him. The Jews understood it as meaning no more."

That must be amended. It is true that it speaks of intentional taking of life with malice, but it is incorrect that this was understood "as meaning no more." In Numbers 35, the same word, *ratsakh*, was used time and again concerning the manslayer – regardless as to whether the killing was intentional or unintentional.

Therefore, the word is better defined as "the unsanctioned taking of human life." The command itself is certainly referring to the intentional slaying of another, but the word extends to accidental slaying of another.

Thus, there was the need for cities of refuge to be designated in order to protect those who did take life without sanction, but who did so without malice. To get a fuller and more detailed understanding of this, one should really go watch the Numbers 35 sermon which details these things.

Having now understood this, we can see that translating this sixth command as "kill," rather than "murder," as the KJV does, can only confuse the meaning.

Elsewhere, the Bible mandates that capital offenders such as murderers *are* to be executed. Further, the killing of another in battle is considered sanctioned killing. Therefore, using the word "kill" instead of "murder" here has led to both a misunderstanding of the intent of the command and a misuse of it against what the law actually prescribes in the execution of offenders or towards soldiers who are legally engaging in warfare.

Because of such a faulty translation, this has even been stretched to imply by some the nonsensical idea that the killing of animals is wrong. This is a complete misuse of the command. In Exodus 12:21, the people were told to “kill the Passover.”

Since then, a jillion times the Bible has spoken of slaughtering animals for both sacrificial and personal uses. Those verses always use entirely different words than the one used here.

As just noted, using the word “kill” here would set up other contradictions in the Bible. Israel has been and will be instructed to destroy certain people groups in battle. These instances are not to be considered as *ratsakh*, or “murder.” When in Exodus 20, we cited the Pulpit Commentary who said concerning this precept –

“The Israelites are told that to take life is a crime. God forbids it. As usual, no exceptions are made. Exceptions appear later on; but the first thing is to establish the principle.”
Pulpit Commentary

That was and is incorrect. Exceptions, which *precede* the giving of the law, already existed. In Exodus 17, the Lord told Moses, “Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek.” After that, it said, “So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.”

The incident predated the law. Therefore, a distinction is made between “killing” and “murder.” The word “kill” is far too broadly rendered, and thus it is a most unfortunate translation. It ignores both previous precedent, and it contradicts later instruction and refinement.

It is noted that all known codes of societal conduct include this precept, either implicitly or explicitly. It is also a precept which predates the law as well. In Genesis 9, after the flood of Noah, the Lord said to Noah –

“Whoever sheds man’s blood,
By man his blood shall be shed;
For in the image of God
He made man.” Genesis 9:6

The willful, intentional murder of another human is forbidden. In order for us to know our own hearts, and the depravity found there – a depravity which is universal in man, we can learn vicariously from Israel about what our own inclinations are.

Israel failed in this command, both individually and collectively, throughout their history. King David, the beloved of the Lord and Israel's sweet psalmist, violated this precept when he had the husband of Bathsheba murdered. Likewise, the people as a whole, on several occasions, are noted for their murders –

“Hear the word of the LORD, O children of Israel,
for the LORD has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land.
There is no faithfulness or steadfast love,
and no knowledge of God in the land;
2 there is swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery;
they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.” Hosea 4:1, 2 (ESV)

The law was given to show us God's perfect standard. Israel failed in meeting that standard. Concerning this sixth word, something else was needed. The sixth word only condemns; it cannot save.

¹⁸ **‘You shall not commit adultery.**

v'lo tneph – “And not shall you commit adultery.” Very few translations get this verse right. Unlike the Seventh Commandment of Exodus 20:14, which says, “You shall not commit adultery,” this one says, “And, you shall not commit adultery.” The KJV paraphrases it by saying, “Neither shall you commit adultery.”

The seventh word. The word *naaph*, which was introduced into scripture in the giving of the Ten Commandments, deals with literal adultery, but it is also used figuratively in the sense of apostatizing from true faith in the Lord.

As with other commands, this one is in the absolute negation, beginning with *v'lo* or “And no.” John Lange noted an interesting connection between the first and second command and the sixth and seventh command –

“This commandment holds the same relation to the sixth as the second to the first. Idolatry proper[ly] corresponds with the murder of one's neighbor, the latter being an offence against the divine in man. Image-worship, however, corresponds with adultery, as this too rests on a subtle deification of the image of man; it is spiritual idolatry, as image-worship is spiritual adultery.” John Lange

And so, following the prohibition against murder, the respecting of the bonds of marriage is highlighted. The act of adultery is a violation of the sanctity of marriage and is as if an invasion has been made upon the household.

When a contract of marriage is made, adultery dissolves the intent behind the contract. The offended party no longer has the ability to trust that any other part of that contract applies. This act is so universally accepted as wrong that almost every society known to man has, at one time or another, laws against it and punishments, up to death, associated with those laws.

Only in a society of moral decay and increasing wickedness is this sin considered as acceptable. But in God's eyes, the command remains in force as much today as when it was first given. And in the case of the Bible, the further defining of adultery will show that this is not just a sin targeted against the woman, but the man as well. For example, Leviticus 20 says -

“The man who commits adultery with *another* man's wife, *he* who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death.” Leviticus 20:10

In taking another man's wife, the offender has failed to honor and love his neighbor. For his willful act against God and man, he was to be executed along with the woman.

As the word *naaph*, or adultery, was used for the first time in Exodus 20, it is a good time to consider that until a command is given, there can be no imputation of sin.

It is certain that many people had committed adultery before the giving of the command, but there could be no imputation of sin for the act. Paul explains this in Romans 5 –

“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—¹³ (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.” Romans 5:12, 13

What this means is that from the time the command was given, any committing of adultery carried with it the imputation of sin, and thus guilt. As Paul notes later in Romans 7 –

“I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. ¹⁰ And the commandment, which *was to bring* life, I found to *bring* death. ¹¹ For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed *me*. ¹² Therefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.” Romans 7:9-12

Paul is specifically speaking about any command which is given. For whatever reason a command is given, because of our failure to meet the requirements of it, death is the result. This is what occurred in the Garden of Eden. Man was given one command, and it was in the negative –

“Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” Genesis 2:16, 17

Had the Lord not given Adam this command, when Adam ate of the fruit, there could have been no imputation of sin. But because the command existed, sin was imputed. Now consider again, before the command to not commit adultery existed, there could be no imputation of sin for the act.

But from the time the command was spoken forth, any act of adultery would result in the imputation of the sin. As we continue to see, the law does not bring life, it only brings death. It shows us how utterly sinful sin is to God. When a violation occurs, we stand condemned because of our misdeed.

But more, Jesus the Lord, who gave the command to Israel, further explained it to them when He came and taught among them –

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ ²⁸ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” Matthew 5:27, 28

Can anyone of us say that we have fulfilled this law in the manner He set forth? Of course not! But even without Jesus’ further explanation of it, we can consider Israel in relation to the command.

Was Israel free from guilt concerning this commandment? The answer is a definite “No!” Like murder, Hosea 4 shows that the people of the land reveled in sin, including the sin of adultery –

“Hear the word of the LORD,
You children of Israel,
For the LORD *brings* a charge against the inhabitants of the land:
“There is no truth or mercy
Or knowledge of God in the land.
² *By* swearing and lying,
Killing and stealing and committing **adultery**,
They break all restraint,
With bloodshed upon bloodshed.” Hosea 4:1, 2

But Israel was even guiltier because they were told that not only was adultery to be considered a sin of the flesh against one’s fellow man, it was also a sin when committed against God. The prophets, time and time again, told the people that when they bowed to other gods, they committed *spiritual* adultery against the Lord.

And throughout the Old Testament, the people are shown to have committed exactly this against Him. They had forsaken their Husband and gone after others. They had violated the marriage contract that He established with them in the giving of the law; the law that they agreed to.

We can learn vicariously from Israel by paying heed to both the law and to Israel’s inability to keep the law – even one point of it. The record of their history is one of abject failure. But Israel is simply given as an example of all people in all cultures.

As is evidenced throughout Israel’s history, concerning this seventh word, something else was needed. The seventh word only condemns; it cannot save.

As an extra note, repeated from our Exodus 20 sermon on this command – it is not true that Jesus abrogated it when he had mercy on the adulteress in John 8. The law demanded that she was to be stoned for her crime. When He was asked for His guidance, the response He gave has been often twisted to justify tolerance in the matter–

“He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.” ⁸ And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. ⁹ Then those who heard *it*, being convicted by *their* conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest *even* to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. ¹⁰ When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, ‘Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?’

¹¹ She said, 'No one, Lord.'

And Jesus said to her, 'Neither do I condemn you...'” John 8:7-11

If that were the end of the account, which is often where the morally deficient leave off with it, then we may come to a different conclusion about the matter. However, there were a few more words to her before He finished. He said, "...go and sin no more" (John 7:11) What is implied is that Jesus called her actions sinful and that she was to not continue in her sin.

*Murder, me? No, I've never done that
Only bad people do that kind of stuff
I've said some mean things though, during an angry spat
But calling that murder, it's just not enough*

*Adultery? No! I've never strayed from my wife
She's so good to me; I just stay at home
Sure, I think about the girl at the store every day of my life
But,, nope! Never from my wife did I roam*

*Wait, I never noticed this before...
The Bible says whoever hates his brother, a murderer is he
And he who looks at a woman in lust, is an adulterer for sure
I've done both of those things... O! Woe is me!*

*Because of this law, I'm digging an awful deep hole
A pit which is set to consume my very soul*

II. Offenses Abound (verses 19 & 20)

¹⁹ **You shall not steal.**

v'lo tgenov – “And no you shall steal.” Once again, unlike Exodus 20:15, the word “And” begins the verse. Other than that, it is identical.

The eighth word. This commandment corresponds to the third. In the making of, and bowing down to, carved images we in essence rob God of His just due. Likewise, when we steal from others, we deny them of what they have a right to. In this, we can see that the structure of the commands is not arbitrary. Instead, it is precise and purposeful.

The word *ganav* means to carry away, secretly bring, steal away, or get by stealth. What is obvious is that something is being removed in an improper fashion. The word was used several times before the giving of the law. It is what Rachel did when she stole her father's household idols.

It is also what the brothers of Joseph denied doing when they had been accused of taking his cup used for divination. In both of these instances, and in the giving of the command itself, there is the implied concept of "personal property."

The Bible takes this precept as an axiom and then solidifies it in this command. People have a right to their possessions. To unjustly deprive them of what they own is theft.

In the pre-law biblical references, in the moral guidelines of civilized culture, and even in the simple knowledge of right and wrong instilled in man, the concept that stealing is wrong is testified to.

In our Exodus 20 sermon, I cited Charles Ellicott's analysis of this command. It is worth citing again –

"Here, again, law has but embodied natural instinct. The savage who hammers out a flint knife by repeated blows with a pebble, labouring long, and undergoing pain in the process, feels that the implement which he has made is his own, and that his right to it is indisputable. If he is deprived of it by force or fraud, he is wronged. The eighth commandment forbids this wrong, and requires us to respect the property of others no less than their person and their domestic peace and honour." Charles Ellicott

It would be hard to argue that the flint knife made by that man belonged to anyone but him. And yet, the one who is stronger, thus the one in power – whether he has earned the right to it or not – will come and rob what is not his.

This is what governments do all the time. But just because the government has the *ability* to take away one's personal possessions, it does not mean that it is *morally right* for them to do so. This is why there is a divide in this matter. On one side, there are conservatives, and on the other, there are liberals.

Conservatives hold that one who earns his keep should retain it. Liberals hold that the shiftless, who do nothing to earn their keep, should be entitled to take from those who have earned it. This is what divides the two in this regard, and it comes down to that one word – power.

When liberals are in power, they pass laws which benefit their own personal agenda at the expense of the efforts of the private individual. This is theft. At what point something which is good for all, such as proper taxation for the continuance of the government, becomes theft may be debatable, but such a point does exist.

Unfortunately, by the time that point is passed, and normally by the way it comes about, there is nothing that the individual can do about it. Adam Clarke rightly states it this way –

“Crimes are not lessened in their demerit by the number, or political importance of those who commit them. A state that enacts bad laws is as criminal before God as the individual who breaks good ones.” Adam Clarke

He is right and it shows the immense guilt of those in power, especially the left, who steal from the rich to give to the poor. Albert Barnes notes that, “The right of property is sanctioned in the eighth commandment by an external rule: its deeper meaning is involved in the tenth commandment.”

The idea that the deeper meaning of the tenth commandment, meaning coveting, is affected by the right to private property is beautifully seen in the account of King Ahab and the vineyard of Naboth in 1 Kings 21.

He coveted Naboth’s vineyard, he had others lie in order to bring accusation against him, and he then had him murdered because of the lie. After that, he stole the property that was left. The violation of one command often results in the violation of several.

Reading about Ahab, and indeed other such accounts like it from the Old Testament, helps us to learn vicariously of what is right and proper, and of what is dastardly. The record is there, if we will just pick it up and read it.

But in reading the word, we not only see the acts committed, but we also see how the Lord takes note of each instance. In Jeremiah 7, we read this –

““Will you **steal**, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, ¹⁰ and *then* come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, ‘We are delivered to do all these abominations’? ¹¹ Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen *it*,’ says the LORD.”” Jeremiah 7:9-11

As with the previous seven words, Israel proved that the law of the Lord only brought guilt. Sin was imputed for their thefts because the law had instructed them that they were to not steal. Concerning this eighth word, something else was needed. The eighth word only condemns; it cannot save.

²⁰ **'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.**

v'lo ta'aneh bereakha ed shav – “And no you shall bear in your neighbor witness empty.” There are two differences here from Exodus 20:16. The first is that this, again, begins with “And.” Secondly, the word false is now changed from *sheqer* to *shav*.

The word *sheqer* signifies an untruth, and by implication a sham or something without cause or justification. The word here, *shav*, signifies deception or vanity, or that which is empty. It is the word used in Exodus 20:7 –

“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God **in vain**, for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name **in vain**.” Exodus 20:7

That was repeated here in Deuteronomy 5:11 with the verses that correspond to the Exodus account. It was also used in Exodus 23 concerning circulating a false report.

The ninth word. In Psalm 12, David says –

“Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases!
For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men.
²They speak **idly** everyone with his neighbor;
With flattering lips and a double heart they speak.” Psalm 12:1, 2

It is a word used quite a bit by David and others in the psalms and elsewhere, and in various applications, but it is always in a negative way. When the Lord speaks, there is purpose, there is substance behind what He says, and what is said is then enduring.

To speak words without substance is a lie. One could speak empty words about himself – “I was a navy seal.” It is harmful because it deprives those who were actually navy seals of the efforts they expended to earn that title. This would then, in a sense, be bearing false witness against one’s neighbor.

One can also obviously speak empty words directly about his neighbor, harming him in the process as well. In this, he can reduce the person's stature in the eyes of others, call into question his integrity, and so on. In Isaiah 59, we read –

“For your hands are defiled with blood,
And your fingers with iniquity;
Your lips have spoken lies, (sheqer)
Your tongue has muttered perversity.
⁴No one calls for justice,
Nor does *any* plead for truth.
They trust in empty words and speak **lies**; (shav)
They conceive evil and bring forth iniquity.” Isaiah 59:3, 4

In his words, Isaiah uses both words given in the two sets of Ten Commandments, *sheqer* and *shav*. In the Greek translation of this from Isaiah, the words signify lawless and empty, which are pretty close to the intent.

Whether they are direct untruths, or words of emptiness, speaking something that is nothing – and thus an untruth – violates the neighbor, and it disgraces the Lord who is perfectly true in His very being.

In fact, in the book of Titus, it explicitly says that God cannot lie. Because this is His very nature, He is asking us to resemble Him by always testifying to the truth. Further, this was given as a protection of the people. To speak either direct untruths or simply words of vanity against another does nothing to enrich the speaker, but it robs much from the one spoken against.

Not bearing false witness against a neighbor includes a whole multitude of things. We can deprive another of his right to life or property by making false claims. We can slander others, tell false tales about them, or even imply that they have committed a wrong which they have not committed.

But more, we can suppress the truth when it is known in order to harm our neighbor. That must be considered a violation of this command.

Finally, the term “neighbor” here is to be given the broadest application. It doesn't mean “next door,” but anyone in any location. And it doesn't stop with friends, but it extends to enemies. It must be considered an all-inclusive reference to humanity in general.

So far, we have seen that the first eight commandments could not save anyone. The people failed, and the Bible witnesses against them. Now, this ninth commandment does so as well. If we pay heed, and learn vicariously that this is so, we can see that the standard also speaks against us.

Israel is given as the example, we are to learn from it, and we are to reach out for grace. If we don't, we can see that we will be lost. The law was given, and it was disobeyed. Israel failed to uphold even this basic commandment. Harm was done to others, the Lord was offended through their actions, and judgment for violating the words of the covenant was due.

Once again, the law which had been given resulted not in man's blissful reconciliation with God, but rather in the imputation of sin. Concerning this ninth word, something else was needed. The ninth word only condemns; it cannot save.

*Steal? Me? No, I never did such a thing
Everything I have I earned on my own
Such an accusation, well, it makes my ears ring
All the food I have, comes from what I have grown*

*And bear false witness? Come on, not a chance
I never say anything that isn't true
My words are like a perfectly choreographed dance
It's the truth! Why would I lie to you?*

*Well, yeah, I did take that kid's toy back in first grade
And I did say things about some people that just weren't true
It's just a couple little mistakes that I've made
God doesn't care... it's all past. On a bell curve, I'm a lot better than you*

III. A Sin of the Heart (verses 21 & 22)

²¹ 'You shall not covet your neighbor's wife; and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, his male servant, his female servant, his ox, his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.'

Again, there are differences between these words, and of those in Exodus 20:17. The verse begins, again, with "And" in the Hebrew. From there the things Moses names are listed differently than they were before –

Deuteronomy 5

Neighbor's wife
Neighbor's house
His field
And his manservant
And his maidservant
His ox
And his donkey
And all that is your neighbor's

Exodus 20

House of neighbor
Wife of neighbor
And his manservant
And his maidservant
And his ox
And his donkey
And all that is your neighbor's

The wife is placed first before house, and "field" is added. That is obvious. But, there is another difference as well. In Exodus 20, the word *khamad* or desire, coming from a root meaning "to delight in," is used twice when speaking of all of the items.

However, here in Deuteronomy, Moses uses the word *khamad* only when referring to the neighbor's wife, and then for the rest of the items, he changes to the word *avah* – to desire, crave, or lust after.

Both words are used negatively and positively throughout Scripture. Therefore, to have these feelings is not necessarily wrong. Rather, it is wrong when those feelings are transferred to something to which an individual has no right.

To understand the changes, the most obvious change – that of adding the field of the neighbor – should be considered. The standard reason given by most scholars is that Israel is about to enter the land of Canaan, and so Moses adds it in.

That doesn't make sense. Israel was expected to go in and possess the land forty years earlier as well. They were to possess houses and fields. Further, some of Israel had already been given their inheritance east of the Jordan. So that cannot be the reason.

One reason for this is certainly *because* some of them had already received their land. They were to be content with what they had been allotted now that they had their possession.

Secondly, and a little more spiritual, is that seven is the number of spiritual perfection. God originally listed seven items. Now seven items are considered under the house, just as it was in Exodus 20, but the wife is elevated above the house, making an eighth – the number of superabundance, new beginnings, and that of a new series. Each of these fits

right in with the thought of Israel now obtaining the promise that they had missed 38 years earlier.

As for the addition of the new word, *avah*. This is given to dispel the lies one might tell himself about his own heart – “Well, I desired his field, but I didn’t lust after it.” Moses is destroying the argument of semantics. He is saying that what you look at, if it is not yours, is not to be salivated over by twenty drops off of your lip, and not by even one drop off of your lip. This is...

The tenth word. As I said, elsewhere in the Bible, the same words are used in a positive sense, such as in the 19th Psalm, where David uses *khamad* –

“The judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether.
¹⁰ **More to be desired** *are they* than gold,
Yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.” Psalm 19:9-10

Later, Isaiah uses the word *avah* –

“With my soul I have desired You in the night,
Yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early;
For when Your judgments *are* in the earth,
The inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” Isaiah 26:9

Therefore, the desiring of a thing is not in and of itself wrong. It is desiring a wrong thing, or desiring something in an unhealthy way, which violates this commandment. What is most important about this tenth commandment is that it is solely of intent, and thus we learn that the Lord is aware of our intent.

The Bible says nothing is hidden from the eyes of the Lord and here we have an explicit reference to that. What we covet, unless acted upon, remains in our heads alone. And yet it is not unknown to the Lord.

And though this commandment is one solely of *intent*, it is that very intent which can so easily lead to disaster. The first two uses of the word *khamad* in the Bible are found right at the beginning of it all. Just after forming the man, and even before the Bible records any words having been spoken to him, we read this, which includes the word *khamad* –

“And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow **that is pleasant** to the sight and good for food. The tree of life *was* also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” Genesis 2:9

After this, man was given his single command -

“Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” Genesis 2:16-17

However, on the next page comes the most unfortunate of verses which uses this same word, *khamad* -

“So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree **desirable** to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.” Genesis 3:6

The lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life all stepped in and took hold of the first people who existed. They coveted that which was forbidden, and the world was plunged into darkness, pain, and death.

And the same is true with the word *avah*. Its first two uses were after the giving of the Ten Commandments, and while the people were on their way to Canaan –

“Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded **to intense craving**; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: ‘Who will give us meat to eat?’”
-Numbers 11:4

After that, we read –

“But while the meat *was* still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was aroused against the people, and the LORD struck the people with a very great plague. ³⁴ So he called the name of that place Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people **who had yielded to craving**.”
-Numbers 11:33, 34

So much for semantics. When we desire more than what the Lord offers us, we fall into sin. The thing which seems so innocuous and so relatively unimportant compared to all the rest of the commandments is that which causes the greatest of troubles.

And what is equally surprising is that the first command ever broken, and the first command that was violated just after Israel's departure from Sinai – both of these examples – started with the last of the Ten Commandments. And each time, it resulted in death!

As this reflects an evaluation of the inner being of man, and the Lord is He who searches the hearts and the minds, then who can say they stand guiltless before God? Can Israel? The answer is, of course, "No." From the time of the giving of the law, until the very last pages of the Old Testament, Scripture is *replete* with the failure of both individuals and the collective whole to meet the demands of this inward test.

In Numbers 11, the congregation craved after meat; in Joshua 7, Achan the son of Carmi coveted the plunder of Jericho; in 2 Samuel 11, David coveted another man's wife; in 1 Kings 21, Ahab coveted another man's vineyard, and in Micah 2 we read this about the people -

“Woe to those who devise iniquity,
And work out evil on their beds!
At morning light they practice it,
Because it is in the power of their hand.
²They **covet** fields and take *them* by violence,
Also houses, and seize *them*.
So they oppress a man and his house,
A man and his inheritance.” Micah 2:1, 2

As with all of the previous commandments, Israel *failed*. The word of God stands as a testimony against them and as a means for us to vicariously learn how far short of God's standard we actually come.

Concerning this tenth word, something else was needed. The tenth word only condemns, it cannot save. The law itself says that the man who does the things of the law will live by them. But then the rest of the Old Testament goes on to show that no one could do the things of the law.

²² **“These words the LORD spoke to all your assembly,**

This means “The Ten Words,” meaning the Ten Commandments. The changes between Exodus and Deuteronomy cannot be taken as either errors or contradictions. The Lord presented the Ten to Israel, and Moses repeated the Ten to them.

22 (con't) in the mountain from the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice;

These words confirm what was already said in verse 4:11, and 4:12. Verse 4:11 describes the scene, and verse 4:12 notes that the Lord spoke out of the midst of the fire.

22 (con't) and He added no more.

This is only speaking of the verbal presentation to the people, not additional words of law. The Lord spoke out the Ten Words in the terrifying way to the people, and then He ceased from speaking. After that, He only spoke to and through Moses, and later at times to Aaron, words of law.

***22 (fin) And He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me.**

This actually occurred later. Moses went up the mountain to receive the tablets. While there, he also received a great deal of instruction over the next forty days. At the end of that time, as was seen in Exodus 34, and as will be seen again in Deuteronomy 9, he was then given the tablets of stone.

As we know, Israel turned from the Lord *while* he was on the mountain, and the first set of tablets were destroyed by Moses. It pictured Israel's failure to meet the law that they had just received. A second set of tablets was made, and these were deposited within the Ark of the Covenant, picturing Christ who both fulfilled and embodies the law.

It is only through what He accomplished that the life God promised to restore to man can be obtained. We have gone through ten basic commandments, and we have seen that Israel violated all of them – openly and as is clearly recorded.

This is for us to learn through them that what we need is less of the law and more of God's grace. When we arrogantly stand on the law for our justification, we tell God that we can do better than He has done. Let us never stand in such an unfavorable light. Rather, let us rush to Christ, receive His forgiveness, and be reconciled to God through Him.

Think of it! As the Lord's voice bellowed out each commandment, He was looking forward to the penalty for each violation of it, knowing that He would someday assume that penalty for us. The display of judgment that accompanied these Ten Words was

taken upon Himself... for us, and the cup of God's wrath was drained at the cross of Calvary. Thank God for Jesus Christ.

Closing Verse: *"And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, ⁴² saying, 'Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.'⁴³ Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. ⁴⁴ And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.'" Luke 22:41-44*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 5:23-33 It's a good question, and you surely wonder why... (Now, Therefore, Why Should We Die?) (22nd Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Learning Vicariously - Hopefully! Part II

¹⁷ 'You shall not murder.

¹⁸ 'You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁹ 'You shall not steal.

²⁰ 'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

²¹ 'You shall not covet your neighbor's wife; and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, his male servant, his female servant, his ox, his donkey, or anything that *is* your neighbor's.'

These words the LORD spoke to all your assembly
In the mountain from the midst of the fire, like a roar
The cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice
And He added no more

And He wrote them on two tablets of stone
And gave them to me, when I was with Him alone

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 5:23-33 **(Now, Therefore, Why Should We Die?)**

In today's passage, the leaders of the people – having received the Ten Commandments and knowing that more laws are coming – present themselves to Moses. They have seen the terrifying display of sight and sound, and they no longer want to experience it.

They have an immense fear because of what they have seen and heard. And so, they ask that the words of the Lord will come through Moses rather than directly. Without a doubt, this is in hopes that it will lessen the effects of fear upon their lives.

But what difference does it really make? What is it about receiving the law through Moses that will make any difference at all? Today we will consider that in hopes of understanding what is being conveyed to us in this – and I mean this sincerely – really marvelous passage.

Text Verse: *“Do you look at things according to the outward appearance? If anyone is convinced in himself that he is Christ's, let him again consider this in himself, that just as he is Christ's, even so we are Christ's. ⁸ For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed— ⁹ lest I seem to terrify you by letters. ¹⁰ ‘For his letters,’ they say, ‘are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.’ ¹¹ Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such we will also be in deed when we are present.”*

-2 Corinthians 10:7-11

The people at Corinth had made the error of thinking that Paul's words in his letters were not a reflection of who he was as a person. When he was present with them, he appeared like a weak person, and his speech left a lot to be desired.

He also worked making tents to support himself, instead of insisting that those he ministered to support him. Everything about Paul seems unimpressive. However, when he wrote them letters, he was always much more authoritative.

Because of this, they began to think his letters were not a reflection of who he was as a person. In his words here, he corrects them of that thinking. Just because he came to the people in a timid manner did not mean he could not present himself with the commanding authority of an apostle.

In correcting them, he says that what he says in his letters when absent from them is exactly how he can be when he is with them. In fact, he had already said that to them in his first letter when he said, “What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?” (1 Corinthians 4:21).

His words were a reflection of who he was, whether he displayed himself with power or not. This is what Israel, in our passage today, and throughout the rest of their history, has failed to understand about the Lord.

It is not how one appears at any given time that people need to be concerned with. It is who the person (or in the case of Israel – the Lord) is by nature that needs to be considered. The Corinthians attempted to disassociate Paul from his words. Israel will attempt to do that today as well. But it doesn’t work that way.

Stay tuned for another exciting adventure into God’s superior word. It is coming right now. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. From the Midst of the Darkness (verses 23-27)

Moses has just finished recounting the Ten Commandments. After repeating them, he finished up that portion of the narrative with, “These words the Lord spoke to all your assembly, in the mountain from the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and He added no more. And He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me” (5:22).

With that fresh on our memories, we start into what occurred after that awesome display. The words of the passage ahead are an expansion of what was seen in Exodus 20. There it said –

“Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw *it*, they trembled and stood afar off. ¹⁹Then they said to Moses, ‘You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.’” Exodus 20:18, 19

Moses will take that short narrative, and he will go into more detail than Exodus did. It is for good reason too, as we will see. And so, he begins the passage with...

²³ **“So it was, when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness,**

v'hi ke-shameakhem eth ha'qol mitok ha'khoshek – “And it came to pass when you heard the voice from midst the darkness.”

Four times in the previous chapter, and four times in this chapter, the text says that the Lord God spoke *mi'tok ha'esh*, or “from midst of the fire.” In fact, that was said in just the previous verse, and it will be said again in the next verse to come. And yet, here it says, *mi'tok ha'khoshek*, or “from midst of the darkness.”

There is no contradiction here. In verse 5:22, which we just cited, it said the voice came “from the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness.” Therefore, the voice resounded from out of the entire display – both fire and darkness. But it has been the fire that has been the main source of focus. Now it says only “the darkness.”

Such a change is not without purpose, and it shouldn't be passed over without a careful analysis of why it has been introduced. And yet, I found no commentary on the reason for the change – as if it had no bearing on the narrative.

The symbolism of the fire is obvious. The words are words of law, and with the introduction of law comes the knowledge of sin. With the introduction of that knowledge, the act of sinning becomes a foregone conclusion. With the act comes a violation of the law, and with the violation comes judgment. The voice out of the fire is one of judgment.

However, the darkness implies obscurity and a lack of understanding. There is an inability to properly comprehend. Darkness also signifies a lack of fraternity. The Bible puts light as revelation and understanding. But it also gives the sense of friendliness and a right relationship for those who draw near to it.

What this means, then, is that there is the lack of a close relationship between the voice and the hearers of the voice. And more, there is a lack of understanding by them as well. In seeing this, the words of verse 27 are explained. The people will say to Moses, “You go near and hear all that the Lord our God may say.”

As soon as that became evident, it was pretty obvious there would be a chiasm to reveal this more fully. Having laid out the verses to see if there would be one, sure enough... this is what came up –

Deuteronomy 5:23-5:27 – A Consuming Fire
When God Speaks with Man (06/22/20)

- a. “So it was, when you heard (*shama*) the voice from the midst of the darkness,
- b. while the mountain was burning with fire, that you came near to me (*qarav*)
- c. His voice from the midst of the fire. We have seen this day that God speaks with man; yet he *still* lives.
- d. Now therefore, why should we die?
- e. For this great fire will consume us;
- d. then we shall die
- c. the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we *have*, and lived?
- b. You go near (*qarav*) and hear all that the LORD our God may say,
- a. and tell us all that the LORD our God says to you, and we will hear (*shama*) and do *it*.’

The people heard, but the display was terrifying and unfriendly. Therefore, they asked to hear through a mediator only. They came near to him in order to have him go near to the Lord. This is exactly what a mediator does. He is the access point between two parties that lack a close bond which would make a mediator unnecessary.

The entire passage opens us up to what is going on, simply because of a change from the words “from the midst of the fire,” to “from the midst of the darkness.”

²³ (con’t) **while the mountain was burning with fire,**

v’hahar boer baesh – “and the mountain was burning in the fire.” While the voice proceeded from the darkness, the mountain was in the fire, and it was burning with the fire.” The mountain is a place of authority, as in a government seat. Therefore, the symbolism is that of an authoritative place of judgment.

The people grasped this. There is no sense of fraternity between the issuing forth of the law. Rather, there is only a state of judgment and of being consumed because of the words of authority issuing forth in the frightful display. And so, Moses recalls...

²³ (con’t) **that you came near to me,**

va’tiqrevun elai – “and you came near to me.” The same word, *va’tiqrevun*, was seen in verse 4:11, which said –

“Then you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain.”

The people had drawn near to the place where the Lord sat and where He issued forth words of law, and that didn't go over too well. The people were overwhelmed and could not bear up under the terror of the fearful display their eyes had beheld. Because of that, the people now approached Moses. It was...

²³ (con't) **all the heads of your tribes and your elders.**

Here, the word *shevet*, or tribe is used. There are other words translated as tribe as well, but this word looks to the political aspect of the tribe. In this, it includes the heads and elders.

In other words, it wasn't just the common folk, the women, and the children who were afraid of what they saw, but even the tribal heads and elders in the community. All of them had seen what they saw, and all were filled with terror, thus...

²⁴ **And you said:**

va'tomeru – “And you said.” Moses had just said that it was the heads of the tribes and the elders. Now, speaking to those gathered before him, he says, “And you said.” What was spoken by the leaders of Israel is as if it is spoken by all of Israel, for all time.

If Moses were alive today, he could say the exact same thing to the people of Israel, and it would have exactly the same effect. They could say, “We weren't there at Sinai. This doesn't apply to us.” If so, Moses could say, “Yes, you said this is what you wanted, and so this is how it is.”

The giving of the law, and everything associated with it, is a one-time and for-all-time event for the people of Israel. Until the covenant is annulled in Christ for them, they are bound to it.

²⁴ (con't) **'Surely the LORD our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire.**

These men – speaking for Israel – acknowledge that what they have seen was from *Yehovah Elohenu*, or “Yehovah our God.” There can be no denying this afterwards, as if the source of the law was out of Moses' own head.

They further acknowledge that the voice was accompanied by His glory, His greatness, and that it issued forth from the fire. These things are remembered to impress upon the minds of the new generation that Moses was not the source of the law.

Rather, its source is not only a god, as if some unseen entity, but the God, who provided a majestic display to reveal His greatness. In doing so, He has thus revealed the greatness of the law which proceeds from Him. Everything spoken here is connected to the law which is to guide Israel throughout their history.

²⁴ (con't) **We have seen this day that God speaks with man;**

Here it says that God speaks with *ha'adam*, or “the man.” It is a way of referring to humanity. There were men and women, young and old – all gathered before Him and hearing His voice. All of them came from their first father, the man, Adam.

It is a way of verifying the Genesis account to the people where the Lord God spoke to Adam in the Garden of Eden. But it also surely brought up the memories of what happened after the fall. There was no longer worry-free conversation, but fear. After they had eaten of the fruit, it said –

Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, “Where *are* you?”

¹⁰ So he said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.” Genesis 3:9, 10

The people sense what Adam also understood. This is certain because they next say...

²⁴ (con't) **yet he *still* lives.**

v'khai – “and lives.” And yet, all of them lived. The people appear to have been familiar with the Genesis narrative, even at such an early time after being brought out of Egypt. If so, they knew that Adam was told that on the day he ate of the fruit, he would die.

Adam was afraid, but Adam didn't die. At least not physically. The people have made the assumption that the record was speaking of physical death, something they now also feared. But the Lord was speaking of spiritual death. Those who heard the law spoken out were already spiritually dead. The law could not fix that.

In their lack of understanding, they equated what was spoken to Adam as what would also occur to them – physical death. In order to avoid that, they continue...

²⁵ Now therefore, why should we die?

This is the center of the chiasm, and it shows the terror of being in the presence of God without an appropriate covering. Adam was in the Lord's presence covered in fig leaves. The fig signifies a connection to God, or its lack thereof. They had sewn the leaves themselves, signifying their own works. In this, they were afraid.

The people of Israel were in the same position. They heard the words of law, they were not covered in the Lord's holiness, and they knew that they would die because of it. Concerning the words, "Why should we die?", Charles Ellicott notes –

"The instinctive dread of death awakened by the Divine presence, and especially by the declaration of the Divine law, bears eloquent testimony to the truth that man was made to bear the Divine likeness, and to live a holy life." Charles Ellicott

He is correct in this. But what is more, is that the people realized that the words of the law would, in fact, bring death, and that by the law they could not live the holy life they were called to. In adhering to the law, it would be possible, but they would not be able to do so.

Thus, even at this moment in their history, only minutes after receiving the Ten Commandments, it was evident that the law was to be a tutor to lead man to Christ. In reality, nothing more could be expected of the law than that. Without Christ, there is only the anticipation of judgment. They even acknowledge it openly...

^{25 (con't)} For this great fire will consume us;

We saw in a couple of sermons from Chapter 4 that the fire, the cloud, the darkness, and the other events the people heard and saw were only displays of the Lord's power, they were not actually the Lord. Rather, He was hidden from their eyes.

Thus, it isn't the really the fire that they should have feared, but the Lord who called out from the fire. Though it will be seen that they partially understand this, they don't fully. Israel's attention was focused in the wrong place. That continues to be seen from the next words as well...

^{25 (con't)} if we hear the voice of the LORD our God anymore, then we shall die.

The people understand that the voice of the Lord God is the Source of what is to be feared. They have equated the voice of the Lord with the terrible display their ears heard and their eyes beheld. However, they will misunderstand what that means.

If the voice of the Lord was accompanied with that terrifying display, and if the voice of the Lord is a reflection of what the Lord expects, then it doesn't really matter if they actually hear the voice of the Lord or not. It is what the voice conveys that is actually to be feared. The people have only partially grasped what they needed to grasp.

And that continues on to this day in Israel. For now, the elders there before Moses continue on in their lack of fully grasping the situation by saying...

²⁶ For who *is there* of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we *have*, and lived?

The question of the men there before Moses demands a negative answer. There is no one who had heard such things. And yet, because these things are written in the law, it is actually irrelevant if the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire is literally heard or not.

In the Talmud, it is said that when the Ten Commandments were spoken out, all of the nations of the world heard the words of the law – all in their own language. There is nothing to substantiate this outside of the Talmud.

It is probable that whoever wrote that had heard about the Day of Pentecost, and how the believers in Christ spoke in all of the tongues of the peoples. In hearing that, he simply coopted the account and made the same claim about the giving of the law at Sinai. But more to the point, the law was only given to Israel – not any other country. But, as I said, it is actually irrelevant.

The words of the law are recorded – not just the Ten Commandments, but all of those received by Moses from the Lord as well. They are no less the words of the Lord, and how they are received is of far less importance than what the words say.

The display was only intended to alert the people to this fact. But it didn't sink in as it should. They only picked up on the importance of the transmission of the words, but not on the importance of the Source of the words, or of the words themselves. That continues to be evident from their next words...

27 You go near and hear all that the LORD our God may say,

These words correspond to what was said in verse 23. There, the people came near to Moses. Here, the people ask Moses to go near the Lord. They wanted to distance themselves from the Source of the words they heard. Thus, Moses was to function in a mediatorial role in receiving the words of Yehovah.

And so, there is supposedly safety both in distance and in how the words of law are transmitted to them. But, if the Lord is God, there is actually no distance between Him and the people.

And more, if the Lord is God, there is no difference in how the word gets to them. The Source is the same, and so the weight of the law remains wholly unchanged.

Remember what Paul told the Corinthians in our opening today. He is the same person, whether he is present or whether he is writing them a letter. His apostolic authority remained unchanged.

If you think about it, the people there with Moses would have been better off to have the words transmitted directly to them by the Lord. The terrifying effect would have remained, and thus the desire to not violate His word would have been ensured.

How can we know this is so? Because the cloud remained atop Sinai while Moses went up to receive the rest of the law from Him. But without being spoken to directly, they assumed that they could do as they wished. The people who received the law were the same people who made a golden calf to worship while the cloud remained right there in full view.

They asked for breathing space. Moses was to receive the words of the Lord...

27 (con't) and tell us all that the LORD our God says to you, and we will hear and do it.'

These words end the chiasm which began in verse 23. The people heard the voice of the Lord "from the midst of the darkness." There was no light, no friendliness, and no comprehension transmitted to the people, only words of law.

They are asking Moses to bring back the word in hopes of there being light, affability, and understanding. This is what a mediator is chosen for. When parties cannot meet personally, they will have a mediator to go between them.

When parties have no mutual friendliness, they will have a mediator to bring about harmony. And when parties have no ability to harmoniously communicate their words, they have a mediator to bring about peace between them.

This is all hoped for and anticipated, but they are not sending words to the Lord. Rather, the covenant is one-sided. They agreed to whatever the Lord would say. It is His covenant, and they had bound themselves to it. They were obligated to simply “hear and do” what the Lord spoke forth.

Despite this, and knowing all that would lie ahead, the Lord responds according to their words...

*When God speaks to man, “It is man’s duty to obey!”
Whatever the precept that is given, so shall it be
We are to observe all the Lord does say
And it will go well with us most certainly*

*When He says, and He does mean, “You shall not eat pork”
That is the command for that particular time
But if He later says, “All foods are clean,” stick in your fork
The previous law is no longer a crime*

*When the Law of Moses is fulfilled in Christ, it has met its end
Now a new reality for God’s chosen has been found
Because from heaven, God – His grace in Christ did send
We are now free from the law, because that grace does abound*

*Thank God for Jesus Christ our Lord
From Him God’s infinite grace is outpoured*

II. That You May Live (verses 28-33)

²⁸ “Then the LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me:

The expression, “heard the voice,” signifies more than just hearing the sound. It is a way of saying, I hear, understand, and have processed what is being conveyed. The people made a proposition to Moses. The Lord both heard what they said, and the intent of the words was understood by Him. In response to this, He says...

²⁸ (con't) **'I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They are right *in* all that they have spoken.**

The Lord's response here cannot go without being combined with what is said in Deuteronomy 18 –

“The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, ¹⁶ according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.’

¹⁷ “And the LORD said to me: ‘What they have spoken is good. ¹⁸ I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. ¹⁹ And it shall be *that* whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require *it* of him.” Deuteronomy 18:15-19

Unlike Israel who has only looked at the effects of the giving of the law – meaning the terrifying display, the Lord has looked upon the entire matter. He not only gave them the effects to see and fear, He gave them the words which issued from Him – who is to be feared.

The leaders of Israel assumed that in the removing of the effects, the terror of the law would be lessened. The Lord knew it would not. Therefore, on the VERY DAY the law was given, the Lord is acknowledging that not only was the display needing to be changed, but the entire covenant was as well.

The Mosaic Covenant, by its very nature – with or without the display – was a covenant of death. Therefore, a New Covenant was needed – a Christ covenant. This isn't seen now in Chapter 5, but it is seen by including the words of Chapter 18.

Moses' mediation of the Law could not remove the terror of the law. Only in Christ's coming, fulfilling the law, and establishing a New Covenant in His blood could the terror be removed. It is that, not obedience to the law which was now being given, that the Lord next speaks of...

²⁹ **Oh, that they had such a heart in them**

It is the heart that the Lord evaluates. This is evident throughout Scripture. The Pharisees did the things of the law, but they didn't care diddly about the Lord who gave the law. That is evidenced by Jesus' own words.

The people observed the law, added in their own commands which twisted the law, and it didn't bother them a bit to do so. In response to this, and citing Isaiah, He said –

“These people draw near to Me with their mouth,
And honor Me with *their* lips,
But their heart is far from Me.
⁹ And in vain they worship Me,
Teaching *as* doctrines the commandments of men.” Matthew 15:8, 9

The Lord recognized that the people feared the Lord as they stood before Moses, but He also knew that this fear was not based on who He was, or what His word (which reflects His nature) said. Rather, it was based on how He presented Himself when He spoke out His word. In removing the terrible display, their hearts would no longer be moved to fear Him.

Is this so? Of course it is. The same Lord who gave this law came and dwelt among them. He also spoke out to them His word. And yet, they rejected who He was and what He said. Hence, the Lord continues, knowing it would be so...

²⁹ (con't) **that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments,**

The words of Chapter 18 are exactly what the Lord is referring to here. Again...

“I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. ¹⁹ And it shall be *that* whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require *it* of him.” Deuteronomy 18:18, 19

The Lord, in the Law of Moses, *commanded* the people to listen to the Prophet like Moses. That IS a part of keeping all His commandments which He now refers to in Chapter 5. To fail to fear Christ Jesus, is to fail to fear the Lord. And to fail to obey the words of Christ Jesus is to fail to keep the commandments of the Lord. One plus one will always equal two in proper theology.

It is with this thought in mind, and while citing Hebrews 12, that Charles Ellicott rightfully and beautifully states what is going on – right here in Deuteronomy 5:29 –

“But it must not be forgotten that He ‘whose voice then shook the earth’ is the very same Person who ‘speaketh from heaven’ now. He who pronounced the Law in the letter writes it on the heart by His Spirit. The Angel of the covenant and the Prophet like unto Moses are one. He who gave the Law on Sinai died under it on Calvary, and provided for its observance for ever.” Charles Ellicott

What Ellicott means is that in coming to Christ, the law is observed by us in Him. We are merited with perfect adherence to the law because Christ perfectly adhered to the law. What He did is imputed to us, and its effects are forever. We are not under law, but we are in Christ, and thus under grace.

For those in Christ, all is well. For those who do not come to Christ, such is not the case. That is why the Lord adds in this qualifier...

²⁹ (con’t) **that it might be well with them and with their children forever!**

It can only go well when one’s heart fears the Lord and observes His commandments. But one cannot fear the Lord, nor can he observe His commandments if He doesn’t obey His commandments – all of them.

As heeding the Prophet like Moses, meaning the Lord Jesus, is such a commandment, then only when one directs his heart to Jesus can it go well with him and his children forever.

As a point of clarity in the Hebrew, a literal translation of this verse is a bit different than the English. It says, “Who will give, and become heart this in them, to fear Me, and to keep all my commandments all the days.”

In other words, they have at this moment a heart that fears the Lord, but He knows that will not continue. And so, He rhetorically asks, “Who will give them such a heart that will be like this forever?” If they refuse such a heart, it cannot occur.

It is a marvelous verse that demonstrates the freewill of man. Israel rejected such a heart, and they set their course for the time being. However, it will happen. The answer to the question is found in Jeremiah 31, and which is then cited by the author of Hebrews –

“For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ¹¹ None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. ¹² For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”

-Hebrews 8:10-12

It is the Lord who will do so, giving them what they have lacked for so long when they call out for it. It is a marvelous promise of future restoration for Israel. For now, the Lord next says...

³⁰ **Go and say to them, “Return to your tents.”**

The people had been called from the dwellings to stand before the Lord. The Lord spoke, the people feared, and the leaders came to Moses on behalf of the people and made their petition. The Lord agreed to their request, and so the Lord now instructs them to return, once again, to their tents...

³¹ **But as for you, stand here by Me,**

Only Moses remains to hear the word of the Lord. And so, he is instructed to *amad*, or stand, there by the Lord. Thus, it signifies that he is to receive what the others cannot. They stood before the Lord, but they will do so no longer. Only Moses will stand...

^{31 (con't)} **and I will speak to you all the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments**

The translation is incorrect. It says, *kal ha'mitsvah v'ha'khukim v'ha'mishpatim* – “all the command (it is singular) and all the statutes and all the judgments.” The law is a codified body which is to be dutifully obeyed. It is a single command which is then defined by the statutes and judgments of which it is comprised.

^{31 (con't)} **which you shall teach them,**

These are to be taken down from the mouth of the Lord and transmitted to the people for their observance. Thus, he is fulfilling the role of both receiving and instruction. It is a mediatorial position as an appointed lawgiver.

^{31 (con't)} **that they may observe *them* in the land which I am giving them to possess.'**

With the record of the Old Testament and the gospels complete, we can see what Israel could not see. The record stands that they were given the law, they did cross Jordan, and they did not observe the law. This is evidenced all the way through until the work of Christ was complete.

Thus, this verse can only truly be appreciated in the knowledge of Christ. The land anticipates a return to paradise. The Jordan anticipates the life and work of Christ. Thus, observing of the law is anticipated in what Christ accomplishes.

This takes us back to Ellicott's words, "He who gave the Law on Sinai died under it on Calvary, and provided for its observance for ever." Thank God for Jesus Christ.

³² **"Therefore you shall be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you;**

The words now return from the Lord speaking to Moses back to Moses speaking to the people. He is imploring them to do as the Lord had instructed a full generation earlier.

Again, like the previous words, what is stated here can only be appreciated in Christ's fulfillment of these things. The record has been faithfully written down – from the time of Joshua, even through the words of Malachi. They were not careful to do what they had been commanded...

^{32 (con't)} **you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.**

This must mean more than just doing as commanded, but it surely includes not adding to what has been given. In other words, to turn one way would be to disobey the law, but to turn another would be to add to the law that which was not law. It is what Jesus really got down on the leaders for at His time.

The people failed to do as the Lord commanded, they turned aside with almost every turn of the page, and they walked in a crooked and contrary manner to the word and will of the Lord. They were not careful to do as they were so instructed, and they added instructions that then twisted the law.

Again, thank God for Jesus Christ. Israel is merely a template of each of us – wandering through our lives completely disconnected from the reality of God. And yet, He intervened in time and did what Israel could not do, and – indeed – what we have each failed to do. Thank God for Jesus Christ.

³³ You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you,

Once again, Moses implores his audience to conduct their lives according to that which the Lord has commanded. In both testaments, the idea of the word “walk” is one which signifies to conduct one’s affairs.

To walk in the ways the Lord has commanded, is to conduct one’s affairs according to the commands of the Lord. And like in the giving of the Fifth Commandment, Moses adds on a note of promise for those who do so...

***³³ (fin) that you may live and *that it may be* well with you, and *that you may* prolong *your* days in the land which you shall possess.**

The words here are similar to those of verse 4:1—

“Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you.” Deuteronomy 4:1

However, there is a difference in the word “live.” An additional letter, a nun, is affixed to the end of it in this verse. Instead, of *tikhyu*, it says *tikhyun*. The addition of this letter gives fuller sense of the word so that it means something like “that you may have abundant life.”

Therefore, Moses is speaking plainly to the people about real life in Canaan. To be observant to the laws will bring about prosperity and abundant life, and it will bring about an extension of their time in the land without fear of exile.

But that brings us to the obvious picture of Christ. If our observance of the law is found not in ourselves, but in Christ, then it is – even from an evaluation of the Law of Moses – a note of the eternal joy and the eternal security of the believer.

The commandments in Christ are found to be fulfilled by faith in Christ. In that faith, the law is fulfilled on our behalf, and in that fulfilling, true life is found. In that, the word calls us overcomers, and in overcoming, we are sealed with a deposit which is our guarantee of redemption from this world to the land which we will possess.

How anyone can read the Bible and find only insufficiency in the work of Christ concerning the salvation of man is almost incredible. Is that what God promises us? Eternal insecurity because of the insufficiency of the cross of Christ?

No! Rather, God has done for us what we could not do for ourselves. And, all He asks us to do is to simply reach out, by faith, and accept it. Let us hold fast to the truth that what God has done is both complete, and it is fully sufficient to bring us home to Himself.

Israel was given a mediator for receiving the law of the covenant. He is a mediator that says, "You are to do these things that the Lord has instructed through me." Israel was offered another Mediator for a New Covenant. He is a Mediator who says, "I have done all that was instructed for Israel to do."

The question is, will you observe all those things that Israel was instructed to do, or will you trust that Christ Jesus has done them for you? Choose wisely. Choose Christ – to the glory of God and to the saving of your soul. Thank God for Jesus Christ. Great things He has done!

Closing Verse: *"And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." Hebrews 9:15*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 6:1-5 *How does this sync with, "God gave His only begotten Son?" (The Lord our God, the Lord is One) (23rd Deuteronomy Sermon)*

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Now Therefore, Why Should We Die?

So it was, when you heard the voice
From the midst of the darkness
While the mountain was burning with fire
That you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes
-----and your elders, me to address

And you said: Surely the LORD our God

Has shown us His glory and His greatness
And we have heard His voice
From the midst of the fire; we heard His address

That God speaks with man, we have seen this day
Yet he still lives, and is not taken away

Now therefore, why should we die?
For this great fire will consume us
If we hear the voice of the LORD our God anymore
Then we shall die; it shall be thus

For who is there of all flesh
Who has heard the voice of the living God
Speaking from the midst of the fire
As we have, and lived? Such a notion is flawed

You go near and hear all that may say the LORD our God
And tell us all that the LORD our God to you does say
And we will hear and do it
So we confirm to you this very day

Then the LORD heard the voice of your words
When you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me, so He did do
I have heard the voice of the words of this people
Which they have spoken to you

They are right in all that they have spoken
Oh, that they had such a heart in them; a heart so wise and clever
That they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments
That it might be well with them and with their children forever!

Go and say to them, "Return to your tents"
But as for you, stand here by Me
And I will speak to you all the commandments, the statutes
-----and the judgments
Which you shall teach them, speaking to them plainly

That they may observe them in the land

Which I am giving them to possess; so they will understand

Therefore you shall be careful to do
As the LORD your God has commanded you

You shall not turn aside
To the right hand or to the left, but the narrow path
-----shall be your guide

You shall walk in all the ways
Which the LORD your God has commanded you
-----so to you I address
That you may live and that it may be well with you
And that you may prolong your days in the land
-----which you shall possess

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 6:1-5 (The Lord Our God, the Lord is One)

In these are found words that are familiar to people who may not have ever read the Bible. Or, they may have such an impact on the world in which we live, or the theology that we espouse, that they stand alone as marvels of wonder and delight.

In our sermon today, we will have such a verse. It is considered by many Jews as the centerpiece of their morning and their evening prayer services. It was cited by Jesus in the New Testament, and it was given to reveal exactly the opposite of what many people find in it. Adam Clarke explains this for the Jews who have rejected Jesus Christ –

“When this passage occurs in the Sabbath readings in the synagogue, the whole congregation repeat the last word תַּךְ *achad* for several minutes together with the loudest vociferations: this I suppose they do to vent a little of their spleen against the Christians, for they suppose the latter hold three Gods, because of their doctrine of the Trinity.” Adam Clarke

Text Verse: *“Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying:
‘Whom shall I send,
And who will go for Us?’” Isaiah 6:8*

In his words, Isaiah says, *va’eshma eth qol Adonai* – “And I heard the voice of Adonai.” That means, he heard the voice of the Lord, Yehovah. The words of Yehovah then said, *omer eth mi eshlakh u-mi yelek lanu* – “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us.”

Unless one gets what Moses is saying in today’s passage, the words of Isaiah, and indeed many of the words of Scripture, make absolutely no sense at all. But in our evaluation of the word today, we will work to make sense out of these things, and to put a right sense of reason into our theology – a God-centered reason.

In doing so, so much of what is otherwise argued and debated over will fall into its proper place. Of course, one must actually accept that the evaluation is correct, and that what Moses is saying is as we will consider it. To this day, what I will tell you is rejected by the unbelieving Jews.

But it is they who have been exiled for two thousand years, and it is they who have suffered for their unbelief. For supposed Christian denominations to follow suit in their thinking is suicidal. Let us think clearly, let us reason things out from the greater

panorama of Scripture, and may our conclusions be honoring of the Lord God who has so meticulously revealed Himself to us in Scripture.

May it be so, and may it be to His glory. Marvelous wonders are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Be Careful to Observe It (verses 1-3)

The opening words of Chapter 6 follow exactly in accord with those of the previous chapter. The people had heard the voice of the Lord, they had seen the terrifying display that accompanied it, and they had heard the words of law – the Ten Commandments.

The entire display was so great and terrifying that they asked for Moses to hear the words of the Lord, and to then convey His words to them. In response, we read the following –

“Go and say to them, ‘Return to your tents.’³¹ But as for you, stand here by Me, and I will speak to you all the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which you shall teach them, that they may observe *them* in the land which I am giving them to possess.” Deuteronomy 5:30, 31

While there, we saw that the translation was incorrect. It said, *kal ha'mitsvah v'ha'khukim v'ha'mishpatim* – “all the command (it is singular) and all the statutes and all the judgments.” The law is a codified body of law which is to be dutifully obeyed. It is a single command which is then defined by the statutes and judgments of which it is comprised.

Chapter 6 now opens with the same thought, but this time it is, almost, correctly translated...

¹“Now this *is* the commandment, *and these are* the statutes and judgments

The word “commandment” is singular, and the words “statutes” and “judgments” are plural. They are also prefixed by definite articles. There is the duty of the law, meaning the commandment, and then there are the statutes and the judgments which define that law, and which comprise it.

What may have happened in this translation is that a different set of translators was assigned to the previous chapter, or a different translator within a committee did one chapter and another did the next. Otherwise, it is hard to guess why they would translate the same words, separated by only three verses, differently.

However it came about, it is a great lesson for us once again. If we hang our hat on a single translation, we will inevitably come to erroneous conclusions about things.

It is one thing to read the word in a general form as we do each day, and it is another to do an in-depth study and rely solely on whatever translation we happen to have at the time. For example, the KJV got both of these verses wrong. Thus, an error in thinking concerning our theology can be the only result. For now, Moses continues the thought with...

^{1 (con't)} **which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you,**

These words, again, follow from verse 5:31. As we just cited, the Lord said, “stand here by Me, and I will speak to you all the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which you shall teach them.”

The Lord spoke out the commandment, and Moses was instructed to then, *lamad*, or teach the people out of that spoken command. Moses is to be the one to goad the people, prodding them along in order that they may learn to be obedient to the Lord. And the purpose is so...

^{1 (con't)} **that you may observe *them* in the land which you are crossing over to possess,**

Again, the words follow after verse 5:31, with a noticeable difference. There, it said, “that they may observe *them* in the land which I am giving them to possess.” Moses changes the words slightly because he is not going into Canaan with them.

The Lord said, “which I am giving them to possess.” Moses now says, “which you are, *overim*, or ‘crossing over’ to possess.” It is referring to *ha’yarden*, or the Jordan, which means “the Descender,” and which pictures the coming of Christ.

Moses is not crossing over anything. As I have highlighted a couple times, the verb *overim*, or “cross over,” is identical in spelling to the noun *ivrim*, or Hebrew, which means “Passer Over.”

There is, seemingly, a subtle pun and an implied theological lesson for us in the words. The Passer Overs will be crossing over, but the law is not a Passer Over. If not by the law, then it must be by faith. This takes us back to Abraham, the first person noted as a Hebrew. Of him, the book of Hebrews says –

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; ¹⁰for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.”

-Hebrews 11:8-10

The same theme keeps repeating. The inheritance is not of law, but rather it comes by faith. Moses’ inclusion of the words *atem overim shammah*, or “you are crossing over there,” open up the passage, and they solidify the same theological message that carries throughout all of Scripture – the just shall live by their faith.

The typology is so clear. With the coming of Christ, those who are to enter heaven must do so apart from the law (pictured by Moses). They must come by faith. Deeds of the law are excluded.

For Israel, however, this does not negate that they are given law, and they must live out their lives under the law in order to instruct the people of the world concerning its need for God’s grace. And so, Moses continues...

²that you may fear the LORD your God,

The words of verse 1 were in the plural – you all who are a part of the whole. The words now transition to the singular – you, Israel, as a people who are the whole.

The teaching of the commandment and the statutes and judgments serves two purposes. The first is a proper relationship with God – *l’maan tira eth Yehovah elohekha* – “to the end purpose *that* you may fear Yehovah your God.” This was the explicit reason given by the Lord in Deuteronomy 4 –

“Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and *that* they may teach their children.” Deuteronomy 4:10

This was repeated towards the end of Chapter 5 as well. Moses repeats it here, noting that this is the first and main purpose of the giving of the law. And that fear of the Lord is demonstrated in obedience. As he next says...

^{2 (con't)} **to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you,**

If a father lays out a list of things for his children to do, and they don't do any of them, or if they do only some of them (the fun stuff), or if they do a shoddy job of the things they do, then there is obviously no fear of dad, and there is no respect for dad.

But if he is a good father, the things he assigned were intended to be for the good of the family, to help them to learn respect, diligence, and to be industrious. Further, they are to keep the family mutually working towards a good goal, and for the productive, happy, and healthy living of the children who are given the instruction.

These, and reasons like them, are also the intents of the law. First and foremost, they were to excite in the people the fear of the Lord, but they were also intended for those of subsequent generations as well. As Moses says, it is for...

^{2 (con't)} **you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life,**

The children of the father that doesn't pass on the value of money will – within a single generation – squander the wealth of those who came before them. The father that doesn't pass on conservative values to his children will have sniveling children who are incapable of handling the responsibilities of life.

Cherished traditions, honor, respect, diligence in work, and on and on – all of these must be trained into one's children and into the grandchildren after them. When this doesn't happen, the values set before the people in times past will be lost. And so will fear of the Lord. But this is quickly what Israel failed to do –

“So the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD which He had done for Israel. ⁸ Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died *when he was* one hundred and ten years old. ⁹ And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Heres, in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. ¹⁰ When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.” Judges 2:7-10

The people failed to heed the words of Moses, and the following generations departed from the fear of the Lord. What would be the outcome? Before we see, we need to understand the second purpose for the teaching of the commandment and the statutes and the judgments which follows logically and inevitably from the first...

² (con't) **and that your days may be prolonged.**

A fear of the Lord leads inevitably to prosperity, especially that of life – both quality of life and length of life. When Israel failed to do as instructed and the subsequent generations didn't know the Lord, the result was –

“Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals; ¹² and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from *among* the gods of the people who *were* all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger. ¹³ They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. ¹⁴ And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. ¹⁵ Wherever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for calamity, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed.” Judges 2:11-15

Both the quality of life, and the length of the lives of many were affected through what occurred. The days of the people were not prolonged. The choice was set before Israel, and each generation had to decide how they would carry the charge set before them. For now, Moses continues...

³ **Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe *it*, that it may be well with you,**

The words remain in the singular. Moses is speaking to Israel as he would to a single person. “You, Israel, are to be careful to observe.” And there are reasons for this. The first being, “that it may be well with you.”

The implication, obviously, is that if they failed to observe, it would not go well with them. And that is what we saw, right out of the gate of their history. For the first generation after Joshua, things didn't go well with them.

Obviously, this doesn't mean everyone. There were certainly those who prospered, even while the nation was being plundered and despoiled. While some were cut down in battle, others lived long lives, never facing danger. But as a people, they faced the judgment of the Lord for having forgotten the fear of the Lord.

Moses next adds on another benefit of carefully observing the charge set before them...

^{3 (con't)} **and that you may multiply greatly**

For just this clause alone, the words return to the plural – *v'asher tirbun meod* – “and which you (all) may multiply greatly.” It only makes sense that he would change to the plural here. He is speaking to Israel as a whole, but Israel is made up of people.

And so, to entice them to careful observance of the command, he says, “Israel, do these things so that it will go well with you.” And then one can imagine him sweeping his arm across the congregation and saying, “And so that each and every one of you may multiply greatly.”

He is calling for national blessing in order to stir up national unity, but he also calls for individual blessing in order to stir up self-worth within the nation which will, in turn, further stir up national unity. Any great leader will do the same. He will focus on the whole while focusing on the individual within the whole.

^{3 (con't)} **as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you—**

The words of this clause, and the next, are debated by scholars. Are these words referring to what was just said – meaning long life and days being prolonged – or are they referring to the next clause, meaning “a land flowing with milk and honey. Both could be possible. The Lord has already said this to the people –

“You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong *your* days in the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time.” Deuteronomy 4:40

And, the Lord has already said this to the people –

“So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey.” Exodus 3:8

So, it could go either way. Much of the reason for the confusion is the wording of the next clause...

³ (con't) ‘a land flowing with milk and honey.’

eretz zavat khalav u-debash – “land flowing with milk and honey.” There is no preposition, such as “in,” even though many translations toss it in there. The NKJV adds in a long hyphen as a pause – “as the Lord God of your fathers has promised you—‘a land flowing with milk and honey.’”

Others add in commas to make it read, “because Yahweh, the God of your Fathers, has promised you a land flowing with milk and honey” (Holman).

With the varying views, it is obvious that what is said is complicated, and I don’t like complicated. And so, I would suggest to you that the entire thought of verses 2-3 is parenthetical and it should read as follows –

“Now this *is* the commandment, *and these are* the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe *them* in the land which you are crossing over to possess, (vs 1)

² — that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. ³ Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe *it*, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you — ‘a land flowing with milk and honey.’ (vs 2-3)

This highlights the two main purposes for observing the commandment – fearing the Lord and the expected blessings upon the people – to be contained within the thought of verse 1, exactly where it should be. It then ties “the land which you are crossing over to possess” directly in with “a land flowing with milk and honey.”

In this, the thought flows properly, and there is no need to finagle the Hebrew by adding in words or thoughts not in the original. And yes, the Hebrew can bear this translation. It is completely supportable.

So, the next time you come to this passage in your reading, remember that everything in verses 2 and 3 is probably parenthetical, right up to the last clause where it resumes the narrative. That is my best analysis of this for you on this otherwise difficult section.

As far as the term, “a land flowing with milk and honey,” this is the first of six times it will be seen in Deuteronomy, more than any other book in Scripture. As this is the first use of it here, and because it is such a commonly used term in Scripture, it would be good to review its meaning.

A land flowing with milk and honey implies richness and fertility. Milk comes from cows and so it means abundant pasture lands. Honey comes from bees which pollinate flowers and so it implies all sorts of fruit trees, herbs, and flowers.

And more, for Israel the term “a land flowing with milk and honey” will also possess a spiritual connotation. For them, it doesn’t just speak of the physical abundance but also of spiritual abundance because of the Lord, and because they are the Lord’s people, through whom the word of God comes.

The word of God is said to be sweeter than honey. It is also equated with milk which nourishes. Thus, this is a reference to that as well. The land would literally flow with milk and honey for sustaining Israel’s physical lives. It would also flow with milk and honey for sustaining their spiritual lives.

It is a certainty that if the promise of the Lord’s word concerning the abundance of the land is true, so should the abundance of His blessing upon them for adhering to His word – summed up in the very commandment, statutes and judgments which He is referring to right now – also be true. With this understood, we now turn to one of the most important verses in all of Scripture to consider...

*I am the Lord Your God, and I am One
There is none other than Me
But the thinking is not flawed to say I have a Son
And together with the Spirit, we are One but We are Three*

I was there before the world came to be

*And I am here now, right now, with you as well
And I shall be ever-present for all eternity
The never-ending story is the one that I tell*

*And so, you shall love the Lord your God
Love Me with all your heart and soul and might
With every step you take and on every path you trod
In Me you shall rejoice, and in Me you shall delight*

II. Sh'ma Yisrael (verses 4, 5)

⁴“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!

shema Yisrael Yehovah elohenu Yehovah ekhad – “Hear Israel! Yehovah our God; Yehovah One!” Deuteronomy 6:4 is simply known as the Shema, or “Hear.” In this, the last letter of the first word, *ayin*, and the last letter of the last word, *dalet*, are written by scribes considerably larger than the surrounding text, thus they form the Hebrew word *ed* – witness.

Thus, the Shema is considered as a witness to Israel, testifying to something. Israel is to thus pay heed to what is said, learning from its instruction, and applying its truths to their national character.

The verse can be translated four distinct ways, but the two main ideas of any of these translations comes down to either 1) the unity of Yehovah; one being, or 2) the fact that Yehovah is Israel’s only God. The latter has already been established numerous times, including in the First Commandment – “I am Yehovah your God” which is followed by “You shall have no other gods before Me.”

It has also been established in Deuteronomy 4 that no image of the Lord should be made to represent Him because the people saw no form when He spoke to them from the mountain.

For these, and other reasons, this is certainly not referring to the fact that Yehovah is Israel’s only God – an already established fact – but that Yehovah is one being. Of this, Albert Barnes rightly states –

“This weighty text contains far more than a mere declaration of the unity of God as against polytheism; or of the sole authority of the revelation that He had made to Israel

as against other pretended manifestations of His will and attributes. It asserts that the Lord God of Israel is absolutely God, and none other. He, and He alone, is Jehovah (Yahweh) the absolute, uncaused God; the One who had, by His election of them, made Himself known to Israel.”

Matthew Poole succinctly then states it, “One in essence, and the only object of our worship.” The statement proclaims the unity of Yehovah, and this is necessary, but it is also problematic, isn’t it, because Yehovah has already been revealed in various, otherwise contradictory ways, unless the words are taken properly.

Of the Shema, scholars give their thoughts along various lines, but many of them will – in one way or another – comment in accord with what Charles Ellicott says here –

“‘We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity.’ But this truth, though visible in the Old Testament by the light of the New, was not explicitly revealed until it came forth in history, when the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world, and both sent the Holy Spirit to represent Him in the Church.” Charles Ellicott

Ellicott (and others) say that even though the Trinity is visible in the Old Testament, it is not explicitly revealed. This is true, but the argument is always made against the Jewish belief that there is one absolute God, meaning a monad.

In this, the analysis is faulty because Yehovah is clearly identified as a physical presence in the Garden of Eden. He is also identified as a physical being, a Man, in Genesis 18:1, 2. Moses has already shown that there is more to Yehovah than meets the eye.

This will continue to be true again in Joshua 5:15; Judges 6:15, 16; Judges 13; Isaiah 6; Zechariah 12:10, and elsewhere. Though the set “Trinity” could not be deduced from the Old Testament, a plurality within the Godhead could. Only a presuppositional bias against this premise would result in the denial of such.

The words of this verse in no way deny the possibility of a unity within a plurality, and that is the point that Moses must make, and that he is – in fact – making. If he didn’t, there would then be a contradiction in what he has already recorded within the Torah.

In order to allow for what he has already shown – such as Abraham meeting with the Man who is Yehovah, he carefully chose his words. The final word of the verse, *ekhad*, means one. But it is often used in the sense of one inclusive of many.

For example, Genesis 2:24, using the word *ekhad*, says, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become (*l’basar ekhad*) to **one flesh.**”

Genesis 11:6 says that the people of the world are *am ekhad*, one people. They are many comprising one. A cluster of grapes is one, and yet it is comprised of many grapes. However, in Genesis 22, the word *yakhid* is used three times to describe Isaac – “your only son.” It signifies one and only one. It is used this way throughout the Old Testament to identify a singularity with no plurality.

As Moses used *ekhad*, it is painfully obvious that he was making a theological point to substantiate what he already knew. He had already written out the Genesis narrative and he knew that God identified Himself in the plural in Genesis 1:26. The Lord also appeared to Abraham, and yet Moses knew that no man could see the face of the Lord and live – as he was told in Exodus 33:20.

Therefore, Moses was fully aware that Yehovah is a plurality within a unity. Hence, he chose *ekhad* rather than *yakhid* to speak forth the Shema.

Further, we can know – with all certainty – that Moses’ words here refer to the unity of the Lord and not that He is Israel’s only God, because Jesus cites the Greek translation of the Shema in Mark 12:29, affirming that it is referring to the Oneness of the Lord.

The scribe who answered him confirms this as well, showing that this is the accepted meaning of the Shema –

“Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He.” Mark 14:32

The immense importance of a plurality within the unity of Yehovah will continue to be revealed to Israel, attempting to wake them up to the coming of Messiah. This is why when Christ came and they rejected Him, it was not a mere man, but Yehovah whom they rejected. This is evidenced, for example, in the words of Matthew 22 –

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, ⁴² saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?”

They said to Him, “*The Son of David.*”

⁴³ He said to them, “How then does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying:

⁴⁴ ‘The LORD said to my Lord,

“Sit at My right hand,
Till I make Your enemies Your footstool” ’?

⁴⁵ If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his Son?” ⁴⁶ And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

-Matthew 22:41-46

Jesus plainly asked them who the Messiah would be. They knew, from their own Scriptures, that He would be the son of David. But then Jesus clearly shows them that He would be Yehovah, because He then cites the 110th Psalm, a messianic psalm.

In David’s words, it says, “Yehovah said to Adonai. Sit at my right hand.” Adonai is simply a formal way of David referring to Yehovah. Thus, Yehovah was having a conversation with Yehovah, and yet David identifies them as different entities.

What we are seeing here in Deuteronomy 6 is Israel’s schooling in the nature of God which began in Genesis 1:1 with the creation by Elohim, which continued with the creation in Genesis 1:2 by the *Ruakh Elohim*, or Spirit of God, and which was then further elaborated on in Genesis 1:26 which said –

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.’”

-Genesis 1:26

From there, it continued to be refined in Genesis 2 where Yehovah was introduced –

“This *is* the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens. Genesis 2:4

Each step of the way through the biblical narrative, God is revealing Himself to us a little bit at a time. It is true that the Trinity is not explicitly revealed as such in the Old Testament, but the concept of a plurality within a unity is not only revealed, it is incontrovertible.

It is this statement known as the Shema which now resolves the numerous otherwise contradictory statements thus far revealed through Moses. It shows that they are not, in any way, to be taken as contradiction, but as statements of fact which need to be considered and evaluated in light of the God who inspired Moses to write them.

From this verse in Deuteronomy, Joshua will not be considered to be a blasphemer when he worships the man with the drawn sword in Joshua 5, even though he has been

instructed just one chapter earlier here in Deuteronomy to have no other gods before Yehovah, nor was he to bow down to them nor serve them.

Otherwise, the life of Joshua, within the span of less than two months, would be a completely contradictory, faithless life – destined to be cast into the pit of hell for having rejected the words of the Lord through Moses.

But through the simple use of a single word, *ekhad*, Moses has opened up the narrative of Scripture into one of wonder, amazement, and indeed anticipation concerning who the coming Messiah will be.

Instead of being stoned for blasphemy, David's words of the 110th Psalm will be pondered, contemplated, and meditated over for generations to come. And the incredible words of Zechariah 12:10 will not only make sense after they are fulfilled, they will perfectly fit with all that the other prophets testified to –

“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only *son*, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.” Zechariah 12:10

There is one God, and one God alone. There is no other God. And He is Yehovah, the God of Israel – uncaused, eternal, and unchanging. He was, and is, and is to come. And He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Three persons in one Essence. Hear O Israel! The Lord our God, the Lord is one! ...

⁵You shall love the LORD your God

When Jesus cited the Shema to the people who confronted Him, He didn't just cite that and then begin to explain. Rather, citing the Shema was part of a greater discourse –

Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, “Which is the first commandment of all?”

²⁹ Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments *is*: ‘Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. ³⁰ And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This *is* the first commandment. ³¹ And the second, like *it*, *is* this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

³² So the scribe said to Him, “Well *said*, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. ³³ And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

³⁴ Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” Mark 12:28-34

This is the continued thought that Moses speaks out now, saying, *v’ahavta eth Yehovah elohekha* – “and you shall love Yehovah your God.” The words here, and throughout the verse, continue to be in the singular. Moses is speaking to Israel as a single entity. The heart of Israel is to love Yehovah their God.

What does it mean to love Yehovah? In the context of Moses’ discourse – which is talking about observing His commandments – it means to obey His commandments.

One cannot say, “I love Yehovah,” and yet not obey His commandments. Because He is God, His words are a reflection of who He is. Unlike humans who lie for pretty much any reason, thus demonstrating a disconnect between their words and who they are, there is no disconnect between the Lord and His words.

A person may say, “I was once a navy seal,” and he could be a complete liar concerning that. We can dismiss his words, and not be unloving in the process. But when the Lord issues forth a word, it reflects His very being. Therefore, in rejecting what He commands is to reject who He is.

Unfortunately, this is taken to unintended extremes by cults all the time. For example, the Hebrew Roots movement will cite 1 John and apply those words to the law we are now looking at –

“He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” 1 John 2:4

“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.” 1 John 5:3

This is an error in theology. The Law of Moses is not what John is referring to. In fact, he never refers to the commands of Moses in his writings in such a manner. He is always referring to the New Covenant in Christ, and the words commanded by Him.

Though it is perfect, and though it perfectly reveals the intent of God, the Law of Moses is only a partial and an incomplete revelation of God. Jesus Christ is the final and full revelation which the Law of Moses only anticipated.

Thus, to love God is to keep His commandments, and to do so in the context of the times in which a person lives. This is why the psalmist was well-pleasing to God. In the 119th Psalm, the psalmist says again and again that he loves the Lord's commandments, His word, His precepts, His testimonies, and His law.

He loved the Lord because He loved what the Lord had revealed of Himself. There was no disconnect between the two. With this understood, Moses next says...

⁵ (con't) **with all your heart,**

b'kal l'vavekha – “with all your (singular) heart.” It is the collective heart of Israel. They were to love Yehovah with all of this heart. The heart is the seat of reasoning and understanding in the Bible. Israel was to consider the commandment of the Lord and to apply it to its life. It was to be an ongoing and active process.

If someone violated a commandment, he was to offer the appropriate sacrifice for it, in obedience to the command. If a person committed a capital offense, Israel was to execute the criminal in obedience to the command. If the nation transgressed as a whole, they were to follow the precepts of the law to make right the wrong that was done.

In 1 Samuel 21, David was faced with such an infraction which had been committed by his predecessor, King Saul. David took the appropriate action to remedy it. This is what it means to love the Lord with all your heart. It is to reason out what has been done to offend, and to then act in accord with the command to rectify it.

⁵ (con't) **with all your soul,**

u-b'kal naphsekha – “and with all your soul.” The soul is what animates the being. The soul of Israel then is that which animates Israel. It is the life, the breath, and the determination of the people. To love the Lord their God would mean that even unto death, they would be faithful to Him.

Though not of the covenant people, Job was such a soul, saying, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him” (Job 13:15). Likewise, the psalmist spoke of the full confidence he

had in the Lord, knowing that holding fast to Him, even in the face of death, was a reward all by itself –

“Whenever I am afraid,
I will trust in You.
⁴In God (I will praise His word),
In God I have put my trust;
I will not fear.
What can flesh do to me?” Psalm 56:3, 4

The soul of Israel was to love the Lord their God, holding nothing back. And then, finally, Moses instructs them...

***⁵ (fin) and with all your strength.**

u-b'kal meodekha – “and with all your strength.” The word *meod* signifies muchness, force, or abundance. One could consider the word *vehemence*. It is holding nothing back as one sets his course. Thus, the strength of Israel was to be expended on the Lord God – solely, without holding back, and entirely.

This would not lastly, but firstly, include their wealth. When people work for a set goal, it is with the strength they have to obtain what they want. If it is a person’s desire to increase in wealth, then it should also be the person’s desire to use that wealth as a way of demonstrating his love for the Lord.

Unsurprisingly, Jesus uses this exact example to show the hearts of the people in Luke 21 –

“And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, ²and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. ³So He said, ‘Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; ⁴for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had.’” Luke 21:1-4

Our physical person is often completely tied up in the wealth we possess. This woman’s next meal was to be her strength, and the money to buy that meal was indicative of where her love was directed. And so, giving up her meal, and thus her source of strength, she showed that she loved the Lord her God with all of it.

In the end, to love the Lord your God is not merely to make a profession with the lips, but to then put the total source of who one is – the heart, soul, and strength – behind that profession, yielding to the Lord all of it at all times.

As a point to close on today, it must be noted that when the Scribes and Pharisees came to Jesus with their question concerning the greatest commandment, He gave His response as we noted, citing the Shema and then to love the Lord and one's neighbor.

After that, in both Matthew and Mark, the next thing that is mentioned is Jesus then asking them whose Son the Christ would be. Everything in the gospels is placed in a particular manner to form a particular context.

It is when they answered that He would be the Son of David that Jesus then cited the 110th Psalm that we looked at. He did this for a reason. He was trying to call their attention to the fact that the Shema says there is one God, and yet there is a plurality within the Godhead that is allowed by the Shema – as testified to by David.

It is the central theme of Scripture, one which goes from the very first page of the Bible even to its very last – Jesus Christ is God. In fact, the very definition of antichrist, which will be our closing verse today, is to deny this fundamental tenet of Scripture. John defines it in both 1 John and 2 John as being such.

Therefore, when we are told that God is one, and that Jesus is God, that is to be accepted and acted upon. We are to receive Him as such, glorifying God the Father through our pronouncement. And then, we are to love Yehovah our God – meaning inclusive of the incarnate Word, Jesus – with all of our hearts, souls, and strength.

We are to obey the commandments of God in order to demonstrate that we truly love God. And John shows us where the beginning of that love is found. He says, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent" (John 6:29).

To love God is to believe God and to do the work of God. And that work is to honor the Son whom God has sent. The passage today has shown us that there is no contradiction in the word. Rather, it is laid out, step by step and in a methodical manner, in order to reveal to us what God has been doing in the stream of time to bring us back to Himself.

Let us apply what we have learned, accept what God has revealed, and bring glory to God through the honoring of His Son. And, let us do so with all of our hearts, souls, and strength. May it be so.

Closing Verse: *“Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. ²³ Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.” 1 John 2:22, 23*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 6:6-15 *And the crier cries out a resounding chord...* (Beware, Lest You Forget the Lord) (24th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Lord Our God, The Lord is One

“Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes
-----and judgments

Which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you
That you may observe them in the land
Which you are crossing over to possess, so you are to do

That you may fear the LORD your God
To keep all His statutes and His commandments
-----which I command you
You and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life
And that your days may be prolonged too

Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it
That it may be well with you
And that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your
-----fathers has promised you—
A land flowing with milk, and honey too

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!
You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart
With all your soul, and with all your strength
You shall do this all your days, not just at the start

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You

May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 6:6-15 **(Beware, Lest You Forget the Lord)**

In the passage today, Moses will carefully instruct Israel on the Source of the good things they will receive. In this, there will be no place for boasting in their own greatness. What is coming will be handed to them on a silver platter, and all they have to do is take it, and then remember where the goodness they have come from.

It won't work, and Israel will do exactly what they are admonished to not do in the years ahead. It will be a costly lesson for them. As far as Israel today, one might say it is different for them. They went into a land that was totally barren, filled with typhus, malaria, and a host of other diseases, and they subdued it.

They basically started from scratch and built it up to what it is today. Is there a difference? Can they boast in their own goodness and righteousness because of this? Well, they certainly do. They take full credit for all of their success, and they do so without acknowledging that the Lord was behind it.

But the answer to the question is, "No. There really is no difference, and no, they have no right to boast in and of themselves for what they have." Why?

It is because the Lord said, in advance, that He would return them to the land, that He would build them up and watch over them, and that their accomplishments are because He has done so. But lest we point at Israel and mock them for refusing to see this, we need to know that it is a problem in the church as well – one that goes back to its very inception...

Text Verse: *"For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?" 1 Corinthians 4:7*

Those at Corinth were boasting in who they aligned with – be it Peter, or Paul, or Apollos. But who is it that gave each of these leaders his ability? It was the Lord.

If a group goes into a royal palace and the one on the throne has gifts prepared for each of them. Who will they thank – the attendant who brings them the gift, or the one on the throne who offered it? The answer is obvious. Paul asked them to think.

Further, Paul's words make it clear that what they have as individuals, they received. There could be no arguing against it, and so his question was intended to be like a sharp knife, cutting away their pride. In essence, "Of course you have received all that you have, so why would you boast as if you had earned it?"

In the end, this is true for all things. If you have a big house and lots of money, it is because God gave you the time, intelligence, place, strength, and so on to earn those things. So, do you say how great you are, or do you thank God for His grace upon your life? If you understand properly, it is God who must be given the credit.

No matter what you have, it ultimately came from God. We, like Israel, need to understand this and remember it. In not remembering, we will end up as Israel did, pursuing paths which are unsound and detrimental to our walk with the Lord. Such truths as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Teach Them Diligently (verses 6-9)

⁶"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.

Moses will now give instruction concerning the law which has thus far been spoken out, and which he will continue to expound to the people that certainly includes what was just said in verses 4 & 5 –

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one! ⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength."

-Deuteronomy 6:4, 5

This is to be considered a command. Thus, it cannot be taken as an emotional love, but a volitional one. The people of Israel were to make a concerted effort to love Yehovah with all of their heart, with all of their soul, and with all of their strength.

But rather than "in your heart," the Hebrew reads *al l'vavekha*, or "upon your heart." As we have learned, in the Bible, the heart is the place of intellect, reason, and understanding. The people were to commit this love of the Lord to their memory.

It was to be as if it was inscribed directly on the heart, or as if a weight was laid upon the heart in order to convict anytime they began to stray. The same term, "upon the heart,"

is used in Jeremiah 31:33 when describing the effects of entering the New Covenant in Christ –

“But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

One can see the difference between the two. In the Mosaic covenant, the people are told to actively work to love the Lord, meaning be obedient to His commands; writing them on their hearts. In the New Covenant, the inscription of the heart is accomplished by the Lord.

One can see the superiority of the New Covenant through the use of this simple term, “upon the heart.” Who is it that does the work? And what are the effects of the work once it is done? One is a law leading to death, the other is a gift, leading to life.

⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children,

v’shinantam l’vanekha – “And you shall whet them to your children.” It is a new and rather rare word in Scripture, *shanan*. It means to whet or to sharpen. Saying “teach them diligently” is more of a paraphrase. Finding a modern word to translate it as intended in this verse is not easy. Whet is closest, but it still needs to be explained.

The word is seen only nine times. Other than here, it is translated as whet, sharpen, or pierce. The idea, then, is to inculcate the commands into the children, but by using this word, we want to include the idea of sharpness, as if the process of instilling the commands is so personal that it is as if the parent is cutting into the child and inscribing them there.

Probably the closest we will get to a comparable translation of the word elsewhere is found in Psalm 73:21 –

When my heart was embittered,
And I was pierced within. Psalm 73:21 (NAS)

This was to be the responsibility of the parents, inscribing the commands of the law in the children. As Matthew Poole says to explain this word, “This metaphor signifies the manner of instructing them, that it is to be done diligently, earnestly, frequently, discreetly, and dexterously.” Paul uses a similar thought in Ephesians –

“And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” Ephesians 6:4

Looking at the rest of the Old Testament, one can see how Israel failed in this. Thus, the Lord promised in Jeremiah 31 that He Himself would perform this for the people under the New Covenant. In order for this to be accomplished, Moses speaks on...

7 (con't) **and shall talk of them when you sit in your house,**

The commands of the Lord should be tied in with everything that is spoken about in a normal conversation. “It was a great day at work. We reaped innumerable sheaves of wheat. How good the Lord is to us, and how we should love Him for the bounty He provides.”

Whatever is normal conversation within the house, it was to be salted with a word concerning the Lord. In this, He would always be contained within the subject matter. He was to be an active thought from moment to moment and not just a mere afterthought.

7 (con't) **when you walk by the way,**

When walking on the way, the conversation may be about how school was, about what the upcoming hunt would be like, or how beautiful the scenery was. In these, or in any other conversations, the love of the Lord was to be an active part of the discussion. “Look at how majestic the mountains the Lord has created are!” “Do you see the intricacy of the spider’s web? The wisdom of the Lord is found even in this!”

7 (con't) **when you lie down,**

The last thoughts of the day are the thoughts that set the mind for sleep. It is right to include the Lord in them. “The Lord was very good to us today. We were safe, we ate well, and we had contentment and happiness. Thank You, Lord, for the day which has passed.” These thoughts are what will be remembered also at the dawning of a new day...

7 (con't) **and when you rise up.**

The parents were to instruct the children concerning the Lord at the outset of the day, reminding them that the span of life is short, and that the surety of reaching evening

was unknown. Therefore, it was right to talk of the Lord in the morning, reminding them that they were accountable for their actions before Him, and to conduct the affairs of the day in a manner worthy of the name they bore – Israel, or “He strives with God.”

They could either strive with God, for God. Or, they could strive with God, against Him. Either way, the day was before them and their actions of the day would be brought to remembrance before the Lord. And so, as reminders of the presence of the Lord, and the need to pay heed to His commands, Moses speaks on...

⁸You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

The idea here is to be taken metaphorically, not literally. This is certain, as will be seen. However, it is this verse which the Jews of Israel – at Jesus’ time, and even today – use to justify the wearing of phylacteries. In Matthew, Jesus spoke harshly of the scribes and Pharisees who prominently made such ostentatious displays –

“But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.” Matthew 23:5

Today, these are known as *tephilim*. They wrap their arms with straps, and they have small leather boxes containing scrolls inscribed with verses from the Torah in them strapped to their heads. This practice is taking what is meant to be symbolic and making it literal. The way we know this is metaphor is based on other verses which reveal this.

First, the words here are similar to Exodus 13:16. Concerning the law of setting apart the firstborn of every male to the Lord –

“It shall be as a sign on your hand and as frontlets between your eyes, for by strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt.” Exodus 13:16

This is obviously a metaphor that needs to be explained. But that cannot be understood properly unless Exodus 13:9 is also considered. When speaking of the observance of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, it said this –

“It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the LORD’s law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt.” Exodus 13:9

The two together explicitly tie the consecration of the firstborn to the consecration of all of the people as is represented by the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The firstborn is given for the whole. Of interest, though, there is also a contrast to this verse in the Bible.

In Christ, the Firstborn of God, the people of God enter into what the Feast of Unleavened Bread anticipates, being a group set apart to God whose sins are no longer imputed. Thus, they are “unleavened,” or “without sin” before God.

Understanding this, the same terminology is used here by Moses to represent a people whose minds are directed to the things of God, and whose actions are in accord with what is right for the people of God. To further understand this, analyzing the words is needed.

First, it says *u-qeshartam l'oth al yadekha* – “And you shall bind them to sign on your hand.” An *oth*, or sign, is something that represents something else. The hand is what accomplishes tasks. Therefore, the people are to remember the commands of the Lord in everything they accomplish – be it cleaning a bathroom or writing a sermon. It is to be done with the Lord in mind.

Next it says, *v'hayu l'totaphoth ben enekha* – “and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.” The word “frontlets,” or *totaphoth*, is seen only three times in the Bible. It is also in Exodus 13:16 and Deuteronomy 11:8. It is derived from an unused root signifying to go around or bind.

As noted in Exodus 13, it is not to be taken literally, but as a metaphor. Taking that verse, and placing it side by side with Revelation 13:16, an interesting pattern is seen –

“It shall be as a sign on your hand and as frontlets between your eyes, for by strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt.” Exodus 13:16

“He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads.” Revelation 13:16

The place between the eyes is the forehead, and so the two correspond one to another. As we saw in Leviticus, in the Bible, the forehead is the place of conscience and identification.

Therefore, this symbolizes that a person is to set his mind on the law of the Lord. In the New Testament, it is reflective of what Paul says to the Colossians –

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ²Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” Colossians 3:1, 2

Moses’ words now indicate the state of each person before the Lord. They are to mentally acknowledge the Lord by thinking on His law and of His handiwork in everything they do.

In contrast to this, the mark of the beast on the right hand or on the forehead of those in the tribulation period signifies an acknowledgment of the work and lordship of the antichrist which is followed by their obedience to him.

They have acknowledged him and have taken either a vow, represented by the right hand, or an oath of assertion, represented by the forehead, to the antichrist. The mark may be visible, but it represents the setting apart of the individual to the devil.

Moses, in saying this to the people, admonishes them to think on the Lord, live for the Lord, and conduct their affairs to the Lord at all times. Further...

⁹You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

u-ketavtam al mezuzot betekha u-bisharekha – “And you shall write them on doorposts your house and on your gates.” The idea here is certainly metaphorical as well, even if it was literally accomplished by whoever decided to do so.

The two words of focus are *mezuzah* and *shaar* – doorpost and gate. The word *mezuzah*, or doorpost, comes from the same source as the word *ziz*, or “moving things.” That word is seen only three times – in Psalm 50 and Psalm 80 to describe beasts moving in the field, and once in Isaiah 66:11 to describe the bosom of a woman. Thus, it means that which is conspicuous.

Understanding this, the *mezuzah*, or doorpost, is that which is conspicuous and prominent in the life of a person. The *shaar*, or gate, comes from *shaar* meaning to calculate or reckon. That is used only once, in Proverbs 23:7 –

“For as he thinks in his heart, so *is* he.
‘Eat and drink!’ he says to you,
But his heart is not with you.” Proverbs 23:7

The gate is for protection of those within. A gatekeeper is one who actively decides who to let in and who to keep out. He makes a reckoning and acts upon that. Understanding these roots, the symbolism of the two words is then made obvious.

The law of the Lord is to be so ingrained in a person that it is in the prominent place of a person's life. Every major decision is to be made based on an understanding of the law of the Lord. Further, it is to be so inscribed in a person that it is what is then the basis for making life's decisions. In this, it will be a guard for the wellbeing of the individual.

One is to evaluate the circumstances set before him, consider what is to be done in relation to the law of the Lord which he is intimately familiar with, and then act upon those things accordingly.

As there are numerous laws that have been given, and that will be given, the indefinite nature of Moses' words, "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates," indicates that this is certainly to be taken in this metaphorical way. Nothing specific is noted, meaning that the entire law is to simply be applied to every aspect of the decisions of life.

Unfortunately, and like all things good, the Jews took this metaphorical concept and applied it literally, but only in a limited manner, and as an intended talisman, rather than as a guide for life.

The word *mezuzah* has now been applied to a small wood or metal container which is affixed to the right-hand post of the doorway to the house. Inside of it is a piece of rolled-up paper or parchment with Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and/or Deuteronomy 11:13-21.

As a show, it is tradition to touch the mezuzah, kiss their finger, and speak out Psalm 121:8, "The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore."

Like many other such things, there is nothing initially wrong with this, but it results in several problems. First, the idea, if taken literally, is to have the words visible in order to remind them of their content, not hidden away.

Secondly, it – like any other tradition – becomes a substitute for the basis of the words and it becomes an implied talisman – which, yes, the words of the Bible can easily be made into such. Thirdly, if doing this is intended as a fulfillment of the law, it actually then violates the law.

The reason this is so is because the word *mezuzah*, or “doorposts,” is plural – *mezuzot*. Therefore, to have the words of law on one post, but not on the other, is to then violate the very law that is being referred to. If you are going to take such precepts literally, they must be adhered to completely.

Unfortunately, this practice is no different than abuses by many Christians – whether true Christians or nominal Christians – in regard to either verses from the Bible, or in regard to the Bible itself.

When either of these is used as a talisman for protection, prosperity, or the like, it is no different than the practice of the Jews with their *mezuzah*. It becomes a show, a pretense, or a charm, but it does not serve the purpose intended by the Lord for the people of God – which is to know, meditate upon, cherish, and apply the word of God to one’s life.

And so, before we go on, let us convict our hearts. If one sees a *mezuzah* on the doorpost of a Jewish – or even Christian’s – house, is it shiny from having been rubbed countless times as people entered and exited the house?

If so, does the life of that person reflect the shiny state of the *mezuzah*? Does he know the word of God? Does he talk about it with others? Does he apply it to his life in such a manner that it is conspicuous to everyone around him? Or is it just there for show?

Likewise, what is the state of the Bible you own? Is it outwardly showy to all around you? Do you keep it in some obvious place where people can see that you own it? Etc. But what about its overall appearance – outside and inside?

Is it well worn? Are there notes, highlights, and underlinings. Or is it just the same as the day it came off the printer? Are the pages worn, stained from use, dog-eared and tattered? Or are they as smooth and clean as the day it was bound?

Although it is not always the case, the condition of one’s Bible is normally the exact opposite of the condition of one’s life. If the Bible is worn out and falling apart, the person’s life is normally tidy and sturdy. But if the Bible is in untouched pristine order, the life of the person will often be a complete ruin.

Lesson for Deuteronomy 6 verse 9 – Keep things in their proper context. Don’t be showy in your exterior religious life, but rather be well-grounded in the word of God. Know your Bible, think on your Bible, cherish the word, and love your God who speaks to you through it.

*Remember these things that I command
Keep them always in your heart
If you do this, you shall always stand
From My laws be sure to never depart*

*Write them on the doorposts of your house
And impress them upon your mind
Talk about them with your children and your spouse
For you, My people, these have been carefully designed*

*They will guide you as you walk in this life
They will be a lamp to you on the path you take
They will keep you from trouble and from strife
If these, My commands, you never forsake*

II. When You Have Eaten and Are Full (verses 10-15)

Moses has been speaking of obeying the commands from a positive viewpoint – “You shall do this, and you shall do that.” Now, he gives a warning concerning being slack in regard to that same law.

The reason for this is the condition of the human heart which quickly forgets the past, and which then presses on into the future without regard to what got that person to where he now is. Moses begins his warning saying...

¹⁰ **“So it shall be,**

v’hayah – “And it shall be.” It is a very common expression, but the intent here is that it is not this way now. Despite this, the time is coming when it will occur. Thus, it is spoken of before it happens, and Israel cannot take credit for it, as is next seen...

¹⁰ (con’t) **when the LORD your God brings you into the land**

The credit for bringing Israel into the land, in advance of the event occurring, belongs to Yehovah. Therefore, it is to be acknowledged as such, and to be remembered in that light. Further, it is not because of the goodness or greatness of the people that this has come about. Rather its occurrence has nothing to do with them directly. Instead, it has to do with the vow of the Lord...

10 (con't) of which He swore to your fathers,

The Lord swore, and therefore, the Lord will perform. No other god was involved in the process, and any supposed god in Canaan could not stop what Yehovah was about to do.

Israel will enter and possess the land, but their possession of it is only a consequence of the oath which had been made long before they stood on the banks of Canaan. That oath was to the fathers, namely...

10 (con't) to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,

l'avraham l'yitshaq, u-l'yaaqov – “to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.” The promise was made to each of these fathers. They would possess the land. The promise to Abraham was over 400 years earlier, and the promise to Jacob was over 200 years earlier.

The people who stood there now were to receive what had been promised, but it was the Lord who determined that it would come to pass, and to which generation of people it would come to. Moses is making a particular point in saying what he is saying...

10 (con't) to give you large and beautiful cities

latet lakh arim gedolot v'tovot – “to give you cities great and beautiful.” Moses does not say, “with cities great and beautiful.” Rather, he says *latet lakh* – “to give you.” A gift is not earned, and it is not deserved. If it was deserved, it would not be a gift; it would be a wage. Moses carefully chooses his words. Next, he says...

10 (con't) which you did not build,

If they did not build them, they cannot take credit for them. The Lord made a promise. The Lord brought them in. And, what they received was grace, including...

11 houses full of all good things, which you did not fill,

Within the cities will be houses already built, and in them will be the labors of the people the Lord has dispossessed, waiting for Israel to come and enjoy. There would be food in the pantry, beds already available, linens carefully woven by the women, lamps for lighting, maybe gold or money stored in a special spot, and so on. And within each city would be one or more...

11 (con't) hewn-out wells which you did not dig,

The people of the land would have dug for water – a laborious task. When water was found, they would have hewn out wells to ensure there was always fresh water on hand – another very laborious task. In this, a new word is seen *khatsav*, meaning to hew or cut out. The difficult and dangerous work was done.

And more, the inhabitants would have maintained the wells throughout the years as well, so there would be no need to worry about a thing in this regard. Further, there would be...

11 (con't) vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant—

Instead of being given an empty land requiring many years to begin to produce such things, the people of Canaan had already subdued the land, cleared the fields, and planted fruit-bearing trees.

The most difficult thing Israel would have to do in this regard would be to wait for the fruit to ripen depending on the plant that was already there, and then to pick it and celebrate. The most difficult part of the process would be behind them. But the most important aspect of this new life lay yet ahead...

11 (con't) when you have eaten and are full—

v'akalta v'savaeta – “and have eaten and are filled up.” The word *sava* signifies to be sated or completely full. There is no lack at all in the person at the end of the meal. But the idea here isn't just one meal. Rather, it is speaking of a constant stream of no lack. This is certain based on the context of the next words...

12 then beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

When the people are full and satisfied, they will be prone to doing the one thing people do so easily, which is to forget where they came from.

A person raised in a conservative family can go off to college and become a flaming liberal. A wealthy person who was born in poverty can forget the plight of those he once lived with. And Israel, filled up as sons, was bound to forget the Lord who redeemed them from slavery.

The very name Egypt, or *mitsraim*, means “double distress.” Sitting in Canaan living off the land they did nothing to earn, they are being warned to not forget that they once lived in double distress, even though now they were living the high life.

The parallel idea here, which is what is also typologically pictured, is that of the sinner being redeemed from his life of sin. The Lord asks Israel to not forget Him because people are prone to forget. And Peter admonishes those in Christ to do the exact same thing –

“But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. ⁸For if these things are yours and abound, *you* will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.” 2 Peter 1:5-9

Unless we think on the Lord, meditate on His word, and actively love Him for all He has done, we – be it Israel or those in the church – can actually forget the Lord and all He has done for us. Rather than this, Moses implores...

¹³ You shall fear the LORD your God

The words are emphatic. *eth Yehovah elohekha tira* – “Yehovah your God you shall fear.” This is contrasted to the words of the previous verse. There it said, “lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt.”

They were in bondage to the Egyptians who ruled rigorously over them. The Lord, in contrast, gave them freedom and abundance. But because He had the power to do so, it means He also has the power to affect their lives negatively as well. Because of this, they were to fear the Lord their God...

¹³ (con’t) and serve Him,

v’oto taavod – “and Him serve.” Again, the words are contrasted to the previous verse. There, the noun *eved*, or slave, was used – “the house of slaves.” Here the verb form of that word, *avad*, or serve, is used. They were brought out of the house of slaves by the Lord, therefore, they were to serve the Lord.

Here, fear is placed before service. If the people fear the Lord – meaning with a proper, reverential fear, they would faithfully serve Him. The opposite was true in Egypt. The people were slaves in Egypt, and thus they feared the Egyptians.

In essence, Moses is giving them a choice – one of faithful service based on reverential fear, or a return to slavery to others which leads to fear. Egypt as a taskmaster was cruel and unrelenting, but the Lord was caring and gracious. All they needed to do was to remember Him and acknowledge His goodness.

This is one of the verses that Jesus cited to Satan in response to his temptings –

“Then Jesus said to him, ‘Away with you, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.”’” Matthew 4:10

Jesus remained faithful in worship and service of the Lord. Israel will be shown to not measure up. The lessons of the law are set before us to see and understand the majesty of what God did in sending Christ to do what Israel could not do.

13 (con’t) and shall take oaths in His name.

Moses builds upon the previous clause. To fear the Lord means to take oaths in His name. To vow in any other manner is to commit idolatry because it elevates something that is not God to a position that rightfully belongs to Him alone. Jesus, in Matthew 5, said the following –

“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’³⁴ But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne;³⁵ nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.³⁶ Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black.³⁷ But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.”

-Matthew 5:33-37

He was not telling the people they could not vow in any manner and at any time. The law had already provided that vows and oaths were to be made in certain legal situations.

Rather, He was referring to the making of vows for things where such a vow was unnecessary. His words even indicate this when He speaks of heaven, the earth, your

head, and etc. Each of those is a part of creation. To make a vow in relation to one of those things was to then commit idolatry, elevating it to what is reserved for the Lord alone.

Unfortunately, many Christians have taken Jesus' words and refuse to make any oaths at all, even in legal situations, such as in court. This is not at all the intent of His words, as is evidenced right here in Deuteronomy. If a vow or oath is to be made, it is only to be made in the name of the Lord.

For our daily conversation, however, our words are to be so trustworthy that when we say Yes, it means Yes, and when we say No, it is to mean No. Anything more than that is, as He says, from the evil one.

¹⁴ You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who *are* all around you

Two things are being dealt with by Moses in these verses. The first is for Israel to not forget God because of a carefree life. The second is to not accept or even tolerate the gods of those who surrounded them. The latter is dealt with here.

To forget God, the first, leads directly to the latter. They are to fear the Lord, serve the Lord, and take oaths in His name. In doing so, they will refrain from going after other gods, serving them and swearing by them.

But the thought of going after other gods also implies the conduct of one's life. Christians go after Christ, emulating Him and serving Him. One emulates whatever god is served.

The gods of Canaan and the surrounding nations were gods of fertility, death through human sacrifice, immorality, and so on. To go after those gods would mean emulation of them. But the people of Israel were told to be holy, just as Yehovah their God is holy.

And there is a particular reason for exhibiting this conduct which Moses next explains to them once again...

¹⁵ (for the LORD your God *is* a jealous God among you),

ki el qanna Yehovah elohekha b'qirbekha – "For God jealous Yehovah your God in midst of you." Moses repeats here what has already been said five times. Yehovah is *qanna*, or

jealous. This is the sixth and final time this adjective is found in the Bible. All six uses have been in relation to the name Yehovah.

The jealousy is directed to the violation of depriving Him what He is justly due. Israel is warned that they cannot escape what is coming if they fail in this regard. He is in their midst, implying that He sees and knows all that happens among them. Should they reject Him, the penalty for it is found in the next words...

15 (con't) lest the anger of the LORD your God be aroused against you

pen yekhere aph Yehovah elohekha bak – “lest burning nose of Yehovah your God against you.” The symbolism is that the countenance of the Lord is so angry that fire shoots out of His nostrils and burns up anything before Him.

This is the result of incurring the jealousy of the Lord. The covenant was made, as a Husband to His betrothed. To violate the covenant will arouse His jealousy. In that, there is only one inevitable outcome. As it says in the proverbs –

“For jealousy *is* a husband’s fury;

Therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.

³⁵ He will accept no recompense,

Nor will he be appeased though you give many gifts.” Proverbs 6:34, 35

No offerings would appease the Lord if the people were also offering to other gods. How could they appeal to Him and also to other gods and somehow expect to escape His fury? Moses says He will pursue...

***15 (fin) and destroy you from the face of the earth.**

The words say, “from the face of the ground.” Utter annihilation could be expected for the people who would do such a thing. In this, it is not the utter annihilation of all of Israel, but of those who acted in such a manner. An example of that is found in Ezekiel 9:6.

The Lord has promised to preserve Israel even through the destruction of Israel. Those who offended would be sought out and utterly consumed in His wrath.

Nehemiah 9:24-31 practically mirrors what is said in the verses we have looked at today (**open Bible and read that passage**). At times, what Nehemiah says is almost word for

word what Moses has warned against. His recounting of this shows that what occurred in their exile was solely their fault.

And yet, as he noted, the Lord did not utterly consume them. The word of the Lord, and the covenant of the Lord, will never be violated by the Lord. Israel's absolute unfaithfulness demonstrates all the more the longsuffering and patience of the Lord. And more, it highlights His grace and mercy as no other thing could.

He is the covenant-keeping God. He kept His promise to the fathers. He kept His promises of punishment within the law, and He kept His promises of the preservation of Israel, also contained in the law. Not a word of the word of the Lord will fail because He – unlike the people of the world – cannot fail.

And so, today, I would ask you to take the necessary step and call out to Him for salvation. We are all going to spend eternity somewhere, and the difference between the two options is either heaven or hell, paradise or the pit. Please choose wisely, call on Christ to save you, and then think on Him and His goodness all the days of your life. This is what will be pleasing to the God who created you for this very purpose.

Closing Verse: *“But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked;*

You grew fat, you grew thick,

You are obese!

Then he forsook God who made him,

And scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation.

¹⁶ They provoked Him to jealousy with foreign gods;

With abominations they provoked Him to anger.

¹⁷ They sacrificed to demons, not to God,

To gods they did not know,

To new gods, new arrivals

That your fathers did not fear.

¹⁸ Of the Rock who begot you, you are unmindful,

And have forgotten the God who fathered you.” Deuteronomy 32:15-18

Next Week: Deuteronomy 6:16-25 *In doing these commandments, don't make such a fuss...* (Then It Will Be Righteousness for Us) (25th Deuteronomy sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of

Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Beware, Lest You Forget the Lord

“And these words which I command you today
Shall be in your heart, as to you I plainly say

You shall teach them diligently to your children
And shall talk of them when in your house you sit
When you walk by the way, when you lie down
And when you rise up – keep on talking and never quit!

You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, like a prize
And they shall be as frontlets between your eyes

You shall write them on the doorposts of your house
-----so to you I tell
And on your gates you shall write them as well

“So it shall be, when the LORD your God
Brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers
-----a land abundantly filled
To Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
To give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build

Houses full of all good things, which you did not fill
Hewn-out wells which you did not dig
Vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant—
When you have eaten and are full; not like a skinny twig...

Then beware, lest you forget the LORD, your Creator Spouse
Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the bondage house

You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him
And shall take oaths in His name; so you shall do
You shall not go after other gods
The gods of the peoples who are all around you

(For the LORD your God is a jealous God among you)
Lest the anger of the LORD your God
Be aroused against you and destroy you
From the face of the earth that you trod

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 6:16-25 **(Then It Will Be Righteousness for Us)**

Our verses today speak of righteousness. So far in the books of Moses, the noun “righteousness” has only been seen three times in Genesis. The noun “righteous” has been used several times in Leviticus and once in Deuteronomy, but that speaks of something that is just, right, or fair. It doesn’t refer to the state of righteousness a person may possess.

And so, in our verses today, the first note of such possessed righteousness is seen since the giving of the law. And, it is given in relation to adherence to the law, or so it would seem. As we come to the end of the verses today, we will arrive at that particular verse and we will analyze it to see what Moses is telling the people.

Before we get there, we will come to a set of verses that describe why the Lord redeemed Israel from Egypt. In one of them, Moses says that “He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in.” Israel was freed from bondage.

What does freedom mean? In the captivity of Judah, Jeremiah was set free. He was perceived as no threat to the Babylonians, and he had spoken the word of the Lord to the people, telling the king to surrender to the king of Babylon’s princes. Understanding this, Jeremiah was not taken captive but was given his freedom.

Text Verse: *“See, all the land is before you; wherever it seems good and convenient for you to go, go there.” Jeremiah 40:4*

Unlike these words to Jeremiah, Israel was freed from bondage, but the intent was that it was to then bring them into the land of Canaan. For them, it meant living under law and all that went along with that.

However, for the Christian, we have also been brought out from bondage. Jesus and the apostles say that explicitly. When one is bound by sin, he is in bondage. Only in being freed from sin can one then be brought into what Canaan only typologically anticipates – meaning a restored relationship with God and access to His paradise once again.

This is what Jesus offers to the people of the world, and the law was only a step in that process. Until the time when the law was fulfilled, man had to wait for that true freedom to come. When He came, Christ brought us out, so that He could bring us in.

But it is not into more bondage through the law. It is into the freedom which is truly free. It is where we can again cry out to our heavenly Father, “Abba!” This is what awaits those who have come to God through Christ.

Before we get into our verses today, we can look over a chiasm which I found while doing this sermon. It will help us to unpack what is going on, and it will help us to have more confidence in the word. This is especially so after I give you a quote from the scholars at Cambridge. One must wonder why there are Bible scholars out there who do their very best to destroy the document they spent their life analyzing. But they are there.

Deuteronomy 6:17-25 – What is the Meaning?
To Keep is to Observe (17/8/2020)

- a. You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes
- b. That it may be well with you
- c. Possess the good land of which the LORD swore to your fathers
- d. To cast out all your enemies from before you (The Lord’s action)
- e. When your son asks
 - x. What *is the meaning of* the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God has commanded you?’
- e. Then you shall say to your son
- d. He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in (The Lord’s action)
- c. To give us the land of which He swore to our fathers.
- b. For our good always, that He might preserve us alive
- a. If we are careful to observe all these commandments before the LORD our God

Chiasms, righteousness, the wonder of Jesus Christ – O my! There is so much treasure be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. That It May Be Well With You (verses 16-19)

¹⁶ **“You shall not tempt the LORD your God as you tempted *Him* in Massah.**

In the previous sermon, the Lord cautioned the people concerning disobedience. To understand the context concerning this verse, we will review the previous six verses –

“So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, ¹¹ houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant—when you have eaten and are full— ¹² *then* beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. ¹³ You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name. ¹⁴ You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who *are* all around you ¹⁵ (for the LORD your God *is* a jealous God among you), lest the anger of the LORD your God be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth.” Deuteronomy 6:10-15

In the last verse, verse 15, the nouns are all in the singular. Now, Moses returns to the plural (you all) here. Here, he refers to an incident that occurred mere moments after leaving Egypt, that of the events at Massah which is recorded in Exodus 17 –

Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim; but *there was* no water for the people to drink. ² Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, “Give us water, that we may drink.” So Moses said to them, “Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the LORD?”

³ And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, “Why *is* it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?”

⁴ So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!”

⁵ And the LORD said to Moses, “Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go. ⁶ Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.”

And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

-Exodus 17:1-7

The words of this verse in Deuteronomy, translated as “tempt” and “tempted,” come from the word *nasah*. It signifies, “to put to the test.” In 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles, the

Queen of Sheba is said to have come to prove Solomon with difficult questions. This is what Israel did.

They were brought out of bondage in a magnificent way by the Lord, but as soon as a little hardship arose, the people attempted to “prove” if He was truly capable of handling things for them. They almost spitefully said, “Is the LORD among us or not?” Thus, the place was named *Massah*, the word comes from *nasah*, and it means, “Testing.”

What Moses is conveying is that by going after other gods, they will arouse the anger of Yehovah. They are to trust in Him who is invisible rather than the false gods they could see. It is this verse, Deuteronomy 6:16, that Jesus refers to in Matthew 4 when He was tempted by the devil –

“Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written:

‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’ and,

‘In *their* hands they shall bear you up,

Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’”

⁷ Jesus said to him, “It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’”

Matthew 4:5-7

Jesus prevailed by holding fast to the law. This is unlike Israel, who will later be shown to fail in these admonitions from Moses. Where Jesus held to the Lord God alone, Israel went about seeking many “gods” in their recorded history.

As a note concerning this verse, especially concerning the changes here from singular to plural, Cambridge says the following –

“Another interruption by the Pl. Because of this; because the reference to Massah is hardly relevant to the context, and because the perfect, *he hath commanded*, [vs. 17] is not yet true of the separate laws; these sentences seem to be a later editorial insertion. The return to the Sg. at their close is explicable by the attraction of the Sg. in Deuteronomy 6:18.” Cambridge

Cambridge flippantly states that “the reference to Massah is hardly relevant to the context.” In fact, it is the point of the surrounding context. They then say these words are a “later editorial insertion.” This would mean they are not the words of Moses, and

thus not true words of Scripture. And yet, it is of these words that Jesus says, “It is written.”

Further, verse 17 is a part of the chiasm that spans the rest of the verses of this passage. Thus, it clearly demonstrates that it is original, and not a later insertion.

What will it be like for the people who authored this commentary when they are brought before the Lord after having said that what is stated here is “irrelevant” and that they are not His words? If they understand the word “mercy,” they will need a great deal of it for their treatment of this precious and sacred word.

17 You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God,

Shamor tishmerun eth mitzvoth Yehovah elohekhem – “Keeping, you shall keep, the commandments Yehovah your God.” The word translated as “you shall keep” contains a pargodic nun at the end of it which is added to express additional emphasis. One might imagine Moses saying, “Keeping, you shaaaaaalllll keep.”

He is stressing to them the importance of not letting up, but of constant vigilance in holding strictly to the Lord’s commandments. Also, this clause begins the chiasm of the passage. It corresponds to the words of verse 25. Included in the stress of keeping His commandments are...

17 (con’t) His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you.

Here, the words of Moses transition back to the singular in saying “commanded you.” That will carry on in the next verse. Rather than being later insertions, the instruction – varying between the plural and the singular – shows intent and purpose. If someone was to insert words later, they would certainly follow with the same person, not change it right in the middle of a verse.

Concerning the words here, the testimonies and the statutes must be considered as a part of the commandments based on the words “which He has commanded you.” Though individual ideas, they all fall under the category of commands. The Lord speaks forth the law in various forms, but all that is said is to be equally obeyed and adhered to. Further...

18 And you shall do *what is* right and good in the sight of the LORD,

v'asita ha'yashar v'ha'tov b'ene Yehovah – “And you shall do the straight and the good in eyes Yehovah.” Here, for the first of seven times in Deuteronomy, Moses uses the word *yashar*, or right. It means “straight,” and gives the idea of being unwavering on the path. As the Lord’s eyes watch the conduct of the person, this is what He will look for – both a walk on the good path, and a straight walk on that same good path. And Moses notes that there is a reason for this...

18 (con't) that it may be well with you,

l'maan yitav lak – “to the end purpose it may be well with you.” One can see the play on words here. When one does the good, good returns to that person – it will be well with him. Moses then explains what that means...

18 (con't) and that you may go in and possess the good land

u-bata v'yarashta eth ha'aretz ha'tovah – “and you will go, and you will inherit the land the good.” Again, the play on words continues – “when you do good, good will come to you, and you will inherit the good land.” It is this good land, which contains houses full of good things (verse 11) that will be inherited by you – the one who does good.

The entire verse is a promise that is to be understood with what will be said in the next verse. In other words, the Lord has promised these things to the people and they will come upon them if they are obedient in the land.

They will cross the Jordan. Moses knows this. But how much of the land will they possess? And how well will it go with them in the land they do possess? The answer to those things is up to them. If they do good, they will continue to possess more and more of the land. And if they do good, they will be blessed in the land they do possess. This fact is later seen in Judges 2 –

“Then the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He said, “Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not heeded My voice, ²¹I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, ²²so that through them I may test Israel, whether they will keep the ways of the LORD, to walk in them as their fathers kept *them*, or not.” ²³Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out immediately; nor did He deliver them into the hand of Joshua.”

-Judges 2:20-23

The people failed to do the good Moses now speaks of, and possession of the good land is, in part, withheld. It is the land...

18 (con't) of which the LORD swore to your fathers,

The Lord swore to the fathers – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – that they would possess the land. But the possession of that land is conditional on obedience. The land is theirs, and it remains theirs, but owning something and possessing that thing are not the same.

The Lord has made this clear, and Moses continues to make it clear. Israel's right to inhabit the land is not unconditional. When they do what is proper, the Lord will lead them...

19 to cast out all your enemies from before you, as the LORD has spoken.

Moses uses the word *hadaph* here and in verse 9:4. It signifies to push or thrust. Further, the verb is infinitive, "to the casting out of all your enemies." In other words, the previous verse said, "that it may be well with you." How will it be well? "It will be to the casting out of all your enemies."

After they went into the land, and after Joshua's death, they forsook the Lord and began to serve the Baals. The natural reaction to this is that it would no longer go well with them, and the casting out of the enemies would cease.

With this thought in mind, Moses then returns to the thought of verses 1 and 2. Moses set out to teach Israel the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments. As it is a written record, it is for – as verse 2 says – "you, you and your son and your grandson."

This then, in turn, goes back to verses 4:9 & 10. Take what is written and teach it to your children and your grandchildren. It is no good to have a written record that is not conveyed to those it pertains to.

Our government is based on a constitution which contains important rights belonging to the people. If they don't know what those rights are, those same rights can be trampled on by the very government which is limited by that constitution.

With Israel, there are certain commandments that are to be adhered to. In not adhering to them, it will not go well with the people. And more especially, if the people are not

taught those commandments, they cannot be obedient to them. Therefore, it logically follows that it will not go well with them.

And so, Moses expects that this word would be passed on to the next generation, as we will see in a moment.

*This is your righteousness before Me
When you accept the word that I speak
Nothing else will do, I tell you plainly
It is the same righteousness for the strong and the weak*

*No matter what great thing you do before Me
If faith doesn't accompany it, such is just waste
The motives behind it I can see
And without faith, it is putridity to My taste*

*But the deeds done by a person of faith
Are deeds that are pleasing in My sight
Hear the word that to you I saith
Such a person's soul before Me is upright*

II. He Brought Us Out, That He Might Bring Us In (verses 20-25)

²⁰ **“When your son asks you in time to come, saying,**

Moses presupposes that the children will feel the weight of the law. In this, they will ask the obvious question, “Dad, why do we have to do all this stuff? Those kids visiting from Lebanon don’t need to do it. The Jebusites don’t have to do it. Why do we have to do it?”

Understanding this, the child asks specific questions. This questioning forms the middle of the chiasm...

²⁰ (con’t) **‘What is the meaning of the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God has commanded you?’**

The question here is not the child’s words. Rather, Moses is citing the substance of what the child will ask. This is certain, because the word “you” is plural. Otherwise, it would

say, “us.” The Greek translation actually says “us” in order to make it the child’s question.

But what Moses is doing is saying to the people, “What is the meaning of these things the Lord our God has commanded you? Your son is going to ask you about it. He might ask about any particular aspect of this law, and you need to explain to him why we do these things.” When he does, Moses continues with...

²¹ then you shall say to your son:

To ask a question about something you are required to do implies that it is required. If it is required, then it is – by default – a burden. It may be the most enjoyable thing on the planet for a person to do. Reading for example. Some people love to read. Well, it says in the Law of Moses –

“Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from *the one* before the priests, the Levites. ¹⁹ And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, ²⁰ that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment *to* the right hand or *to* the left, and that he may prolong *his* days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.” Deuteronomy 17:18:20

The king may enjoy reading more than eating durian. He may do it constantly. But... this is a law. He must do it. Today, he is terribly pressed for time. He is irritable. His wife is nagging him. His children are not being good little princes and princesses. What is his favorite thing to do has, today, become a burden.

If eating durian every day were a part of the law, and everyone loves durian as we know, it would still be a burden when someone had a bad stomach. It would also be a burden when durian got so expensive that it caused difficulty on the family finances.

But the law is the law. What is good – no matter how good it is – when it is a law, will naturally be a burden at some point. We all know this when it comes to speed limits. Some more than others.

Again, as we have cited in many Deuteronomy sermons already, Paul speaks of just this—

“For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. ²³ But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!” Romans 7:22-25

His words are true even when we not only delight in the law, but they are true when we delight in some particular aspect of the law that we absolutely love (normally). “I literally LOVE to have Saturdays off. Thank God for the Sabbath! But today, the Sabbath has become really problematic for me. Here’s why...”

If this is true about the things we really enjoy, how much more so is it about the things that we are not all giddy about. Paul then takes this further. We may be good and fine with the law because it restrains people who are otherwise out of control. In 1 Timothy 1:8-11, he writes –

“But we know that the law *is* good if one uses it lawfully, ⁹ knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for *the* lawless and insubordinate, for *the* ungodly and for sinners, for *the* unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, ¹⁰ for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, ¹¹ according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.”

We may say, “Boy do I agree with the law. Otherwise Tom next door would be driving 100mph down the road with all these kids playing on it. The 10mph speed limit makes us happy on account of someone else’s tendencies.

However, an infraction of the law is an infraction of the law. Anyone who has had to drive 10mph knows how hard it is to not go 11. But the cop on the corner does not care if you “tried” to do 10. The ticket says you did 11.

Because this is so, and because your child is going to ask about the burden of the law, Moses tells them why the law – which they don’t understand – is so good. And he does it by taking them back to their past, beginning with...

²¹ (con’t) **‘We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt,**

“Son, you cannot even imagine. We were under a yoke. We were crushed. We were bound in chains. It was hot, it was tiring, there was no relief. We were used up and cast aside.”

“And more, we were slaves of Pharaoh. He ruled our bodies, he had us cast our boys into the Nile, and he took our women for himself.”

“And more, this was in Egypt. We were in a land not our own. We had no property rights. What we grew was taken from us. There was always lack, heat, want, and anguish. This was our state. Son, Egypt means “double distress,” and you simply cannot imagine how true that was.”

²¹ (con’t) **and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand;**

“Son, you cannot see Him, but He is there. We couldn’t redeem ourselves. Pharaoh had an army, chariots, weapons, and food to sustain them. We had nothing. The impossibility of our situation extended in all directions and into the future.

We were without hope, except... in the promise to our fathers from the Lord we could not see. But even though we cannot see Him, we saw the things He did – things that eye never imagined nor mind could ever conceive. The Lord did these things for us, to redeem us as a people prepared for Himself.”

The substance of what Moses has said, and will say, was first conveyed to Moses by the Lord just prior to the giving of the Ten Commandments. In Exodus 19, it says –

“And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: ⁴ ‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine. ⁶ And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.” Exodus 19:3-6

Concerning this, Charles Ellicott rightly states –

“The keeping of the Law of Jehovah by Israel as a nation in the land that He gave them was the final cause of their national existence. This fundamental fact must never be

forgotten. This alone would justify what had been done to Egypt. Hence the neglect of the Law must inevitably bring down the Divine vengeance.” Charles Ellicott

Moses is conveying his words now as instruction for the fathers to relay to their children. It is why they must accept and obey the things the child now asks about. With this understanding, Moses continues with...

²² and the LORD showed signs and wonders before our eyes,

Here, it is said the Lord showed *ototh u-mophtim*, or “signs and wonders.” A sign is something that stands for something else. For example, the blood applied to the doorposts and lintel of the houses was a sign of and for protection.

In the case of Pharaoh, the Lord afflicted him with the plagues, but he did not afflict Israel. That stood as a sign that the Lord was Israel’s God, that He is a God, and that Pharaoh’s gods were ineffective against Him. The sign is not the thing or occurrence, but the meaning conveyed by it.

A wonder is a thing, and it is that which is evident in itself. It is something that extends beyond what is normal and is thus considered miraculous. When it is done, it is to be attributed to the Lord because there was no other explanation for it to occur.

“Son, these things happened before our eyes. Our fathers beheld them, and the events were recorded for us to read and believe.” These things were...

^{22 (con’t)} great and severe,

gedolim v’raim – “greats and evils.” It is the adjectives *gadol*, or great, and *ra*, or evil. But in making them plural, it enhances what is conveyed. These great and severe wonders and signs were...

^{22 (con’t)} against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all his household.

People have been oppressed by other people since the very beginning. Israel’s fate in Egypt is no more severe than the fate of many other nations in history. And yet, the Lord has not intervened in their affairs. He has allowed the nations to continue on in their way. However, the Lord personally acted against:

Egypt – the nation in which His people were in bondage.

Pharaoh – the leader of Egypt and who determined the fate of those under his rule.

His household – Not only did the Lord punish Pharaoh, but he also took action against his household, limiting their ability to effect retribution against Israel into the future.

All of this was to secure Israel for Himself, protect Israel from those who had once controlled them, and to provide for Israel in the land He had promised to their fathers. He first performed these signs and wonders...

²³ Then He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in,

The Lord didn't simply bring Israel out of bondage because He felt sorry for them. If that was the case, He could have stopped right there and said, "You all are free! Go live your life as free men." It would have been a pretty sweet deal, but it would have left many uncertainties for the people.

Where do you go with your freedom? Do you stay together, or do you separate? Will you argue over who will rule? Will the strong immediately subjugate the weak? Rather, there was a purpose for what the Lord did. It says, *v'otanu hosi misham l'maan havi otanu* – "and us brought out from there to the end purpose bring in us."

There is an emphasis in the words, beginning with, and ending in, "us." It is a particular group of people that was focused upon. The Lord determined that it is they whom He would favor, and thus He acted.

And, He brought the people out specifically so that they could then be brought in. This was the purpose of bringing them out. They were not brought out to simply be given freedom, but to serve the Lord's purposes in redemptive history. The first aspect of that was to demonstrate that the Lord God keeps His word...

^{23 (con't)} to give us the land of which He swore to our fathers.

The Lord swore to the fathers – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – that He would give the land to their descendants –

"Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, 'To your descendants I will give this

land.' And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.”

-Genesis 12:7

“Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father.” Genesis 26:3 (To Isaac)

“And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: ‘I *am* the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants.’” Genesis 28:13 (To Jacob)

The Lord spoke, and the Lord fulfilled His promise. This is what is to be conveyed to the children when the question is asked: “Why do we do these things?” “Well son, here is why. The Lord swore that He would give this land to us. When we were in bondage, He fulfilled that promise by redeeming us from it and bringing us into this land...”

²⁴ And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as *it is* this day.

This is the second aspect of why He did this. It wasn't just to prove that the Lord keeps His word to the fathers in giving them the land, but that He might also preserve them in the land – which is another aspect of the promise.

In Genesis 13:15, Exodus 32:13, and elsewhere, the land was not only said to be given to the descendants, but that it was to be forever. One can, and indeed many will, debate what “forever” means, but as long as these descendants of Israel are preserved –which means even until today – the promise must stand.

And so, the law, meaning the observance of all of these statutes, was given to direct the people, keep them united, and to preserve them as a people.

One way of keeping them united was by observing certain statutes which looked back – such as the Passover. In directing them to look back, it kept them in the mindset of being a united people with a common heritage and salvation. Other statutes were observances within the normal patterns of human existence – be it from moment to moment, day to day, weekly, or annually.

These were to keep them dependent on the Lord, cognizant of the Lord, anticipating the Lord's hand in their lives, and so on. And, there are statutes found in the law and the

prophets that were future looking. In Deuteronomy 18:18, 19, Moses said that the Lord would raise up for Israel a prophet like him –

“I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. ¹⁹ And it shall be *that* whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require *it* of him.”

This was a set statute and it was to keep them as a people as well. They knew the Lord had made the promise, and so it could serve as both a means of sifting out false claims and also strengthening the true claim. Thus, uniting the people in a unique way. In fact, we know this is certain because it says this in John 1 –

“Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’

²⁰ He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, ‘I am not the Christ.’

²¹ And they asked him, ‘What then? Are you Elijah?’

He said, “‘I am not.’

‘Are you the Prophet?’

And he answered, ‘No.’” John 1:19-21

The people, in asking these questions, were being obedient to the words of law. In observing all such statutes, they would demonstrate a fear of the Lord their God – meaning a reverential fear of Him – and this would be for their good as long as they maintained that state. Understanding this, it is what the fathers were to tell their sons.

This was not because of who *they are*, but because of who *He is*. They did nothing to earn the land He had given them, the place they occupied, the family they were born into, or any other thing they possessed.

It was all due to what He had done for them, and therefore, they were under obligation to return their allegiance to Him. The father was then to finish this thought, saying *ke-ha’yom ha’zeh* – “as the day, the this.”

The implication is that they were still in the land because of the Lord. Thus, it means that their dwelling in the land – by default – must be conditional.

“Son, we are doing these things because this is what the Lord has done for us, and we continue to do them to this day. Should we neglect this service, the Lord has spoken other things to us as well – things we do not want to have to face. Therefore...”

***25 (fin) Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the LORD our God, as He has commanded us.’**

The word of Moses speaks of their righteousness in their faithful observance of all these commandments. It is the same word which was used for the first time in Scripture in Genesis 15 –

“And behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, saying, ‘This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.’⁵ Then He brought him outside and said, ‘Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be.’⁶ And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for **righteousness.**”

-Genesis 15:4-6

Paul uses that passage in Romans 4 and Galatians 3 to demonstrate that Abraham’s righteousness was not of works of the law, but of faith. This is because the law wasn’t introduced until long after Abraham had died. But more, he even received this righteousness before he was circumcised.

And so, the question here is, “What is the source of righteousness?” If Moses says that the fathers are to tell the sons that doing all these things were righteousness for them, then does that mean that righteousness can come from within?

The answer is, “No.” Moses has, and will continue to, make the “righteousness of the law” so dependent on the condition of the heart that it is summed up – completely and entirely – in the word “faith.” Could someone go up to John the Baptist and ask if he were the Prophet if he didn’t have faith in what the law said? No!

In fact, it is solely by faith in what the Lord said concerning the matter that anyone would even assume someone could be the Prophet. But that is true then with the entire law. One must have faith that it is from God in order to believe they are pleasing the Lord by doing the things He instructs.

If this is not so, then the observance of the law becomes a self-based righteousness – exactly what the Pharisees trusted in. Instead of “I am doing these things to please the

Lord and to be pleasing to the Lord,” their attitude was, “I am doing these things because the Lord is pleased with me.”

They looked first to their own righteousness, and how they could exalt themselves in the eyes of men even more through the law. But the true Israelite looked to what the Lord had done for them, despite themselves. They were in bondage; He set them free. They were lowly; He exalted them. They had no home; He gave them the land.

Whether under law or not, what pleases the Lord is faith first, and only then working out that faith in whatever manner the Lord has prescribed. We know this is true because David delighted in the law of the Lord, and yet he is shown to have failed in works of the law.

It wasn't the battles he won, it wasn't the sacrifices at the temple that he offered, and it wasn't the wealth he amassed that the Lord was pleased with. Rather, it was his complete dependence upon the Lord, despite all of those things.

From his time as a shepherd boy in Bethlehem, to his reigning as king over all of Israel, he was a man after God's own heart because his heart followed after God. The same is true with all of the greats of the Bible. They are not remembered for the things they did, except as how those things were in relation to – meaning products of – their faith.

As I sat typing this sermon on August 17, 2020, it was the day after the first sermon in our short break from Deuteronomy. The week after that, we introduced David into the narrative. And how exciting it was to prepare for that!

But the reason wasn't because he was going to slay a giant, showing how great he is. Rather, it is because he was going to trust in the Lord, despite how insignificant he is. It is the honor of the Lord, faith in His hand of providence, and a surety that the honor of the Lord is what is needed to win that battle, that set David apart from all the other men of Israel.

And in the typology of those sermons, we saw that he was only prefiguring a far greater figure in the redemptive narrative, our Lord Jesus. It is He who not only defeated the enemy of God, but He did so without ever sinning in the process. David was just a shadowy type of what was to come in Christ.

Now, with Christ's having come, we have so much more than those under the law had. We have the fulfillment of this law, in every single detail, in the Person of Jesus Christ.

And so, we do not have to bear our fruit of the righteousness we possess by doing deeds of the law.

Rather, the fruits of righteousness for Christians are displayed in our ongoing faith in what Christ did under the law, and in how we then live our lives in accord with that. And so, let us bear fruit to God in this manner – to His glory.

But in order to do so, we must first be true Christians. Have you met the standard? What sets you apart from the world as a Christian? Christ came to bring you out, so that He might bring you in. You are sold as a slave, and He has come to give you freedom as a son. Let's make sure you have that right first...

Closing Verse: *“But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, ¹¹ if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”* Philippians 3:7-11

Next Week: Deuteronomy 7:1-8 *Why did the Lord these things do?* (Because the Lord Loves You) (26th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Then It Will Be Righteousness for Us

“You shall not tempt the LORD your God
-----as you tempted Him in Massah
You shall diligently keep the commandments, so you shall do
Of the LORD your God
His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you

And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD
-----that it may be well with you
And that you may go in and possess the good land of which

----- the LORD swore to your fathers – His personal token
To cast out all your enemies from before you
As the LORD has spoken

“When your son asks you in time to come, saying
When these words to you he is relaying...

‘What is the meaning of the testimonies, the statutes
-----and the judgments too
Which the LORD our God has commanded you?

Then you shall say to your son: ‘We were slaves of Pharaoh
-----in Egypt
And the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand
And the LORD showed signs and wonders before our eyes
Great and severe, against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all his household
-----His deeds were gloriously grand

Then He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in
To give us the land of which He swore to our fathers
-----for all our days
And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes
To fear the LORD our God, for our good always

That He might preserve us alive, as it is this day
Then it will be righteousness for us; yes, it will be a plus
If we are careful to observe all these commandments
Before the LORD our God, as He has commanded us

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 7:1-8 (Because the Lord Loves You)

The day I typed this sermon started out, as always, with my morning Bible reading. A part of what I read was Deuteronomy 28. In that passage is the woeful reminder to Israel of what got them into the pickle they were in when exiled to Babylon, and then what got them into the pickle they have been in for the past two thousand years. Their troubles have been a self-inflicted wound.

Until they realize this, there will be no change for them. They project outward at the world over every infraction against them, and indeed many are unjustified. But none of the ills they face would come to pass if they had been obedient to the covenant that they agreed to.

As I will point out today, and continue to point out again and again, this covenant anticipates its own ending, and the introduction of a New Covenant.

In rejecting Christ, they were disobedient to the Mosaic Covenant, and they are outside of the New Covenant. Such is the state they have been in, and that they will continue to be in, until the day they – as a nation – call out to Him.

But, even in life under the Old Covenant, as is recorded in the Bible, God has used the misdeeds of Israel to bring glory to Himself. An example of this will be explained later when we hear about Rahab the harlot.

Something occurred in the account concerning her which is in violation of the word given by Moses today. That is a bad thing. However, the result of that bad thing led to good things. Even Israel under the law could figure that out from their writings.

And so, they could – perversely – say, “We brought glory to God through our misdeed. Therefore, what we do as a people – right or wrong – is an instrument to bring glory to the Lord.” Sounds unreasonable, doesn't it?

Text Verse: *“For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? ⁸ And why not say, “Let us do evil that good may come”?— as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.” Romans 3:7, 8*

Unfortunately, this is the attitude of many in Israel, and that attitude continues in the church today. Is it evil to violate Scripture? Are Paul's words Scripture? When Paul says concerning theological matters that a woman is not to teach or have authority over a man, is that prescriptive or descriptive? Is it optional or mandatory?

But many females have become pastors. Some have great insights, lead people to Christ, and run what would otherwise be considered important ministries. And yet, it is exactly what Paul argues against in our text verse – "Let us do evil that good may come." The end cannot justify the means, and God cannot reward open disobedience to His word.

We will learn about that today. We will also learn a lot more. So buckle your seat, and put on your helmet. There is a lot to learn and it will come at you quickly. Great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Make No Covenant with Them (Verses 1-5)

Moses had given a brief review of some of Israel's history in Chapters 1-3, highlighting events from leaving Sinai until the spot where they now sat, across the Jordan from Canaan.

In Chapter 4, there was a bit more review, but the chapter focused on idolatry and being sure to obey the commands of the Lord, forsaking any such idolatry. At the end of that chapter, the defeat of Sihon and Og was again repeated, even though it had been reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3. They and their people were exterminated, and that was the expectation west of Jordan as well.

Chapter 5 again commanded obedience as the Ten Commandments were repeated. They also warned against idolatry as well as the other major points of the law, focusing on love for the Lord and love for one's neighbor.

Chapter 6 continued to stress love for the Lord and holding fast to Him in obedience. At the end of Chapter 6, Moses explained that the meaning of all of these testimonies, statutes, and judgments was based on the Lord having delivered Israel from Egypt, from the house of bondage.

It was a land of idolatry and bondage, but they were brought out from that in order that He might bring them into their own land. One can see that Chapter 6 expanded upon the first command –

“I *am* the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

⁷ ‘You shall have no other gods before Me.’” Deuteronomy 5:6, 7

Understanding this progression of thought, Moses now opens Chapter 7 saying –

¹“**When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess,**

The purpose of bringing them out is so that He might bring them in. They were held in a land they did not possess; they were being given a land of their own to possess. In this, there were certain obligations that needed to be performed to keep them from violating the very commands that have been so heavily stressed.

One of those commands was to dispossess the inhabitants of Canaan. Moses says that it will be the same Lord who brought them out who will now accomplish that task...

^{1 (con’t)} **and has cast out many nations before you,**

Here, Moses uses a rather rare word, *nashal* – to slip off, draw off, or clear away. It has only been used so far in Exodus 3:5 –

“Do not draw near this place. **Take** your sandals **off** your feet, for the place where you stand *is* holy ground.” Exodus 3:5

Moses promises that the Lord will be the one to draw the people off of the land, just as a person draws off his shoe. Those who will be ejected are...

^{1 (con’t)} **the Hittites**

ha’khiti – “the Hittite.” It should be noted now that all seven of the named people groups are in the singular, not the plural. Hittite means, Terrible or Fearsome. They were introduced into the Bible in Genesis 15. They are referred to throughout the Old Testament writings, and the name will last be seen in Ezekiel 16:45 when speaking of Jerusalem –

“You *are* your mother’s daughter, loathing husband and children; and you *are* the sister of your sisters, who loathed their husbands and children; your mother *was* a Hittite and your father an Amorite.”

1 (con’t) **and the Girgashites**

v’ha’girgashi – “and the Girgashite.” The exact meaning of the name is unknown. It may mean, “Dweller in a Clayey Soil.” They are sparsely noted between Genesis 10:16 and Nehemiah 9:8.

1 (con’t) **and the Amorites**

v’ha’emori – “and the Amorite.” The name means, “Spoken Of” and thus, “Renowned.” They are noted many times throughout the Old Testament, from Genesis 10:16 until Amos 2:10. They are, at times, used as a catchall name to describe the inhabitants of the land of Canaan. The same is true with...

1 (con’t) **and the Canaanites**

v’ha’kenaani – “and the Canaanite.” The name Canaanite may mean Merchant or Servant. The latter is more likely. They were cursed by Noah as the lowest of slaves, and they also picture those who bring others into slavery.

Canaan was the firstborn of Ham, and his name identifies with the land and people groups in the land. The name is mentioned throughout the Old Testament and even into the New, beginning in Genesis 9:18 and seen last in Acts 13:19.

1 (con’t) **and the Perizzites**

v’ha’perizi – “And the Perizzite.” The name means Villagers, or Dwellers in the Open Country. They are seen mostly in the Books of Moses and the writings of the Old Testament from Genesis 13:7 until Nehemiah 9:8.

1 (con’t) **and the Hivites**

v’ha’khivi – “And the Hivite.” Hivite might mean “Tent Villagers.” They are also seen in the Books of Moses and the writings from Genesis 10:17 until 2 Chronicles 8:7.

1 (con’t) **and the Jebusites,**

v'ha'yebusi – “And the Jebusite.” The name means “Treading Down” or “Trodden Underfoot.” They are found mostly in Moses and the writings, but Zechariah mentions them also, going from Genesis 10:16 until Zechariah 9:7. It was the Jebusites who held the main body of Jerusalem until the time of King David. Of these people groups, Moses says they are...

^{1 (con't)} **seven nations greater and mightier than you,**

It should be noted that ten people groups were mentioned as possessing the land in Genesis 15:18-20. That was when the Lord promised the land to Abraham. At times, even in Deuteronomy, the names of the people groups will vary from this list now. For example, Deuteronomy 20 will say –

“But of the cities of these peoples which the LORD your God gives you *as* an inheritance, you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive, ¹⁷ but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the LORD your God has commanded you, ¹⁸ lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against the LORD your God.”
Deuteronomy 20:16-18

There, only six groups are named. The Girgashite is left out. Therefore, the list is to be taken as a general list speaking of all of the inhabitants, even if not all are named at all times. The words of Moses, “seven nations greater and mightier than you,” are certainly intended to mean that each, by itself, is mightier and greater. Despite this, Moses continues...

² **and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you,**

Here it is clearly stated by Moses that the Lord will, in fact, deliver the inhabitants to them. This is an important statement because the Lord’s deliverance of the peoples precedes the destruction of them. Because the Lord is God, this cannot be considered either indiscriminate or unsanctioned killing.

And more, because He will deliver them, there is no excuse for any to survive. This is especially so concerning the next words. The Lord will deliver them, and they must then take action...

^{2 (con't)} **you shall conquer them *and* utterly destroy them.**

v'hikitam hakharem takhrim – “and you shall strike them and accursing them, you shall make them accursed.” The word is *kharam*, and it signifies to devote to destruction as an offering to God. When *kharam* is pronounced, whatever the Lord included as *kharam* was to be utterly destroyed.

For example, Jericho was to be completely destroyed. All people, all possessions, all animals – everything. The only thing to be spared is noted in Joshua 6, saying, “But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, *are* consecrated to the LORD; they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.”

At times, the animals might be spared. Or maybe the people were to be killed but the city could be inhabited. It was the Lord’s decision and whatever level of *kharam* was determined, it had to be accomplished to the last thread or stone.

In case of the inhabitants of Canaan, all were to be completely exterminated. None were to survive. As it next says...

² (con’t) **You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.**

The command is given and thus it is a point of law. The words say, “You shall not cut with them a covenant.” The idea surely extends to treaties or making alliances. The reason is obvious. They were to be exterminated in order to prevent taking up their idolatrous practices. Thus, making a covenant with them would preclude this.

In having a covenant with them, the land would not be a solely Israelite possession. There would be the constant warring over whose land it was, what rights did the inhabitants have, and so on.

Israel was to move in, dispossess the inhabitants, and thus be the sole possessors of the land – unhindered by the idolatry which would be sure to arise without these mandates being fulfilled.

One would think that not cutting a covenant would even extend to swearing an oath of protection for someone who sides with Israel. The Lord said to destroy all, and there is no caveat presented to make exceptions.

As this is so, it would be logical to assume that the *shevua* or oath sworn to Rahab the harlot to spare her and her family would fall under this. Either way, it is absolutely certain it extends to the treaty that Joshua made with the Gibeonites.

They were a clan under the Hivites mentioned in verse 1 who came in through deception. Joshua, without checking with the Lord, made peace with them and cut a covenant with them (it is the same words as are used in this verse now). Thus, the law was violated in their actions.

Despite this, we see later that Rahab came into the line of David, and thus into the line of Christ. The Gibeonites are seen still among Israel, even after the exile in the book of Nehemiah, helping to repair the wall and governor's residence in Jerusalem.

The failings of Israel are still used for good purposes by the Lord, demonstrating that His plan includes even the countless failings of His people. As we sit here today, that includes each of us. We fail, and yet the Lord works out a good end despite it. It is a marvelous lesson we can learn and cling to, knowing that He has it all figured out, even if we grieve over our own faithlessness or incompetence.

³ Nor shall you make marriages with them.

Of the previous verse, concerning utterly destroying the inhabitants, Joseph Benson (and others) says –

“That is, in case they continued obstinate in their idolatry, they were to be destroyed, as nations, or bodies politic. But if they forsook their idolatry, and became sincere proselytes to the true religion, they would then be proper objects of forgiveness, as being true penitents.” Joseph Benson

Now, of this verse concerning marriage, Joseph Benson says –

“From this prohibition it has been justly inferred that the Canaanites, as individuals, might be spared upon their repentance and reformation from idolatry. For on the supposition that nothing that breathed was to be saved alive, but that all were to be utterly destroyed, there could be no occasion for this injunction. What end could it answer to forbid all intermarriages with a people supposed not to exist?” Joseph Benson

It is hard to understand how scholars can insert into the text something which is not to be found. Moses says, “utterly destroy,” not “utterly destroy unless...” No exceptions were to be made.

The answer to Benson's question is, “The people were set for destruction and yet Israel failed to carry through with the command. Thus, intermarriages were forbidden, even if

those people still existed.” This is perfectly evident from examples such as Solomon, even more than four centuries later –

“But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, *and* Hittites— ²from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, ‘You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.’” 1 Kings 11:1, 2

The failure to be obedient to one command allowed for Solomon’s failure to be obedient to another one. Hittites are under the ban now mentioned in this passage.

The Bible, whether in the Old or the New Testament, is not a book of personal exceptions when convenient. It is the word of God, and it is to be accepted as such. The context is to be maintained, and when the context commands or forbids something in that context, it is to be adhered to.

³ (con’t) **You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son.**

The pronouns are singular – “to his son, nor take his daughter.” This is speaking of the inhabitant, whoever he may be.

Again, John Gill qualifies the words of verse 3, saying, “Unless they became proselytes...” There is no qualifier given by the Lord or by Moses. The point of the later exceptions is not to say that such exceptions are ok. It is to show that the Lord can still work through Israel’s disobedience for a good end.

This does not mean that we should think it is acceptable to marry a Muslim or a Buddhist, for example, knowing that God can use our disobedience for a good end. The New Testament shows that believers are to marry believers. Anything else than that is disobedience.

And yet, I personally know Christians who have disobeyed this precept and good has come out of it in the conversion of the spouse. The end, however, does not justify the means. There will be a loss of reward for the disobedience, and there will also be joy in heaven despite it.

This precept is what Paul spoke against in our Text Verse today, “Let us do evil that good may come.” Such is actually perverse thinking. The marvel of God, however, is that He can turn our perverse ways into a marvelous part of the beautiful tapestry He is weaving in the unfolding plan of redemption. For now, Moses explains his words, and in a rather exceptional way...

⁴ For they will turn your sons away from following Me,

Again, this needs correction. It says, “For he (singular) will turn away your son (singular) from following Me.” It is speaking of the foreigner, whoever he may be. However, the interesting part of the verse is that it is Moses who is speaking, and yet, he says, “from following Me.”

The two possibilities are that 1) he is referring to the body of law coming from him (aka the Law of Moses), or 2) he says “Me” as if the Lord is speaking in order to ensure that the words “he will turn” is not speaking of the Lord, but of the foreigner.

The second option is certainly what is being conveyed. Moses, speaking under inspiration, has transferred his words to be as if those spoken directly by the Lord in order to ensure clarity. It is in not following after the Lord that they will turn...

^{4 (con’t)} to serve other gods;

This is the whole point of the passage so far, and as we saw, this passage continues in thought from the previous chapter, and that passage continues in thought from Chapter 5 where it said –

“I *am* the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. ⁷ ‘You shall have no other gods before Me.’”

-Deuteronomy 5:6, 7

Intermarriage will result in turning away from the Lord. Turning away from the Lord will result in turning to serve other gods. Remember what we read about Solomon in the previous verse. What was the result of what he did? The very next verses say –

“And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. ⁴ For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as *was* the heart of his father David. ⁵ For Solomon went

after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.” 1 Kings 11:3-5

The same chapter directly credits Solomon’s faithlessness in this to the division of the nation. And yet, the Lord used both the division of Israel, and one of Solomon’s marriages to continue marvelous events in the redemptive narrative. One of the wives, an Ammonite, became the mother of Rehoboam, and thus entered into the genealogy of Christ as noted in Matthew 1:7.

But just because good comes out of such things, it does not mean that the Lord is pleased with our disobedience. As Moses says...

⁴ (con’t) **so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly.**

Again, the ends do not justify the means. The Lord brought good out of many instances of Israel’s disobedience. In fact, the Redeemer of man came through some of them. But that is because of the Lord’s overarching sovereignty.

But our negative decisions will negatively affect ourselves and those around us. God does not impose His will on us, be it in who we marry, or whether we choose Christ for salvation or not. Those are personal, free-will choices.

When those choices are against the stated will of the Lord, that disobedience against the Lord will be judged. In the case of this verse, the “you” is plural. He is speaking to the people, “You all will be destroyed.” The very thing they were to do to the peoples in Canaan will come upon them. To avoid this, Moses continues...

⁵ **But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire.**

Moses now turns from the people to what the people worship. And yet, they are united as one thought. The people are intimately connected to that which they worship. And so, each was to be destroyed according to what it is.

The altars were to be torn down. The *matstsevah*, or pillars were to be broken in pieces. The Asherim, or wooden images, were to be *gada*, or cut down. Here Moses introduces this word into Scripture. It means to cut off or cut down.

And, finally, the *pasil*, or carved images (another new word in Scripture, coming from a verb meaning “to cut”) were to be burned in the fire. In the Hebrew, a special emphasis is placed on burning these carved images by the addition of a suffix on the word.

As for the thought of these words, similar words have already been put forth by the Lord –

“You shall not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their works; but you shall utterly overthrow them and completely break down their *sacred* pillars.” Exodus 23:24

But the Lord spoke even more precisely in Exodus 34, where He ties all of these things together as Moses now repeats here –

“Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it be a snare in your midst. ¹³ But you shall destroy their altars, break their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their wooden images ¹⁴ (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name *is* Jealous, *is* a jealous God), ¹⁵ lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot with their gods and make sacrifice to their gods, and *one of them* invites you and you eat of his sacrifice, ¹⁶ and you take of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters play the harlot with their gods and make your sons play the harlot with their gods.” Exodus 34:12-16

The people are tied to their altars, and a covenant with the people means that a covenant has been made with their false deities. The resulting chaos, and turning from the Lord, is thus inevitable. The jealousy of the Lord will be aroused, And, in the arousal of His jealousy will come forth His anger. Moses next explains why these things were to be so...

*Be obedient to what I say
Even if not doing so will turn out for good
It is not right for you to ever disobey
Be sure that this is perfectly understood*

*If My word is violated, and good comes from that
It is because I ordained that it would be this way
But your disobedience only makes you a brat
Even if good comes from it, you have no right to disobey*

*Turn from disobedience, and always do right
Do not use the excuse that, "Things will turn out ok!"
That is wickedness in My sight
There is never a time when it is right to disobey*

II. A Special Treasure (verses 6-8)

⁶“For you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God;

ki am qadosh attah l’Yehovah elohekha – “For people holy you to Yehovah your God.”
The words of this verse, with differences, comes in thought from the words of the Lord
in Exodus 19:5, 6 –

“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant,
then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the
earth *is* Mine. ⁶ And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’
These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.”

-Exodus 19:5, 6

There, the Lord made the words conditional, “if you will indeed obey My voice and keep my covenant, then you shall be...” Here, Moses simply says, “you *are*.” There, the Lord says, “a holy nation.” Here, Moses says, “a holy people.”

The words beg for us to consider them. The Lord says, “if/then” in order to be a holy nation. Moses says, “you *are* a holy people.” What is obvious is that a people can be holy – meaning set apart to God, and yet not be a holy nation – meaning a nation which is set apart to God.

Israel is set apart as holy, whether they act like it or not. But Israel can be unholy even in their being set apart. The resolution to the two states is obeying the Lord’s words and keeping His covenant. In understanding this, it resolves one of the greatest misunderstandings concerning Israel in the world today.

Israel misunderstands it, the church – in large part – misunderstands it, and the world at large misunderstands it. Israel is a holy people, regardless as to how they act. The Lord has set them apart, He has put His name on them – Israel – and He has covenanted with them. That has not changed, nor will it change.

Israel as a nation thinks it is holy, meaning right with God, because they are Israel the people. This is incorrect. As a nation, they are right with God when they are obedient to the Lord. As a people, they are to be obedient to the Lord in order to be holy as a nation.

If I adopt a child, we could say he is set apart (holy) to the family. He is to act as a member of the family in order to be right with (holy to) the family. If he doesn't act in accord with the rules of the family, it doesn't mean he isn't a child of (holy to) the family. It means that he is an unholy child.

This is where Israel fails to understand their obligations. It is also where the church fails to understand Israel. The church says Israel is no longer a holy nation. They have disobeyed the Lord, and thus they are also not now the Lord's people. The theological categories are thus mixed.

That is entirely incorrect. Israel is a holy (set apart) people to the Lord – forever. But they are not a holy nation to the Lord. The latter does not negate the status of the former. It simply means they, as a holy people, are not a holy nation.

Israel looks at themselves as a holy people, and thus they are a holy nation. Many in the church look at Israel as an unholy nation, and thus they are an unholy (meaning not the Lord's) people. Both are incorrect, and both require correction. They are category mistakes.

The world at large (meaning the nations who reject the God of Israel – from either testament) looks at Israel as an unholy nation, and an unholy people. To them, they are not set apart by God as a people, because their God is not the true God. And, they are even disobedient to the word of their God which they claim gives them holiness. Thus, the nations view them as double unholy.

Each of these, and you can see there is overlap between views – be it positive or negative – is an error in thinking. The nations, in general, are in error because they reject the God of the Bible. People in the church, in general, are in error because they fail to understand the unconditional decrees of God. And Israel, the nation, is in error because, as a people, they fail to conduct themselves in the manner which is in accord with who they are as set apart by God – meaning to Himself. Moses continues to show this, saying...

⁶ (con't) **the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself,**

The words here, and in the next clause, are rendered in various ways. We will put two side by side to see this –

the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. NKJV

The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. ESV

The NKJV gives two separate designations, “a people for Himself,” which is then qualified by “a special treasure above all peoples.” The ESV gives one, saying, “a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples.”

The words read *lihyot lo l'am segulah mikol ha'amim* – “to for Him to people treasure from all the peoples.” It comes down to the word *l'am*, or “to people.” Is it “for Him to people, a treasure,” or is it “for Him, to people treasure.”

The meaning is similar in either case, but I wanted you to be aware of the Hebrew, because either way, they – as a people – are set apart to the Lord. Thus, the error of thinking by all can be corrected if they accept 1) the God of the Bible, 2) that God's decrees are unconditional, and 3) that being set apart as a holy people does not mean that the holiness is “in the people” but “as the people.”

Because the Lord has chosen Israel as a people for Himself, they are to Him...

⁶ (con't) **a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.**

The word is *segulah*. It signifies possession or property, coming from an unused root meaning “to shut up” as in wealth. One would take something precious, like treasure, and shut it up and keep it close by. Thus, it is variously translated as peculiar treasure, possession, jewels, special possession, and so on.

Moses says that they, as a people, are this treasure. And yet, as a nation, in order to be so they must be obedient to His commandments. Thus, it is both conditional and unconditional, depending on the context. Peter, speaking to the Jews who have come to Christ, cites these words in his first epistle, saying –

“But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out

of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”

-1 Peter 2:9, 10

Paul uses the same word in Ephesians 1:14 concerning the Gentiles who have been brought into the commonwealth of Israel. We have become a possession of the Lord through obedience to, meaning calling on, Christ.

More directly, however, Paul uses the same phrase, *laon periousion*, in Titus 2:14 that is used in the Greek translation of this verse in Deuteronomy –

“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹² teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His own special people*, zealous for good works.” Titus 2:11-14

Vincent’s word studies notes of this, “The phrase was originally applied to the people of Israel, but is transferred there to believers in Messiah – Jews and Gentiles.”

The people of the church have been redeemed in order that we can become a special people to God, just as Israel is. In this act, and in the use of this term by Paul, many scholars unfortunately then make the jump in logic that this means that the Church has now replaced Israel, thus becoming “spiritual Israel.”

This is a category mistake, and it is gigantic error in theology. Just because we in the church have become a special people to God, it doesn’t mean that we have replaced God’s chosen people, Israel. We have simply joined *into* the commonwealth of blessing of which they already participate in.

Others will use Paul’s words to justify that there are two gospels, one for the Jews and one for the Gentiles – a heresy known as hyperdispensationalism. That is proven false by Paul’s words in verse 2:11 where he says, “the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.” There is one gospel for all.

However, to understand how the church did not replace the people Israel, we can make a simple example. The church was once predominantly Jewish. It later became predominantly Gentile. In this, we can think of two separate baskets of olives.

God chooses one basket and draws it out for Himself, Israel. He takes the fruit out of it as needed for His oil. At some point, however, the olives in the basket which are good are so few in number that He then draws out from another basket, Gentiles.

That basket has an immense supply of good fruit, so much so that it becomes the predominant fruit used for the oil. The oil running into the bottles is mixed with an almost insignificant amount of Jewish oil. However, that is still coming from the basket of Israel. The two baskets remain separate and distinct.

Now, over the many centuries, the basket of Gentile fruit is starting to wane. The number of good olives is rapidly diminishing, but the number of Israel fruit is on the increase. The categories have never changed, and one did not replace the other.

It simply has become the predominant source of oil for a period of time. It's not a perfect analogy, but one can see that each basket remained the same. One did not replace the other. Israel as a people is set apart unto the Lord. But only those of Israel who do what the Lord expects are of use by the Lord.

Someday, the set-apart people of Israel will, as a nation, come to Christ (a precept anticipated in the Mosaic Covenant) through the New Covenant, and they – as a nation – will be holy to the Lord.

Israel, as a people, was *selected* by the Lord as His own, and for His own good purposes. They, and no one else, were offered the Mosaic Covenant, and they accepted it. They are a physical group of people united to the Lord in this manner.

The church, as a people, is *received* by the Lord as His own, and for His own good purposes. All, without any exceptions, are offered the New Covenant. Those in the church are those who have accepted its offer. They are a spiritual group of people united to the Lord in this manner. As for Israel...

⁷The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people,

The word translated as “set His love” is *khashaq*. It comes from a word meaning “to cling to.” In the construction of the tabernacle, it was translated as “bands” which bound two things together. Here, it is as if the Lord bound Himself to Israel through an act of love. However, He didn't do it based on their size as a nation.

Many groups descended from Terah, Abraham's father – the people of Edom, Moab, Ammon, and Ishmael, for example. However, the line of promise from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob started slowly. For example, Ismael gave Abraham twelve grandsons. However, it wasn't until Jacob that there were twelve tribes, meaning Abraham's great grandsons.

And not only that, Isaac was sixty when he had Esau and Jacob. And Jacob was over 85 when he started having children. Despite the smaller numbers, God had chosen this line and had sovereignly watched over it, binding Himself to it, nurturing it, and loving it.

⁷ (con't) **for you were the least of all peoples;**

God upturns the thinking of man. We look to large numbers and see greatness. We expect that God would do the same. But where is the glory for Him in that? He called a small and insignificant group of people for Himself, and He brought them into a situation where they would greatly multiply.

However, in their multiplication, they were in bondage. And yet, the Lord brought them out, destroying a greater and mightier nation in the process. The glory belongs to the Lord. Such is true with every aspect of what the Lord does. He uses that which is considered less to glorify His greatness. The same thought transfers to those in the church. As Paul says –

“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*.²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;²⁸ and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence.³⁰ But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—³¹ that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.” 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

It must be understood what Paul's words are conveying. The calling of the Lord is what is responded to by the individual. It is generally those who are of low esteem who will humble themselves and admit they need a Savior. The call is made, but it is a call that is generally responded to by the lowly.

Israel's calling was active; the calling to the church is passive. But both are to what would otherwise seem unimpressive, lowly, etc. For Israel, it was not because of their size...

⁸ but because the LORD loves you,

ki me-ahavat Yehovah etkem – “Because for love Yehovah for you.” In Chapter 4, the Lord says it was because of love for their fathers –

“And because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them; and He brought you out of Egypt with His Presence, with His mighty power, ³⁸ driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land *as* an inheritance, as *it is* this day.”

-Deuteronomy 4:37, 38

In Chapter 9, Moses says it is not because of their righteousness, but because of the wickedness of the nations that the Lord was giving them Canaan. Further, he says that it is in order to fulfill His word to the fathers. He then ensures they understand this by calling them stiff-necked.

Understanding that the Lord's love for Israel is originally based on His love for the fathers, there is nothing intrinsically worthy of that love in them. Rather because of His nature – which is love – it is then directed to those of the covenant promises. As Moses says...

^{8 (con't)} and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers,

The Lord spoke an oath, and therefore He must perform. His very nature demands that His word will be fulfilled. Therefore, His word must come to pass. Because of this...

***^{8 (fin)} the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.**

The idea of these words, from both verses 7 and 8, is that the Lord bound Himself to this people in order to love them and in order to keep His oath. Both have a divine motive behind them. It's not that He loved Israel for who they were, but because of who He is.

We could say, “I'm not loving you for who you are, but for who you could be in relation to Me.” When the Lord saves a person, it is because He is love. The saving is in

anticipation of the relationship, not the other way around – because the relationship did not exist until the saving.

This is how it is with Israel. Because of who He is, He brought Israel out from the house of bondage. Because of who He is, He sent His Son to die for us. The love extends from God to us. Only when we rightly respond to that love does the relationship begin.

What we see in this final verse is Israel's selection and calling being equated directly to the individual believer. We are in sin. We are in bondage. And, we can do nothing to redeem ourselves. But more, we have no idea about the love of God. It is foreign to us.

Israel was brought out, and that act was to alert them to the fact that God is covenant-keeping, and that He is loving. They were to respond in kind because of that understanding.

We are told the message of Christ, that He has potentially redeemed us from our bondage. When we understand that God did that as an act of love, we are to respond, accepting what He has done, and thus making that redemption actual. It is the acceptance of the love of God that is found in Jesus Christ.

This is what this passage today tells us. God is sovereign over the process, be it in exterminating the inhabitants of Canaan, using Israel's failure to do so in unique and glorious ways – such as the saving of Rahab the harlot – or be it in the offer of Jesus for the sins of the world.

No person can question what God is doing. We can only accept that what He is doing is for the greatest good of all. If you don't believe that, then you have misunderstood the significance of the cross. Contemplate what God has done, and then accept it for what it is. And then, receive it by faith. The offer stands open for any and all who will reach out and receive it.

Closing Verse: *“Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. ¹⁹ We love Him because He first loved us.” 1 John 4:17-19*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 7:9-16 *That it is wonderful is beyond controversy...* (The Covenant and the Mercy) (27th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Because the Lord Loves You

“When the LORD your God
Brings you into the land (as He promised to do)
Which you go to possess
And has cast out many nations before you

The Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites
And the Canaanites and the Perizzites
And the Hivites and the Jebusites
Seven nations greater and mightier than you; a bunch of “ites”

And when the LORD your God
Delivers them over to you
You shall conquer them
And utterly destroy them, so you shall do

You shall make no covenant with them
Nor show mercy to them, not even one
Nor shall you make marriages with them
You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take
-----their daughter for your son

For they will turn your sons away from following Me
To serve other gods, so I tell you plainly
So the anger of the LORD will be aroused
Against you and destroy you suddenly

But thus you shall deal with them
You shall destroy their altars, and down their sacred pillars
-----you shall break
And cut down their wooden images
And burn their carved images with fire, for goodness sake

“For you are a holy people to the LORD your God
The LORD your God has chosen you with joy and mirth
To be a people for Himself
A special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth

The LORD did not set His love on you
Nor choose you because you were more
In number than any other people
For you were the least of all peoples, such is the score

But because the LORD loves you
And because He would keep the oath, please understand
Which He swore to your fathers
The LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand

And redeemed you from the house of bondage
-----out of his grasp, you He stripped
From the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 7:9-16 (The Covenant and the Mercy)

In our verses today, Moses refers to the covenant and the mercy that the Lord swore to Israel's fathers. When we read something like that, as we have seen in previous sermons, it isn't always easy to know what "fathers" are being referred to.

Scholars make their analyses, and each presents the case as to what he believes is being said. At times, one case seems as possible as another and a third just as likely as the first two. The same is true with what Moses says today. It can be confusing, because there are various ways that the term "fathers" can be defined.

Is it those who received the law? Is it the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Or, is it all of them or some other group? Sometimes deciding is made easier by later passages in the Bible, and sometimes they may muddy the waters to us even more. Not because the word is conflicted, but because we are.

This is especially true because we may come at the Bible with our own presuppositions. If so, we will refuse to see what is otherwise plain and obvious. I'm certainly as guilty of this as anyone else. There are certain things I believe about God, about His word, and about His relationships with various peoples at various times. Because of that, I'm sure that my judgment is – in one point or another – clouded. I would hope this isn't the case, but if it is, I wouldn't be able to identify it in myself very easily. None of us could.

Text Verse: *"Blessed is the Lord God of Israel,
For He has visited and redeemed His people,
⁶⁹ And has raised up a horn of salvation for us
In the house of His servant David,
⁷⁰ As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets,
Who have been since the world began,
⁷¹ That we should be saved from our enemies
And from the hand of all who hate us,
⁷² To perform the mercy promised to our fathers
And to remember His holy covenant,
⁷³ The oath which He swore to our father Abraham:
⁷⁴ To grant us that we,
Being delivered from the hand of our enemies,
Might serve Him without fear,
⁷⁵ In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life."* Luke 1:68-75

Did you see any similarities in those words to the sermon text we read a minute ago? If so, how are you going to analyze what is said in one passage in relation to what is said in the other?

Did the church replace Israel? Is there one covenant for Israel and another for the Gentiles? Why does one speak of a land grant and the other doesn't? Does the promise of land go hand in hand with the other promises to Israel? Can it be separated from them? Are the Gentiles included in any land grant?

On and on, we have to evaluate the word as best we can. We can't ignore any of it, but we have to consider it in relation to what the Lord intends. It's not always that easy, and one error in analysis can lead to many others. As always, what I have evaluated for you to consider today should be supplemented by your own study and consideration.

It's important because this is God's word. As such, it presents what He has done, intends to do, and to whom He intends to do it – at any given time. We all fit into the picture somewhere, but we don't fit into it everywhere. So, keeping things in their context is necessary.

In understanding the context, we can then determine what God will do for us and with us. Isn't that exciting? It's all to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

There is a chiastic structure to verses 9-12 that I plucked out of those verses the day this sermon got typed. So you are aware of it, here it is –

Deuteronomy 7:9-12 – The Covenant and the Mercy
A Promise and a Warning (08/31/2020)

- a. He *is* God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy
 - b. For a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments
 - c. And He repays those who hate Him to their face
 - x. He will not be slack with him who hates Him
 - c. He will repay him to his face
 - b. Therefore you shall keep the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments which I command you today, to observe them
- a. That the LORD your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy

With that in view...

I. Therefore You Shall Keep the Commandment (verses 9-11)

⁹“Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God,

v’yadata ki Yehovah elohekha hu ha’elohim – “And know for Yehovah your God, He, the God.” The words are emphatic, but the emphasis is left out of English translations. There is a definite article before the word God. In other words, Moses is stating unambiguously that not only is Yehovah Israel’s God, but He is THE GOD.

This is one of only five times in the book of Deuteronomy that the definite article is placed before the word Elohim, or God, in this exact manner. It was seen twice in Chapter 4, and it will be seen once in Chapter 10 and once in Chapter 33.

As Moses says He is THE GOD, and as simple logic tells us that there can be only one God – meaning in the sense of the Creator God and not a “lesser god” – then this One God is Yehovah. That this is evident is understood from the theological points known as the 12 First Principles. Points 7 and 8 state –

7. Only Necessary Being Can Cause a Contingent Being ($B^n \rightarrow B^c$). This is known as the Positive Principle of Modality. What it means is that there is a Being that cannot Not exist. He must exist. As we exist, and as we are certainly not necessary, but rather are created beings, then God must exist. The principle is reducible to the undeniable. Understanding this, we then turn to point 8 –

8. Necessary Being Cannot Cause A Necessary Being ($B^n > B^n$). This is known as the Negative Principle of Modality. Again, the principle is undeniable. Only one Necessary Being can exist. Any being which exists apart from a Necessary Being is contingent and could Not exist. It is self-evident. In other words, because a Necessary Being must exist (point 7), and because only He is necessary, then only He is God.

Without giving the logical explanation for it, this is what Moses is conveying to the people of Israel. His words simply proclaim it is true, and they ask us to logically consider them (as we have done), and to accept that if Yehovah is that Necessary Being, then He is THE GOD.

That thought brings in the obvious next thought. How do we tell “if Yehovah is that Necessary Being?” Can it be some other “god” that some culture or another follows?

How do we find out? The gravity of getting this wrong is such that only a fool would not want to be sure.

The answer is to be found in several logical steps. The first would be to contemplate all twelve of the First Principles. In understanding them, it is possible to weed out all of the false gods, and also the false presentations of the true God.

But that only eliminates, it doesn't confirm. And so, man next evaluates whatever has not been eliminated – which is the God of the Bible, Yehovah. We can know that all other gods are false, but that does not prove Yehovah is THE GOD.

In comparing Scripture with logic, we will find that nothing about the God of the Bible is contradictory to logic. From there, we can go further and see that not only is the God presented in the Bible supported by such logic, but He goes beyond it, telling what He will do before it comes to pass – meaning He gives us the prophetic word.

This prophetic word includes what God has done, is doing, and will do with a particular group of people – Israel. Thus, the God of the Bible not only reveals Himself as possibly being the true God, but He then confirms that possibility through His actions. One of those actions, which came through Israel, is the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

In that, nothing is contrary to the logical principles which have been set forth, it was spoken of in advance, and it is therefore a confirmation of who Yehovah is, and of the word He has given. When we place our faith in Jesus Christ, we have a sound and reasonable faith. And this continues to be true for Israel, even though Israel rejected Him. Why? Because Yehovah is...

⁹ (con't) **the faithful God**

ha'el ha'neeman – “the God, the faithful.” I said that *ha'elohim*, or “the God,” is seen just five times in Deuteronomy. I was referring to that exact expression. Here, there is – again – an article before *el*, or God. This is one of just two times this expression is used in Deuteronomy, once here, and once in Chapter 10.

Moses then qualifies that by saying, *ha'neeman*, or “the faithful.” The word signifies to confirm or support. In other words, God is faithful – confirming His words. They are to be trusted. In the case of Israel, what will be said in the coming words and verses indicates that Israel could, and indeed, will be cut off for disobedience.

But we find elsewhere that this is never permanent. God's covenant with them will stand, even in their breaking of it. He will never break His own side of it. For now, Moses continues describing THE GOD...

⁹ (con't) **who keeps covenant and mercy**

shomer ha'berit v'ha'khesed – “keeping the covenant and the loyal love.” It is tragic how out of 27 translations referred to for this sermon, only one included the definite articles – “the covenant and the mercy.” Moses is being especially careful to describe the actions of Yehovah and how they relate to Israel.

The use of the article before the verb “mercy” gives it the force of an adjective, showing that He is to be trusted because it is His very nature. He will keep the loyalty to His mercy faithfully.

⁹ (con't) **for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments;**

l'ohava u-l'shomere mitsvotav l'eleph dor – “to those who love Him and keep His commandments to thousandth generation.” This is similar to the second commandment found in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 –

“For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me, ¹⁰ but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.” Deuteronomy 5:9, 10

There is a difference in this verse though, which very few translations pick up on. The word “generations” is in the singular – “to thousandth generation.” It is as if Moses is looking ahead in time and anticipating the faithfulness of God, counting each generation and seeing that His lovingkindness is not missing toward even one of them. However...

¹⁰ **and He repays those who hate Him**

There are those who hate God, and then there are those who hate God. Some hate Him for whatever reason they think is justified. They may hate Him because He took away a beloved spouse or a child. They may hate Him because they lost a great fortune. They may hate Him because they were born crippled.

People find their own reasons that God is to be hated based on who they are, meaning that they feel they are deserving of better. Thus, their hatred of Him ultimately demonstrates that they believe it is they, and not He, who is the center of the universe.

Then, there are those who hate God not explicitly, but implicitly. They may say, “Yes, I just love God. He and I are in tight.” But it is a lie because they don’t obey His precepts, whatever they may be, demonstrating that they have no love for Him.

If one has no love for God, they – by default – hate God. There are not the usual gradations of love and hate that we may express towards a person we can see, touch, and so on. This doesn’t mean, however, that someone who exactly fulfills God’s law loves Him, nor does it mean that someone who fails to exactly fulfill God’s law hates Him.

David failed to fulfill the law, and yet his love of God is revealed throughout his life, his actions, his writings, and so on. And the Lord’s love for him is seen as well.

The Pharisees and Sadducees meticulously kept the law, and yet they had no love for God. And, the words of Jesus, who is God, shows that the Lord had no love for them as well.

Because of these things, the words of this passage need to be considered in their proper context, which is a heart relationship towards the Lord and a heart attitude towards His law. When the hatred toward God is seen, either actively or implicitly, he will repay them...

¹⁰ (con’t) **to their face, to destroy them.**

It is debated what *el panav*, or “to their face,” means. Some views are “openly and publicly,” or “at once,” or “in their lifetime.” But it is evident that many who hate the Lord, whether explicitly or implicitly, lived long, trouble-free lives. Job speaks about that.

What Moses is surely conveying is that man will be judged, and he will personally know that his judgment is from God, regardless of the day it comes. This is certain because Moses next says...

¹⁰ (con’t) **He will not be slack with him who hates Him;**

These words make it sound like the earlier option of the Lord's judgment coming "at once" is the most likely. However, the alacrity of the Lord is not conditioned on our expectations, but His foreknowledge, wisdom, and purpose. Peter makes this evident –

"But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

-2 Peter 3:8, 9

We may look at the promise of the Lord to repay an offense to someone's face as only fulfilled if it comes in his life. But that is because we want justice in that manner. But to God, that is unnecessary. It is He who will judge, and He will do so in a manner which is the most perfectly executed.

And how good that is for many of us who openly rebelled against God for much of our lives! And yet, that open rebellion was met with the judgment of grace and mercy. It is judgment, nonetheless, but it was judgment brought down upon His Son in our place.

Can anyone say that the Apostle Paul had his hatred of the Lord repaid in the way we expected from our reading of Deuteronomy 7? Probably not. Despite his zeal for the law (which he admits in both Acts and Philippians), it cannot be said that he loved the Lord, because the law foretold of the coming of Christ.

It told what He would be like, what He would do, how He would do it, and so on. And yet, Paul rejected the obvious when Christ came. In rejecting Christ, he demonstrated hatred toward the Lord. The repayment of that, at least for Paul, was one of the most incredible displays of "before your face" that anyone could ever imagine –

"Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

⁵ And he said, "Who are You, Lord?"

Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It *is* hard for you to kick against the goads."

⁶ So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?"

Then the Lord *said* to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." Acts" 9:4-6

How the Lord handles His affairs is solely up to the Lord. How He repays any given person is also solely up to Him. As Paul says elsewhere, “But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God?”

The Lord will have mercy on whom He has mercy, but that mercy is still in the form of a judgment. No infraction against Him will be treated otherwise. But the mercy on those who received it is taken out as judgment on Another who did not. Either way...

10 (con't) He will repay him to his face.

No person's hatred of God will go unpunished. It may appear that way when we see the wicked and corrupt continuously getting away with their actions, but they are actually only heaping up greater guilt for the day of their judgment, whenever it will be, and in whatever manner He determines for it to come about.

For those who truly wish to please the Lord and not see judgment either in themselves or in a Substitute, Moses implores the people (Oh, thank heaven, it's)...

11 Therefore you shall keep the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments

The NKJV gets it right this time. The word “commandment” is singular, not plural. The words “statutes” and “judgments” are plural. They are also prefixed by definite articles. There is the duty of the law, meaning the commandment, and then there are the statutes and the judgments which define that law, and which comprise it.

Moses is giving the law with its many details in anticipation of the people hearing and responding. As he next says...

11 (con't) which I command you today, to observe them.

These words show, quite clearly, that hating the Lord can be either active or passive. In failing to observe the commands, it demonstrates a hatred toward the Lord. But again, and as we already saw, this is not to be taken in the absolute sense, nor is it necessarily to be taken in the reciprocal either.

Just because someone observes the law, it doesn't mean they love the Lord. It may be a self-love looking for the approval of others. And just because someone fails to observe the law perfectly, it does not mean that his heart does not love the Lord. In both, the

attitude of the heart is considered. This is true throughout the rest of the Bible. For example, from Isaiah –

“To what purpose *is* the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?”

Says the LORD.

“I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams

And the fat of fed cattle.

I do not delight in the blood of bulls,

Or of lambs or goats.

¹² “When you come to appear before Me,

Who has required this from your hand,

To trample My courts?” Isaiah 1:11, 12

The answer is that the Lord required them in the law, but He did so in the context of what we are looking at today – faithful observance, not rote observance. Isaiah goes on to speak of the feasts, the Sabbaths, the assemblies – all being repulsive to the Lord because the people’s hands were tainted with blood and their lives were filled with evildoings.

*The Lord your God, He is the God
He is ever faithful and true
Of His great deeds we shall forever applaud
When He at last all things makes new*

*He keeps the covenant and the mercy
He shall never forget those who trust in Him
Let there be no controversy
Because of the Lord, the devil is done in*

*No longer does Satan have the power
To tear God’s people away from Him
Christ is our protection and our high tower
Because of Christ our Lord, the devil is done in*

II. Which He Swore to Your Fathers (verses 12-16)

¹² **“Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them,**

v'hayah egev tishmeun – “And it shall be, following after, you listen.” It is a somewhat rare word, *egev*. In Deuteronomy, it will only be seen here and in the next chapter. It speaks of consequence and so “because” is fine. But the word’s etymology will help understand what is being conveyed.

It comes from the verb *aqav*, meaning the hind part, or following after. That comes from the noun *aqev*, meaning the heel, or a footprint. At times, such as in Psalm 19, it is translated as a “reward.” What Moses is conveying is that one thing will be the consequence of the other. Just as there is anticipated repayment for those who hate Him, there is expected reward for those who heed, demonstrating that they love Him.

Moses gives the commandment and the statutes and the judgments. From there, the people listen (meaning hearken) to these judgments, and then they keep and do them –

You (all – it is plural) listen
And you (all – it is plural) keep and do
Then, in the footprints of that action...

^{12 (con’t)} **that the LORD your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers.**

The words revert from the plural to the singular – the Lord your (singular) God will keep with you (singular) the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your (singular) fathers.

The wording, going from the plural to the singular, is precise and beautiful. Israel can expect the reward, but they cannot expect it if the people pursue the word willy nilly. “This group does, and this group doesn’t, but who cares?”

The people (all of them) must listen, keep, and do. In this, the people (Israel) will receive the blessing. One can see the rejection of Jesus as an example. Some of Israel received Him. But the people (all of them) did not. The blessing for corporate Israel was not received.

That is why it repeats the same phrase as in verse 9, but which is translated correctly by the NKJV this time: *ha’berit v’eth ha’khesed* – “the covenant and the mercy.” It is this which Moses says, “which He swore to your fathers.” This then is ultimately speaking of the covenant of Messiah, and the loyal love which stems from Him.

This was never truly realized in Israel, and the blessings they received –as seen in Scripture – were only shadowy reflections of what was promised, and which will ultimately come to pass at some future point when they acknowledge Christ as Lord.

We can be absolutely certain this is correct because it is exactly what Zacharias prophesied by the Holy Spirit in our text verse today, and which reverts all the way back to Abraham. This is not merely speaking of the Mosaic Covenant, but the fulfillment of it in Christ, and thus the promised blessing to all peoples which was made to Abraham.

Israel will receive that someday because Moses is speaking not to the Gentile world, but to Israel alone. In the Song of Moses of Chapter 32, however, Moses says, “Rejoice O Gentiles *with* His people.”

One could argue that is only speaking of the Gentiles because the word “with” is inserted. But Paul repeats that in Romans 15:10, and he clearly indicates that “with” is to be understood in Deuteronomy. Moses next says what this reaction of the Lord will be...

¹³ And He will love you and bless you and multiply you;

The “love” follows on from the promise to Abraham –

“By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only *son*— ¹⁷ blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which *is* on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.” Genesis 22:16, 17

Israel would receive the promise of Abraham, because it was ordained to be so. The inclusion of “love” here signifies that they are obedient to the words of Moses and accepting of the promise based on that. In other words, the love will be displayed when they receive the One whom the commandment anticipates. Until then, the love is imperfect and conditional. At some point, it will be a complete and fully realized love.

¹³ (con’t) He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land,

The two are necessarily stated together to show blessing upon blessing. In impoverished nations, the rate of babies being born normally doesn’t decrease. However, without the fruit of the land, it becomes a double curse, rather than a blessing. And so, to mention

the fruit of the land implies anticipated health to the fruit of the womb. The fruit of the land is then further explained as...

13 (con't) your grain and your new wine and your oil,

Here, Moses promises blessing upon the *dagan* or “grain.” That comes from *dagah*, meaning to multiply or increase. Also, the *tirosh*, or “new wine,” which comes from *yarash*, meaning to take possession of or inherit. Thus, it is fresh, unfermented, wine. And also, the *yitshar*, or “fresh oil.” That is from *tsohar*, or midday. Thus, it is as if oil that produces light.

13 (con't) the increase of your cattle

The word translated as “increase,” is *sheger*. It is only seen in Exodus 13 and four times in Deuteronomy. It signifies offspring of beasts. The word translated as “cattle” comes from a root signifying “to learn.” Thus, Moses is referring to animals which are tamed and yoked, learning to be obedient to the master.

13 (con't) and the offspring of your flock,

Here, the word “offspring,” *ashtaroth*, is a rare plural word. It is introduced here, and it will only be seen three more times in Deuteronomy. It comes from a root signifying to either be or become rich. Thus, in their multiplication, one amasses wealth.

These blessings are promised to the people, but more, they are promised to be...

13 (con't) in the land of which He swore to your fathers to give you.

This is the greatest of all of the promises, even though it simply appears tacked onto the end as if an afterthought. The land promise is what makes the rest of the blessings possible, and that land promise is only possible if the people are living in accord with the Lord as Moses puts forth in this passage.

At times, the people lived in the land while suffering under deprivation, hostility from their enemies, and so on. At other times, the people were exiled from the land. In this, they were cut off from all but the most basic covenant promises – that of being kept as a people.

However, while in the land, they could – if they were obedient to the word in a proper, heart-directed way – experience these promised blessings of the Lord.

Understanding this, we again see that the exile of Israel, and all of the woes that have come upon them, are because they failed to heed the word. If the Lord is God, and indeed He is, then their failure to receive Christ as their Messiah is what brought all of the calamity upon them.

The Mosaic covenant is incomplete without the coming of Christ, and in His coming, it is fulfilled in Him. Thus, all of these promises are denied to Israel in their fullest sense until they realize this and call out to Him. When they do...

¹⁴ You shall be blessed above all peoples;

As has been noted, at times, these promises came upon Israel in a limited way, and for a limited time. During the reign of Solomon, this was as close to being realized as at any other time in Scripture. But it was still an imperfect blessing even then. Solomon departed from the Lord, and trouble ensued.

One could argue then, that this is only a hopeful anticipation which is never fully realized. This is especially so because in the coming of Christ, the people of the church are on an equal status with the Jews, all being one in Christ.

However, that is not what this is referring to. It is referring to the status of Israel among all peoples. That is not a promise which is set aside in the coming of Christ and their acceptance of Him. Rather, it is the fulfillment of this promise now.

The countless promises of the messianic blessings upon the people of the land of Israel have never been fulfilled. But they will come to pass. Israel being above all peoples in this capacity is seen again and again in Scripture. One obvious example is found in Zechariah 14 –

“And it shall come to pass *that* everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. ¹⁷ And it shall be *that* whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. ¹⁸ If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they *shall have no rain*; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of

Tabernacles. ¹⁹ This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.”

-Zechariah 14:16-19

The promises have come to pass during Israel’s infrequent times of obedience, but they shall come to pass – in their fulness – in Israel’s acknowledgment of the Lord Jesus. And, Moses next says...

¹⁴ (con’t) **there shall not be a male or female barren among you or among your livestock.**

Again, as with verse 13, Moses promises that the blessing of (or toward) the womb will be assured. This will be upon both males and females, and upon both man and beast. Here, the word is *aqar*. It signifies being barren, and it is almost always referring to the barren womb of a woman. However, in the case of a man, it signifies being sterile. The words of this verse follow after the earlier promise made in Exodus 23 –

“No one shall suffer miscarriage or be barren in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days.” Exodus 23:26

Throughout the Bible, the ability to procreate is considered a blessing, and to not be able to is considered exactly the opposite. It was a cause of shame. Moses promises that this will never be the case to the people who are faithfully obedient to the commandment of the Lord. Further...

¹⁵ **And the LORD will take away from you all sickness,**

Here is another new word, *kholi*, or sickness. It signifies any malady, anxiety, disease, or even grief that a person may experience. It is used when speaking of Christ and of the people of Christ in Isaiah 53 –

“He is despised and rejected by men,
A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him;
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.
⁴ Surely He has borne our griefs
And carried our sorrows;
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten by God, and afflicted.” Isaiah 53:3, 4

It certainly can't be said that there was any time in all of Israel's history that this could be considered as truly fulfilled. And yet, the words of Moses say that such a state is anticipated in rightful obedience to the law. But, because this state was not realized before Christ's coming, as is clearly evidenced from Isaiah 53, and because it says that Christ bore our griefs, then it again shows where the disconnect for Israel stands – in their rejection of Christ.

Such an ideal time is promised in the writings of the prophets when Christ dwells among Israel for one thousand years. However, the final realization of this is actually stated towards the end of Revelation –

“And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” Revelation 21:4

This is the ultimate point of Christ's coming. It isn't just an earthly reign of Christ among Israel, but an eternal heavenly reign of Christ among all of the redeemed from all of humanity. For now, Moses says...

^{15 (con't)} **and will afflict you with none of the terrible diseases of Egypt which you have known,**

Here is another new word, *madveh*, or disease. It will only be seen here and in Deuteronomy 28. The word comes from *davah*, which is used in Leviticus 12:2 to signify a state of uncleanness which defiles a woman. Thus, one can assume the diseases mentioned here are such that a person would become defiled.

The term, “the diseases of Egypt,” is specifically mentioned as such three times in the Bible. The first was in Exodus 15 where it used a different word, *makhaleh* –

“If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the **diseases** on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I *am* the LORD who heals you.” Exodus 15:26

This now is the second time the diseases of Egypt are mentioned, using this new word instead. The Lord promises to withhold such diseases from the people in their faithful compliance to the commands now given. What is possible, is that the sanitary laws

found within the law would, ostensibly, prevent these. In not obeying the law, this would be the inevitable result of their disobedience.

Whether this is correct or not, the people had known these diseases, and Moses promises that they will know them no more if they are faithfully obedient. Instead...

¹⁵ (con't) **but will lay *them* on all those who hate you.**

Those who hate the Jews would also naturally hate the practices of the Jews. As this is so, then the diseases prevented by adherence to the law would naturally cling to them. Thus, this does not necessarily mean the Lord actively places them on their enemies, but it occurs because of their own rebellion against what is contained within the law itself.

This is, obviously, conjecture. But the many washings and inspections for skin ailments, molds, and the like – as well as the laws for sexual morality – does point to a cleanly society, and this would only be the case through obedience to what the law prescribed for such things.

And, as I said, there is one more specific reference to the diseases of Egypt. It uses the same word as here, and it is also found in Deuteronomy 28 –

“If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, THE LORD YOUR GOD, ⁵⁹ then the LORD will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues—great and prolonged plagues—and serious and prolonged sicknesses. ⁶⁰ Moreover He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you.” Deuteronomy 28:58-60

In adherence to the law, these diseases would be kept from them. In failing to observe the law, the diseases would cling to them. One can hardly think that anything but the meticulous care of the hygiene and sexually moral verses of Leviticus being adhered to, or not adhered to, would bring about the stated result of the words of Moses.

As those laws would be shunned by the inhabitants of the land, it is another reason for what Moses next says...

¹⁶ **Also you shall destroy all the peoples whom the LORD your God delivers over to you;**

v'akalta eth kal ha'amim – “And you shall eat up all the peoples.” Moses was probably thinking of the disaster of their first time at the door of Canaan. When the twelve spies were sent to inspect the land, upon their return a bad report was sent among the congregation so that they began to rebel. At that time, Joshua and Caleb called out –

“The land we passed through to spy out *is* an exceedingly good land. ⁸ If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, ‘a land which flows with milk and honey.’ ⁹ Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land, for they *are* our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the LORD *is* with us. Do not fear them.” Numbers 14:7-9

They called the inhabitants “their bread.” Here Moses says that the people are to eat up the inhabitants. Thus, it means to utterly consume them, like bread. In this, he says...

¹⁶ (con't) **your eye shall have no pity on them;**

This takes us back to verse 2 where it said, “and when the Lord your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them *and* utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.” The reasons for this are many, but one of them must be tied to the last verse.

In being unclean, they would bring their unclean habits among Israel. The very diseases the Lord was to keep them from would infect them. This would be because their own morals would become slack, their own adherence to the law would wane, and so on. Another obvious reason completes our words today...

^{*16} (fin) **nor shall you serve their gods, for that *will be* a snare to you.**

In allowing the inhabitants to live, an inevitable result would be departing from the Lord and serving other gods. It had already happened more than once outside the land. Once they were happily settled into the land, it would be sure to come about, just as the rest of the Old Testament testifies to.

In this, there would be sin heaped upon sin. The people would first disobey the command to consume the inhabitants, and then they would resultingly start to serve their gods. One step would lead naturally to another, because sin is – as it notes – a *moqesh*, or snare.

That word comes from *yaqosh*, meaning to lure or lay bait. In other words, the people would actually be baiting themselves into sin by committing the first sin of failing to do as instructed. There is never a time that sin doesn't affect more than just the initial act. It will always spread beyond itself in some way or another.

The best way to understand that is to simply look at what occurred in Eden. The bait was laid, the trap was set, and man sinned. But that one sin didn't just have one negative effect. Rather, through that one sin, every single evil thing that we have ever faced – in all of human existence – arose.

This is how sin works. And the tool by which it has its hold on us is the law. Not that the law is bad, but that the law allows for sin to take place. Our own evil desires trap us, we disobey the law, and sin is the result.

This is why Jesus is so very important for us. The law was given, the law was violated, and sin entered the picture. But with the entrance of that sin came death, and that death has transmitted to all people. As we continue to see, week after week, the Law of Moses does not solve that problem, it only magnifies it – it is like a mirror reflecting back on us all of our defects.

But in Christ, the law reflects back only the purity of God's perfection. Without sin, the law highlights His perfect goodness. It radiates it out like a beacon for us to come and participate in it. And so, what do we do? We come to Christ and His perfection covers us.

When we are in Christ, we can look at the mirror and only see His perfection, and that is what God sees as well. The law, this giant and impossible body of writings, can no longer condemn us because we are imputed His righteousness. That is the sweetest deal of all. Now, when we look at the law, we can see the greatness of what God has done.

Israel will too, someday. For now, we are continuing on through this book, seeing where they failed and thus, honestly, seeing where we too fail. Let us remember this and let us come to Christ and participate in the ultimate victory of God's people. May it be so for you, and may it be today. Amen.

Closing Verse: *“For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, ³ if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. ⁴ For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. ⁵ Now He*

who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.” 2 Corinthians 5:2-5

Next Week: Deuteronomy 7:17-26 *What is it by which we are most awed?* (The Great and Awesome God) (28th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Covenant and the Mercy

“Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God
The faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy always
For a thousand generations with those who love Him
And keep His commandments all their days

And He repays those who hate Him to their face
To destroy them, so to you I say
He will not be slack with him who hates Him
He will him to his face repay

Therefore you shall keep the commandment
The statutes, and the judgments, to them you shall be true
Which I command you today
To observe them, just as I am instructing you

“Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments
And keep and do them; to you they are no bore
That the LORD your God will keep with you
The covenant and the mercy which He to your fathers swore

And He will love you and bless you and multiply you
He will also the fruit of your womb bless
And the fruit of your land
Your grain and your new wine and your oil from the press

The increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flock, it is true

In the land of which He swore to your fathers to give you

You shall be blessed above all peoples
The Lord's special flock
There shall not be a male or female barren
Among you or among your livestock

And the LORD will take away from you all sickness
And will afflict you with none (this word is true)
Of the terrible diseases of Egypt which you have known
But will lay them on all those who hate you

Also you shall destroy all the peoples
Whom the LORD your God delivers over to you, so you shall do
Your eye shall have no pity on them
Nor shall you serve their gods, for that will be a snare to you

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 7:17-26 **(The Great and Awesome God)**

There is a lot of repetition in our ten verses today from verses going all the way back to Exodus. And much of what is said here will also be connected to a lot of what is coming in the time of the law. The Lord carefully weaves His word together in this way so that we will have a better grounding on what we might have misunderstood elsewhere.

In other words, we may have come to some thought or word that was difficult – maybe because it was new or rare. In that, people could debate if what the Lord said is really the way we are interpreting it.

But when the Lord restates things in various ways, and in adding in complementary thoughts to items he is repeating, we can be much surer of being accurate, if we are willing to look through the entire picture.

Unfortunately, that is a lot of laborious, tedious, and mentally taxing work. It is something that few ever do. Because of this, we have all kinds of incorrect interpretations about how things work or what things mean. This is also why it is such a treasure for me personally to preach to the people who attend the Superior Word, or who watch the videos later.

Although it doesn't need to be said, simply by looking at the numbers one can tell that each of you is a rare breed. Sermons are intended to be an analysis of God's word, but they often are not. And even if they are, they don't contain as much detail as you all find rewarding. So, my hat is off to you.

As you know, we have been in the five books of Moses now since 1837, or somewhere around then. And we are steadily plugging through them. Some find no value in the law at all. Others find it too convicting. For whatever reason, people find other things to do than pursue what is stated in the books of Moses.

However, they serve many great purposes, as we have seen over the past years. For the law itself, in Galatians, Paul gives us a couple of the many good reasons why we should know it.

Text Verse: *“What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.”²⁰ Now a mediator does*

not mediate for one only, but God is one.

²¹ Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. ²² But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. ²³ But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.” Galatians 3:19-25

Paul says the law was added because of transgressions. That actually makes it a kind of downer if that is all there is. But it's not. He also tells us that the law is our tutor to bring us to Christ. When he said that, he was writing to the Galatians – a Gentile church that was never under the law. And yet, he used the word “our.”

The instruction is for everyone, if we will just pay heed. In knowing the law, and its many, many limitations, we can then more fully understand and appreciate the grace found in Jesus Christ. Yes, Paul makes sure he tells us that we are no longer under a tutor, meaning the law, but how sad it is that many reject that premise.

In truly knowing the law, we can then truly be appreciative of what the grace of God in Jesus Christ means. We'll see some of that in relation to our conscience. What is impossible under the law because of conscience, is allowable under grace because of the same thing.

We needed this tutor to understand that. It is one of many wonderful truths we will see today, truths that are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. You Shall Not Be Terrified of Them (verses 17-21)

¹⁷ “If you should say in your heart,

The verses today begin with an idiom, *ki tomar bilvavekha* – “If you should say in your heart.” In the Bible, the heart is not the seat of emotions as it is with us. Rather, it is the seat of reasoning. One considers a matter and reasons it out.

This is a personal, inward reflection. However, the words here, like those of the previous verse which ended us last week, are in the singular. It is the heart of the entire nation which is reflecting on a matter and considering it. And that matter is...

17 (con't) **‘These nations are greater than I;**

The entire nation’s heart is questioned. “We are Israel, and what we are to face in these many peoples is a sum that is far larger and more powerful than we are.” The reasoning is made, and therefore the obvious question is next asked...

17 (con't) **how can I dispossess them?’—**

The nations we face are greater, they are larger, they are more powerful, they dwell in fortified cities, they have supplies and weapons, they know the land, and so on. The reasoning out of the matter causes Israel to question. It is the prudent thing to do under normal circumstances. Even Jesus spoke of this –

“Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³² Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace.” Luke 14:31, 32

This is what is normally expected. Battle means death, possible defeat, and thus subjugation and possibly more death. However, in the case of Israel as they consider their entrance into, and subduing of, Canaan the Lord next says...

18 **you shall not be afraid of them,**

lo tira mehem – “No you shall be afraid of them.” What Israel sees, and what Israel considers of their own size, state, and abilities in relation to their foes is not even to be considered. Rather, they are to exhibit full confidence in their situation. It is a reminder that has often been repeated already, such as –

“Look, the LORD your God has set the land before you; go up *and* possess *it*, as the LORD God of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged.”

-Deuteronomy 1:21

This state of confidence, however, is not based upon who they are in relation to the enemy, but in relation to who their God is...

18 (con't) **but you shall remember well**

zakor tizkor – remembering, you shall remember. The repetition of the word is given as a way of saying, “You shall continuously call to mind the matter.” Israel was to never forget what had transpired in their past so that they would always be prepared for their future.

18 (con't) **what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt:**

Again, the words are reflective of often-repeated earlier words –

“The LORD your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you, according to all He did for you in Egypt before your eyes.” Deuteronomy 1:30

Israel was a nation of slaves, held in bondage, and unable to free themselves. And yet, in this state, they were brought out from that by the Lord. Pharaoh’s rule over them ended, Egypt was destroyed as a military power, and Israel was freed – all without their own effort.

As this was so while in slavery, then it was a note of surety that the Lord had intentions for them that made it certain they would endure and prevail in whatever else He directed them to do. Whatever was set before them, as long as it was ordained by Him, could not fail.

Likewise, whatever they chose to do that was not authorized by Him was sure to fail. Moses will not touch on this now, but it is a certain truth that should be called to mind. It is reflected in what was said in Numbers, and as was repeated in Deuteronomy 1 –

“Then you answered and said to me, ‘We have sinned against the LORD; we will go up and fight, just as the LORD our God commanded us.’ And when everyone of you had girded on his weapons of war, you were ready to go up into the mountain.⁴² “And the LORD said to me, ‘Tell them, “Do not go up nor fight, for I *am* not among you; lest you be defeated before your enemies.’⁴³ So I spoke to you; yet you would not listen, but rebelled against the command of the LORD, and presumptuously went up into the mountain.⁴⁴ And the Amorites who dwelt in that mountain came out against you and chased you as bees do, and drove you back from Seir to Hormah.⁴⁵ Then you returned and wept before the LORD, but the LORD would not listen to your voice nor give ear to you.”

-Deuteronomy 1:41-45

Israel's actions are to be conducted solely by how the Lord directs them. In telling them to go, they are to go, and they will prevail. In telling them to stand fast, if they disobeyed that, they would fail. All of this is taken from the view of what occurred in Egypt.

It is the lesson of being released from the bondage of Egypt that was to be the preeminent reminder of their future conduct at all times. As Moses next says...

¹⁹ the great trials which your eyes saw,

ha'masoth ha'gedoloth asher rau enekha – “the trials, the greats, which saw your eyes.” Moses will now focus on events that actually occurred. Israel was in a foreign land, they were unable to free themselves, no other group or people defeated Egypt, and yet they were freed. It was solely by the divine workings of the Lord that it came about.

Here Moses begins a list of five descriptors concerning this magnificent event. The first is *ha'masoth ha'gedoloth*, or the trials, the greats. *Masah* is a word derived from the verb *nasah* which signifies “to try.”

This is probably speaking of the trials the people faced before Moses' arrival. Israel was in hard bondage, they were afflicted, and they were tested. In this state, Exodus 2 says –

“Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage. ²⁴ So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. ²⁵ And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged *them*.” Exodus 2:23-25

It is obvious that they could not free themselves. They were in anguish and cried out because of it. From there, the Lord heard and responded. Moses next tells them how. Israel also saw...

¹⁹ (con't) the signs

v'ha'othoth – “and the signs.” *Othoth*, or signs, are things given to represent something else. The Lord gave Moses three signs to give to Israel – the rod which turned into a snake, the leprous hand, and the water which turned to blood. He also gave signs to Pharaoh concerning what would come upon them as the Lord accomplished His work. Next...

19 (con't) and the wonders,

v'ha'mophetim – “and the wonders.” *Mopheth*, or wonder, comes from *yaphah*, or beautiful. Therefore, they speak of that which is conspicuous and amazing. This word then refers to the plagues that came upon the land.

But equally wondrous is the fact that Israel was spared at the same time. While Egypt was destroyed, Israel survived through the plagues. Each such occurrence was a wonder in itself. Next...

19 (con't) the mighty hand

v'ha'yad ha'khazaqah – “and the hand, the mighty.” The hand is what accomplishes things. Moses is saying that it was by the strength of the Lord’s hand – His power which is mighty – that these things came about and how they were displayed. And more...

19 (con't) and the outstretched arm,

v'ha'zeroa ha'netuyah – “and the arm outstretched.” The *zeroa*, or arm, comes from the word *zara*, meaning “to sow” or “scatter seed.” One can see the arm extending as it does. In this, you can think of the Lord reaching out over all of Egypt.

Nothing was hidden from His reach to destroy, and nothing was left as an obstacle before Israel once His arm had cleared the way. As it next says...

19 (con't) by which the LORD your God brought you out.

asher hotsiakha Yehovah elohekha – “which brought you out Yehovah your God.” It is speaking of all five of the descriptors mentioned in this verse. Together, the Lord combined them into one awesome display of His ability and capability to accomplish the feat of bringing Israel out from under the huge weight and burden of Egyptian bondage.

It cannot go without reminder at this point that the Lord, bringing Israel out of Egypt, is a direct analogy to Him bringing each person out of their bondage to sin. We have to constantly remind ourselves of this as we progress through Deuteronomy.

Israel was in physical bondage; we were in spiritual bondage. The Lord accomplished the great trials, signs, and wonders, and He did it by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. It was by His power and His clearing the way for us that this was made possible.

In this passage, Moses is asking His people to not fear the enemies that they will face. Likewise, in Christ, we are to not fear the enemies we face, even and up to our greatest enemy, death. As Paul says –

“So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’

⁵⁵ ‘O Death, where *is* your sting?

O Hades, where *is* your victory?’

⁵⁶ The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks *be* to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

-1 Corinthians 15:54-58

The Bible, for example in Ephesians 6, says that we are in a battle against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. What we are seeing in Israel being admonished to not fear the enemy because the Lord has already proven Himself to them, we are likewise to see concerning not fearing our enemies because the Lord has already proven Himself to us. The battle, and the victory, belong to the Lord. As Moses next says...

¹⁹ (con’t) **So shall the LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid.**

In verse 18, Moses said, “you shall not be afraid,” using the verb *yare* – “be afraid.” Here it says, “the peoples of whom you are afraid,” using the adjective *yare* – “fearful.” This is just how we are as well.

We are fearful of sickness. We are fearful of wicked people. We are fearful of death. But we are told to not be afraid of them. As the Lord has done to sickness, the wicked, and death at the cross, so He will do for us when the time for Him to bring us across into the promise arrives.

It is certain that soldiers of Israel died in battle, but Israel survived. We may “die” in our battle, but we shall also survive. Where the enemy is seen to get the upper hand in humanity, it is only a temporary thing for the redeemed of the Lord.

²⁰ **Moreover the LORD your God will send the hornet among them**

Here, the *tsirah*, or hornet, is mentioned for the second of three times in the Bible. The verb comes from *tsara* which means to be leprous. Also, it is a singular noun with an article in front of it – “the hornet.” Thus, the language is to be taken metaphorically, although some scholars demand a literal interpretation.

However, similar terminology is used concerning bees in Deuteronomy 1:44 and Psalm 118:12. There, they are equated with one’s enemies, not literal insects. Secondly, Joshua says that this was fulfilled in the case of the Amorites in Joshua 24:12 –

“I sent the hornet before you which drove them out from before you, *also* the two kings of the Amorites, *but* not with your sword or with your bow.”

There it said it was the hornet that drove out the two kings of the Amorites. And yet, Moses, speaking of the same battle, shows that it was, in fact, Israel who defeated them–

“And at that time we took the land from the hand of the two kings of the Amorites who *were* on this side of the Jordan, from the River Arnon to Mount Hermon...” Deuteronomy 3:8

This was repeated in Deuteronomy 4:47 and it was referring to the kings Sihon and Og. My take on it is that this is referring to a connection between the hornet and its associated word meaning leprosy.

The Lord promised health and long life to Israel if they held to His laws. As they were going into a land defiled by those things which are opposed to a healthy lifestyle, the enemy had been, or would be, afflicted with disease to the point where they were incapable of standing up to Israel’s armies.

Thus, “the hornet” is a metaphor for God’s judgment of sickness upon them, preparing them for destruction by Israel. The Bible records that Israel actually faced these foes in battle, and so, it is a reasonable explanation for the term “the hornet” which is said to have gone before them.

²⁰ (con’t) **until those who are left, who hide themselves from you, are destroyed.**

ad avod hanisharim v’ha’nistarim – “Until destroyed the remainers and the hiders from you.” It shows that the words “the hornet” are to be taken figuratively. Indiscriminate killing of people around the land of Israel by hornets is far less likely than the effects of

being in hiding from the forces of Israel turning into deprivation, disease, and physical bodily ailments.

The same types of effects are noted upon the people of Israel during their own times of siege from the enemies who came against them. The overall evidence pretty clearly shows that the words “the hornet” are speaking of the effects upon the people as a result of the destruction of them and their cities by Israel, as the Lord led them. This is again noted by Moses’ next words...

²¹ You shall not be terrified of them;

lo taarots mipenekhem – “No you shall be terrified from their faces.” This isn’t simply speaking of their mean countenances, but of their numbers. Moses is still speaking to Israel in the singular and as a collective body. But he refers to the enemy in the plural. It is a way of saying, “It may be one against many, but do not be terrified.” This is because...

^{21 (con’t)} for the LORD your God, the great and awesome God, is among you.

Ki Yehovah elohekha b’qirbekha el gadol v’nora – “For Yehovah your God, in your midst – God great and *to be* feared.” It is an adjective and then a verb which are used to describe the Lord. Moses reminds them that He is in the midst of Israel, ever-present with them. It is a note of absolute assurance that He can be relied upon in the battle.

I would personally take these words as a warning to Israel though. In verse 18, they were told not to fear using the verb *yare*. Here, it says that the Lord is feared, using the same word. One must choose who he will fear.

This is especially so because the final two verses of the chapter indicate that the Lord is watching the actions of Israel at the same time that He is actively working for Israel in the destruction of their enemies.

As long as Israel fears the Lord, they will not fall under the judgment of the Lord. But when they turn to the images and idols of the people they are instructed to destroy, they are no longer showing a fear for the One who is to be feared. Israel cannot have it both ways, nor can we.

As long as we fear the consequences of our actions, we will not conduct ourselves in negative ways. But when one fears a negative outcome, he will remain vigilant to ensure

that doesn't come about. The same God who ruled over Israel, and who continues to do so today, is the same God we are each accountable to for our own actions. As for Israel entering Canaan, Moses continues...

*With a mighty hand and an outstretched arm
The Lord brought you out of Egypt the land
Through it all, you suffered no harm
And now at Canaan's door you stand*

*Do not fear what the inhabitants can do
The Lord has shown you His greatness already
He will remain constant and faithfully true
So do not fear; rather, remain sure and steady*

*Do not fear and do not be afraid
The great and awesome God is among you
Do not be so easily swayed
The Lord our God is faithful and true*

II. An Accursed Thing (verses 22-26)

22 And the LORD your God will drive out those nations

v'nashal Yehovah elohekha eth ha'goyim ha'el – “And will clear away Yehovah your God the nations the these.” Moses uses the same rare word that he used in verse 7:1, *nashal*. It means to slip off, draw off, or clear away.

He again promises that the Lord will be the One to draw the people off of the land, just as a person draws off his shoe. Moses says to Israel that they are those who are...

22 (con't) before you

mipanekha – “from your face.” In the previous verse, he told them not to be terrified *mipenekhem*, or from their faces. Now he tells Israel they will be removed *mipanekha*, or from your face. It is beautifully worded showing the complete contrast between the two. Next he says the Lord will do this...

22 (con't) little by little;

meat meat – “little little.” This tells them that the process will be solely at the direction of the Lord. It is a certainty that the inhabitants are to be driven out. However, there is an incremental process which is to take place.

All advances will be when He determines, not all at once as Israel would certainly be inclined to want to do. How often we look at the Lord’s plans as if He is slacking, but this is not the case. It is only from our short life spans and eagerness to get on with things that we decide things should move more quickly. Understanding this, Moses says...

²² (con’t) **you will be unable to destroy them at once, lest the beasts of the field become *too* numerous for you.**

The same basic thought of this verse in Deuteronomy is also given in Exodus 23, but there are differences –

“I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. ³⁰ Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land.” Exodus 23:29, 30

One difference is that here it says, “you will be unable to destroy them,” and in Exodus 23 it said, “I will not drive them out from before you.” It is obvious that the actions of Israel are said to be ultimately accomplished by the Lord. What He does not want to come to pass will not come about.

Also, here in Deuteronomy it leaves off the thought of the land becoming desolate. But it is an important point to be reminded of. If all of the inhabitants were taken out at once, the land would become desolate.

The land of Canaan was inhabited. There were fields, crops, fruit trees, wells, houses, and so on. If all the people were taken out at once, there would have been an insufficient number of people to take them over. All of that productivity would have been lost.

But more, with land standing idle and not being properly cultivated, animals would multiply. The word translated as “beasts” signifies living things. If you have fruit trees that aren’t tended to, rats will multiply. If you have rats, you will have disease.

And other animals feed on rats, so they too will quickly multiply – cats, dogs, and so on. Very quickly, you would have many animals, some of them disease-filled, and so on. This exact scenario occurred after the exile of the northern tribes of Israel, as is seen in 2 Kings –

“And it was so, at the beginning of their dwelling there, *that* they did not fear the LORD; therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which killed *some* of them.”

-2 Kings 17:25

Lions are but one species that would quickly multiply as they fed off the rats and other little animals that were busy feeding off of unattended fruit trees and the like. This is also documented in more recent history after wars where areas were highly depopulated.

The Lord knew these things would occur and so He determined to methodically take care of the occupation of Canaan...

²³ But the LORD your God will deliver them over to you,

u-netanam Yehovah elohekha lephanekha – “And will give them Yehovah your God to your face.” It is a note of surety following on after the note of gradual accomplishment. Moses is assuring them that even if it seems that the process is slow, it will be accomplished according to the will of the Lord.

The fact that this later does not fully come to pass does not mean that the Lord failed. Rather, it means that Israel failed. What he will warn about in the coming verses is exactly what Israel will fail to do. When that occurs, the Lord will then amend the process according to their disobedience. That will be seen as we continue.

For now, Moses says that the Lord will deliver these people over to Israel, but then he continues by saying...

^{23 (con't)} and will inflict defeat upon them until they are destroyed.

v'hamam mehumah gedolah ad hishamedam – “And confusing, disquietude greatly until they are destroyed.” The words are full of action and life as they proceed from a verb followed by a noun and then to an adjective.

Here is a new word in Scripture, *mehumah*, which I have translated as “disquietude.” It is a noun signifying tumult, confusion, disquietude, discomfiture, and the like. Both it, and the previous word, *hamam*, come from the same root, *hum*. That signifies murmur, roar, agitate, make an uproar, and so on.

Thus, both words are onomatopoeic expressions where the sound gives the sense of what is going on. There is turmoil, panic, and so on as the Lord brings great agitation and uproar among them. The divine judgment of the Lord that is anticipated upon the inhabitants is marvelously vocalized by Moses.

And, this divine judgment will not be limited to any single class of people. From the least, even to the greatest, all of the people of Canaan are promised to be delivered into the hand of Israel...

²⁴ And He will deliver their kings into your hand,

v’natan malkehem b’yadekha – “and will give their kings into your hand.” As has been the case throughout this passage, Moses continues to speak in the singular – “their kings into your (singular) hand.” Israel is one, they are many. And yet, Israel will prevail. Once the king is subdued, it is taken as an axiom that the people are likewise subdued.

This conquering of the kings is poignantly noted in Joshua 10 –

“Then Joshua said, ‘Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings to me from the cave.’²³ And they did so, and brought out those five kings to him from the cave: the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, *and* the king of Eglon.

²⁴ So it was, when they brought out those kings to Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the captains of the men of war who went with him, “Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings.’ And they drew near and put their feet on their necks.²⁵ Then Joshua said to them, “Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; be strong and of good courage, for thus the LORD will do to all your enemies against whom you fight.” Joshua 10:22-25

The account goes on to say that Joshua then struck the kings, killing them, and then they were hanged on five trees until evening. This was in compliance with the next words...

²⁴ (con’t) and you will destroy their name from under heaven;

v'haabadta eth shemam mi'takhat ha'shamayim – “And cause to perish their names from under the heavens.” The word “heavens” is plural. Here, it is not speaking of heaven in the sense of the Lord’s dwelling place, but of everywhere under the skies.

And more, this is not saying that their names will literally perish as to never be heard again. They are clearly recorded in Scripture for us to know who they were. The idea is that there will be no continuance of them, such as in progeny. Their names were to die with them. This is what is explicitly said to be done to Amalek later in Deuteronomy 25:17-19 –

“Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, ¹⁸ how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you *were* tired and weary; and he did not fear God. ¹⁹ Therefore it shall be, when the LORD your God has given you rest from your enemies all around, in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess *as* an inheritance, *that* you will blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. You shall not forget.

There was to be nothing left of Amalek, just as there was to be nothing left of the names of any of the other peoples and kings who dwelt in the land of Canaan. They were to be destroyed until they were completely eradicated. And it was fully possible because the Lord promises it would be so...

²⁴ (con’t) **no one shall be able to stand against you until you have destroyed them.**

lo yityatsev ish b'phanekha ad hishmidkha otam – “no shall stand man in your face until you have destroyed them.” As always, the words “in your face,” or similar phrases, are a literal translation meaning “before” or “in the presence of.”

Moses assures Israel that not only will the kings be destroyed, but not even a man of any state or stature will be able to stand before Israel. However, the promise is conditional. It required faith that the words of Moses were true.

In this, we see the abject failure of the ranks of Israel who stood listening to Goliath’s taunts for forty days. He was one man, but every man in all the ranks of Israel failed to simply trust the Lord and take the words of Moses at face value.

That is, until a young shepherd boy on a mission from his father called this precept to their attention, and then who followed through with his own example of his faith in

what Moses now says. To believe Moses is to believe the Lord who inspired Moses to issue forth these words. And he continues with...

²⁵ You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire;

pesile elohehem tishrephun baesh – “Carved images their gods you shall burn in the fire.” In this clause alone, the words go from the second person singular to the second person plural. And more, the verb “you shall burn” is, like in verse 7:5, accentuated with a suffix, causing it to be emphasized.

There was to be no tolerance for allowing them to continue in the form they were in. Further...

^{25 (con't)} you shall not covet the silver or gold *that is* on them,

The act of coveting is forbidden in the tenth commandment. Therefore, to simply covet what was on an idol would be sin. But more, the fact that it was on an idol only exacerbated the problem. If the idol was kept, that would be sin. If only what was on the idol was kept, it would lead to other problems next noted...

^{25 (con't)} nor take *it* for yourselves, lest you be snared by it;

Here is a new word, the verb *yaqosh*. It signifies to lay a bait or a snare. Why would taking the precious part of the carved image while destroying the rest of it be a snare?

It is understood by Moses how precious both silver and gold are. It would normally seem right to melt the metal off of the idols and then reuse it for something else. However, this is absolutely forbidden. At times, the precious metals taken from devoted villages could be claimed by Israel. For example –

“Now the city shall be doomed by the LORD to destruction, it and all who *are* in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who *are* with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. ¹⁸ And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. ¹⁹ But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, *are* consecrated to the LORD; they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.” Joshua 6:17-19

The silver and gold and other metals could be saved and reused, but, all idols and carved images were devoted to the ban and were to be utterly destroyed. This included anything they were plated or adorned with.

If such were reused, it would enter into the public monetary system, and it would be known – for example – that the silver of idols was acceptable to be used in the payment of temple taxes and so forth. Such could never be the case, simply for conscience sake.

The snare that was laid is that of knowing that what was intended for the worship of false gods was acceptable to be used towards offerings to the true God. There was to be no hint of mixing the profane with that which is holy. The heavy stress of this is explained with the next words...

²⁵ (con't) **for it is an abomination to the LORD your God.**

ki toavat Yehovah elohekha hu – “For abomination to Yehovah your God it.” The Lord detested what it was. Changing its form doesn’t change what it was previously used for in the minds of the people. Gold is gold and silver is silver. But when the people know the source of it, the conscience of the people is defiled. In this, the Lord cannot be placed alongside that which is profane in the minds of His people.

The precept is clearly explained by Paul concerning meats in 1 Corinthians 8 –

“Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there is* no other God but one. ⁵ For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), ⁶ yet for us *there is* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom *are* all things, and through whom we *live*.

⁷ However, *there is* not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat *it* as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. ⁸ But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.” 1 Corinthians 8:4-8

Paul goes on to say in 1 Corinthians 10 –

“Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience’ sake; ²⁶ for ‘the earth *is* the LORD’s, and all its fullness.’

²⁷ If any of those who do not believe invites you *to dinner*, and you desire to

go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake. ²⁸ But if anyone says to you, 'This was offered to idols,' do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you, and for conscience' sake; for 'the earth *is* the LORD's, and all its fullness.' ²⁹ 'Conscience,' I say, not your own, but that of the other. For why is my liberty judged by another *man's* conscience? ³⁰ But if I partake with thanks, why am I evil spoken of for *the food* over which I give thanks?" 1 Corinthians 10:25-30

As you can see, in this case, what is an abomination to the Lord in the Mosaic Covenant is so because of conscience. The law, as was clearly seen in our text verse, is simply a tutor to instruct the people in the propriety of proper conduct before the Lord, meaning a life of proper conscience.

Earlier, I said that the promise of the Lord's driving the people out was conditional. The words of this verse, and the destroying of such forbidden things, shows that this is so. In Judges 2, we read –

“Then the Angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: ‘I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, “I will never break My covenant with you. ² And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.” But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this? ³ Therefore I also said, “I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be *thorns* in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.” ⁴ So it was, when the Angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voices and wept. ⁵ Then they called the name of that place Bochim; and they sacrificed there to the LORD. ⁶ And when Joshua had dismissed the people, the children of Israel went each to his own inheritance to possess the land.” Judges 2:1-5

The people failed to do what the Lord said. They did what was contrary to His will and therefore He altered the promises given by Moses now.

Unfortunately, they continued to suffer through this type of disobedience until there was no remedy left and they went into exile. Their rejection of the law brought about many woes upon them, and that continues to this day – whether they realize it or not.

²⁶ Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it.

We come to the last verse of the chapter with these words. Moses uses the same word, translated as “abomination,” as in the previous verse. The word extends beyond just carved images to anything the Lord proclaims is detestable or abominable.

The people were to separate themselves from such things. If they failed to do so, they would come under the same ban that was to be levied upon the banned thing. This is exactly seen in the account of Achan in Joshua 7. He failed to heed and thus he and his entire household were utterly destroyed.

Moses warns in advance, but it took a painful life lesson for the truth of the words to be revealed. In hopes of avoiding that, however, Moses proceeds with...

²⁶ (con’t) **You shall utterly detest it**

shaqets teshaqetsenu – “detesting, it you shall detest it.” The emphasis is given to highlight the importance of the act. Further...

²⁶ (con’t) **and utterly abhor it,**

v’taev tetaavenu – “and abhorring, you shall abhor it.” It is a new word in Scripture derived from the word translated as “abomination” in the previous verses. They were to actively find abominable that which the Lord declares an abomination. Moses then explains why...

^{*26} (fin) **for it is an accursed thing.**

ki kherem hu – “For devoted thing it.” The word *kherem* signifies devoted to a particular purpose. In this case, it is in the sense of being banned or under a curse, and thus devoted to God through destruction. A New Testament equivalent would be the word *anathema*.

Something in this state is intolerable to God and must be destroyed. In the Old Testament, as a tool of learning for Israel, things as are described here are noted as such. In the New Testament, Paul equates one who abuses the gospel as such. We will see that in our closing verse today.

The Lord has given man certain instructions at certain times in redemptive history, but the lesson continuously points to the same truths – faith, conscience, reliance on the

Lord and not ourselves, and a complete and total trust in, reliance on, and adherence to His word.

Whatever we do that is not in accord with that, we will fall into error. It happened in Eden, it happened with the covenant people, it happened throughout the time of the Mosaic Law, and it continues on today – literally throughout His church.

The word is given, a context is to be maintained, and within that context, we are to live out our lives in His presence. But, throughout all of the times of man's failings, for those who are within the covenant offered by the Lord, there is also the opportunity to receive His grace.

This is the best part about it all. Man is limited and troubled by time, circumstance, stresses, temptation, and so forth. God understands this, and He is there with us – knowing what we are going through because He Himself was willing to share in our humanity.

Because of this, we have a great High Priest who can sympathize with us. He understands our failings and offers us His grace when we come to Him. Without it, all there is left for humanity is remaining under the ban and being consigned to the trash heap of human history. I would hope for better for you.

Receive God's offer of pardon in the giving of His Son and be reconciled to Him to live out better days – eternal days – in His glorious presence.

Closing Verse: *"I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, ⁷ which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed."* Galatians 1:6-9

Next Week: Deuteronomy 8:1-9 *Understanding this, you will be in the sweet zone...*
(Man Shall Not Live by Bread Alone) (29th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Great and Awesome God

“If you should say in your heart
‘These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?
-----from me my life will be stripped!
You shall not be afraid of them
But you shall remember well what the LORD your God did
-----to Pharaoh and to all Egypt:

The great trials which your eyes saw
The signs and the wonders when you gave a shout!
The mighty hand and the outstretched arm
By which the LORD your God brought you out

So shall the LORD your God do as in those acts He displayed
To all the peoples of whom you are afraid

Moreover the LORD your God will send the hornet
Among them until those who are left
Who hide themselves from you are destroyed
Of their lives they will be bereft

You shall not be terrified of them; this you shall not do
For the LORD your God, the great and awesome God
-----is among you

And the LORD your God will drive out
Those nations before you little by little; so He will do
You will be unable to destroy them at once
Lest the beasts of the field become too numerous for you

But the LORD your God will deliver them over to you
-----this tactic will be employed
And will inflict defeat upon them until they are destroyed

And He will deliver their kings into your hand
And you will destroy from under heaven their name
No one shall be able to stand against you
Until you have destroyed them; such is the aim

You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire
You shall not covet on them the silver or gold
Nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it
For it is an abomination to the LORD your God
-----so you have been told

Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house
Lest you be doomed to destruction like it; hear what I say
You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it
For it is an accursed thing; yes, hear my words this day

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 8:1-9 (Man Shall Not Live by Bread Alone)

A correction I have made in previous sermons, and which I will make again in this one, is what the term “live,” as in “that you may live,” means. Joseph Benson, commenting on these verses, says it means, “Comfortably and prosperously, for *life*, in the Scripture phrase, signifies more than bare life, namely, happiness and prosperity.”

He then went on to cite various verses which have nothing to do with the context here. And, he is not alone. It is the generally accepted commentary on such verses. But it is wrong. We have seen this several times in Deuteronomy, and it was painfully obvious when we evaluated Leviticus 18:5, “You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I *am* the Lord.”

In fact, a right interpretation of that verse is so important, that Paul uses it in both Romans 10:5 and again in Galatians 3:12. To “live” in this context means to not “die.” The meaning of that then has to be derived from the surrounding context.

Text Verse: *“I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. ¹⁰ And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death.” Romans 7:9, 10*

Paul is obviously speaking of spiritual death here. He is speaking in general terms of those who have law and who violate that law – such as Adam and Eve. They were alive, the law was introduced, and they died.

This is what Paul is referring to here in a general sense. Moses is speaking of physical life. Christ never died spiritually, having never violated the law. And yet He died physically. But that was on behalf of those who were spiritually dead.

Because this is so, He came out of the tomb, proving He had not violated the law. He could not stay dead – it was impossible. Therefore, Moses is saying that to be obedient to the law means to live. If you have participated in more than five sermons in Deuteronomy, you have certainly heard this. And it is sure that you will hear it again, and again. This is because it is important.

How do we find life? The answer is dealt with once again in today’s passage. It cannot be said enough, and so let us pay heed. For now, a small treat for you, a chiasm found by

our friend Sergio about four years ago. He had actually forgotten he found it. I didn't. It will help us to make our way through the chapter.

Deuteronomy 8:3-16 - Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God

In Abundance, Keep his Commandments, Judgments and Statutes (Discovered by Sergio Voitenko - 03/09/2016)

a 3 "humbled you.. And fed you with manna.. Nor did your fathers know"

b 4 garments did not wear out, foot didn't swell for 40 years

c 6 "Keep the commandments of the Lord, walk His ways, fear Him"

d 7-9 you will lack nothing

e 10 "when you have eaten and are full"

x 11 "beware that you do not forget the LORD your God"

e 12 "lest when you have eaten and are full"

d 13 when in abundance of everything

c 14 "when you forget the Lord your God"

b 15 the Lord who led you through the great and terrible wilderness

a 16 "who fed you in the wilderness with manna which your fathers did not know.. And Humbled you"

Great things, such as chiasms, are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. God Led You All the Way (verses 1-5)

¹"Every commandment

kal ha'mitsvah – "All the commandment." The words of this verse are appropriately divided in order to begin chapter 8, even though they fit with the thought of the previous chapter. Chapter 7 began with, "When the Lord your God brings you into the land to possess..." That same thought is provided in the second clause of this verse in Chapter 8.

After that opening thought of Chapter 7, many thoughts concerning possessing the land were given, and then in the final verses, the Lord gave specific commands concerning the possession of the land to sum the chapter up –

"And He will deliver their kings into your hand, and you will destroy their name from under heaven; no one shall be able to stand against you until you have

destroyed them. ²⁵You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold *that is* on them, nor take *it* for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it *is* an abomination to the LORD your God. ²⁶Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it *is* an accursed thing.”

-Deuteronomy 7:24-26

Because of this, one might think that verse 8:1 should have closed out Chapter 7. Indeed, some think the division should have come after verse 8:1. But by starting this chapter here, it calls to mind the previous words and then sets the tone for what lies ahead in the new direction it will take in verse 8:2.

Despite being a new direction, possession of the land and the thought of obedience to the commandments is still a central theme of Chapter 8. Understanding this, the words begin with, “All the commandment.”

Some translations say, “All the commandments.” This is incorrect. It is singular. Each individual commandment is united in thought as one body of law. The idea is that breaking one part of the commandment nullifies the entire commandment. It is what James refers to, saying, “For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10).

By dividing the thought as “All the commandments,” it can give the incorrect idea that as long as everything comes out in the end, then missing the mark on the details is acceptable. It is not. Understanding that, Moses next says...

¹ (con't) **which I command you today**

The “you” is singular. It is the corporate body of Israel being told that obedience is required across the board. The phrase, “which I command you today,” is repeated again and again in Deuteronomy. It is saying that what Moses speaks out, during the entire time of the giving of this book, is included in “today.”

Therefore, Moses isn't dividing up the portions of law into sections to be individually obeyed, but he is rather continuing on with a body of law that comprises each and every section into one unit.

Each “which I command you today” simply adds onto the already impossible weight of law that began when Moses first opened his mouth to start conveying it. Despite this, the entire body of law is that which...

1 (con’t) you must be careful to observe,

tishmerun laasot – “you shall keep to observe.” From this point on, the addressee goes from the singular “you” to the plural “you all.” In other words, “All the commandment that I command you (Israel) today, you (all) shall keep to observe.

Here the importance of the difference between “All the commandment” and “All the commandments” is highlighted. The entire body of law, of which what Moses spoke of until now, and of which he will add to now, and of which he will continue to add to throughout Deuteronomy, must be observed.

What is not observed is not a simple slip of a law, but it becomes a transgression of the law. Guilt comes upon the entire body because of such a transgression, whether they know it or not. This takes the reader back to Leviticus –

“Now if the whole congregation of Israel sins unintentionally, and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done *something against* any of the commandments of the LORD *in anything* which should not be done, and are guilty; ¹⁴ when the sin which they have committed becomes known, then the assembly shall offer a young bull for the sin, and bring it before the tabernacle of meeting.” Leviticus 4:13, 14

In that same chapter, there are offerings for individual sins, sins committed by a ruler, and even sins committed by the high priest. In the case of the high priest, it said, “...if the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people, then let him offer to the Lord for his sin which he has sinned a young bull without blemish as a sin offering” (Leviticus 4:3).

When the high priest failed to uphold a precept of the law, he brought guilt on all of the people. This is because he was the mediator between God and them. In his guilt, the mediation was harmed. God saw his imperfection, and that imperfection was transferred to those he mediated for. The importance of being free from sin, a precept already brought forth several times, is...

1 (con’t) that you may live and multiply,

I'maan tikhyun u-rebitem – “to end purpose you may live and multiply.” The idea of living does not mean “full and abundant life.” It means “not dying.” The law’s purpose was to give life. Paul makes that abundantly clear in Romans 7:10, which was our text verse.

Obviously, this couldn’t be understood by the people of Israel at the time, but it is a truth that is confirmed in the overall body of Scripture both implicitly and explicitly. Israel (and indeed most readers of the Bible) looked to Moses’ words as a promise of full and abundant life, and great multiplication of the people.

But the typology clearly shows that it is referring to true life, meaning not dying, and greatness of reward. The word *rabah* can speak of many descendants, much increase, a length of time, of greatness of reward, and so on. The greatness of reward is seen, for example, in the promise to Abram –

“After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Abram. I *am* your shield, your exceedingly great reward.’”

-Genesis 15:1

The intent of the law is life. Violation of the law then means death. The lesson we are repeatedly seeing in Deuteronomy is that the law is given as an instrument of learning for the people of the world. Life was lost in Eden, life was promised to come again, but it is not by law that life will come about, except in the fulfillment of it by the God/Man. As Paul says –

“Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. ²² But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. ²³ But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”

-Galatians 3:21-25

The continual repetition of the same thoughts, in sermon after sermon, is to remind you that these things are so. This is what Moses is doing, and thus, this is what we are to do – to contemplate the lesson of the law.

Of this process, John Lange says, “It is less a repeated, than a continuous (this day) enduring law-giving.” The many pronouncements equal one law and that one law is to be fully obeyed. The reward of perfect obedience to the law is next noted...

^{1 (con't)} and go in and possess the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers.

For Israel, the idea is that the possession includes not just crossing the Jordan, but obtaining all of the promise – from north to south and from east to west. However, the typology of Israel crossing the Jordan is seen in Christ.

To cross the Jordan is to cross through Christ. To cross through Christ means possession – complete and finished possession. The singular “you” which is then changed to the plural is given to show Israel that as an obedient body, national salvation will result.

Thus, they must get the relationship with Christ right first. Obedience to the law means all of the law. And only in coming to Christ can perfect obedience to the law be imputed.

Just note the order – observe / you may live and multiply / and go in and possess. Keeping the law comes first, not last. One receives Christ’s fulfilment of the law, then life and greatness comes, then comes possession. And how evident that is from the next words...

² And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness,

The words return to the second person singular – you (Israel). In this, Moses returns to the time of wilderness wanderings. It is the time of receiving the law, and then punishment for disobedience of the law. But despite their disobedience, the Lord continued to lead them, meaning keep them as a people.

In saying, “the way,” it isn’t referring to a particular path that they took, but how the Lord conducted them. In other words, during the entire time of punishment, He still gave them manna, water, relief from the poisonous snakes, and etc.

Despite being consigned to die in the wilderness, they were also brought through the wilderness alive as a people. The covenant promises to them were upheld by the Lord, despite their own covenant unfaithfulness.

Those years of wandering are typical of the time after rejecting Christ. They have been punished as a people, and yet they have been given the grace of being kept as a people. Whether they acknowledge it yet or not, it is the Lord who has so kept them. The words of this clause are remembered by the psalmist –

“To Him who led His people through the wilderness,
For His mercy *endures* forever;” Psalm 136:16

This leading them in the manner in which He did was for a set and good purpose. It was...

² (con't) **to humble you *and* test you,**

l'maan anotekha l'nasotekha – “to end purpose chasten you to test you.” The people had disobeyed. They had failed to go up into the land (a picture of receiving Christ) in Numbers 14. In their refusal, the Lord set about to chasten them as a means of testing.

But the fact is, those twenty and above were set to die without entering Canaan. But they were provided the opportunity to look to the bronze serpent and live. Thus, while Israel collectively was punished, individuals could obtain life. Therefore, they would have passed the test.

As a whole, the chastenings were intended to eventually bring them to the point where they would voluntarily cross the Jordan (picturing coming to God through Christ) as a nation. As this has not yet happened, even though Israel is, even today, in the land of Canaan, it is evident that living in the land is not the promise.

Rather, coming to Christ and finding life through Him is. Their chastening, in other words, is ongoing. And it will continue until the day they call out to Christ – “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.” Understanding both the literal, historical record and also the typological pictures, Moses continues...

² (con't) **to know what *was* in your heart,**

This is not for the Lord to learn something He did not know. Rather, it is to bring to light what the heart conceals. As Charles Ellicott says, “What God Himself knows by omniscience He sometimes brings to light by evidence for the sake of His creatures.” This is, for example, what He did to King Hezekiah –

“However, *regarding* the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, whom they sent to him to inquire about the wonder that was *done* in the land, God withdrew from him, in order to test him, that He might know all *that was* in his heart.”

-2 Chronicles 32:31

In the case of Israel, Moses says it was to know...

² (con't) **whether you would keep His commandments or not.**

Here, Moses uses the same word, *shamar*, that he used in the previous verse. He told them they shall “keep to observe” all the commandment so that they could enter the land. Now, he says the Lord tested them to see whether they would keep His commandments during the wanderings.

They failed to do so, and so he chastened them to test them. If they did not enter Canaan before because they did not believe (have faith in) the Lord, then their keeping His commandments cannot be what will bring them in this time either. Rather, it must come through faith.

The chastening of Israel to test them concerning the keeping of His commandments, then, cannot be for granting them life. It is obviously a way of showing them that life is not possible through it. As Paul says, the law is a tutor to lead people to Christ.

John Lange, at least partially, picked up on this when he said, “...thus the pedagogical significance of the wilderness agrees well.” The wanderings were intended to teach them what they otherwise could not learn.

Everything we are seeing here must be taken in relation to the work of Christ. He came. He fulfilled the law. They rejected Him. They were punished to test them concerning the law. They failed, are failing, and will fail, to meet its demands. Only when they meet it through Christ’s perfect obedience will they find life. That continues to be seen in the next words...

³ **So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger,**

This verse begins the chiasm we saw during the introduction. The humbling mentioned here precedes the giving of the law. The Lord led Israel out of Egypt, and purposefully waited until they were hungry before providing for them.

In their hunger, they moaned against Moses and Aaron. But it wasn't they who resolved the matter. Rather, it was the Lord. He humbled them. He allowed them to hunger...

^{3 (con't)} **and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know,**

In their hunger, the Lord then did something completely unique by feeding them with *ha'man*, or the manna. In this, Moses reminds them that what was provided was completely unknown before or since. In saying, "the manna," it provides an emphasis. The word comes from *mah*, or "what." Thus, Moses calls it "the whatness." It is completely set apart from anything else.

The manner in which the manna came, the volume in which it was provided, the way that it degraded in a night for five days but lasted over Friday and the Sabbath, and so on – all of this was to separate the manna as something completely unique and wholly of the Lord.

And this is parallel to Christ, the true Manna. Though a Man, there is a "whatness" about Him that sets Him completely apart from all others. The manner in which He came, the abundance He provided, the fact that He was crucified on Friday and yet did not see corruption through the Sabbath etc., – all of it showed that He was the fulfillment of the pictures from Israel's past. This was so...

^{3 (con't)} **that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone;**

In this, there are two articles that should be considered, "the man," and "the bread." Also, the word "by" should read "on" or "upon." The Lord is teaching "the man," meaning the Adam in every man, that he shall not live on "the bread" alone.

In providing the manna, the Lord was showing that what He spoke is what comes to pass. To eat, then, isn't what ultimately sustains a person. That which has come to pass – meaning anything that we see, feel, eat, smell, and so on – came to pass because the Lord spoke it into existence.

The manna is a demonstration of this. It never existed, nobody ever knew of it, and yet it appeared. As it came at the command of God, just as the universe came at His command, then the truth is that man lives not by bread that is a result of the command, but from the spoken word (the command) itself. As Moses says...

^{3 (con't)} **but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.**

ki al kal motsa pi Yehovah yikhyeh ha'adam – “for upon all outgoing mouth Yehovah lives the man.” These are the words Christ Jesus spoke back to the tempter. The exchange said –

Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”

⁴But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” Matthew 4:3, 4

Jesus prevailed where Israel failed. They had the manna, and yet they continued to complain against the Lord. Jesus, understanding that the manna only existed because the word caused it to exist, conveyed to the tempter that the bread was only a part of God’s proclamation.

To default to commanding the stones to become bread in order to satisfy His personal hunger would be to not rely on all that proceeds from the mouth of God. But later, we see that the manna was only a shadowy type of Christ Himself – the Word of God –

“And Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.’” John 6:35

As Christ is the Word of God, He is everything that is needed to have life. The bread of the world can sustain life, but it cannot make man live. God who gave the manna in the wilderness showed that He can sustain a man apart from the common food of man. As He can do this, then He can make man live. How does the man live? He lives through Christ.

⁴Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.

The obviously miraculous intent of the words here are all but destroyed by most commentators. Many commentators try to diminish the miraculous by saying that the supplies for making clothes didn’t run out, or something stupidly similar to that.

Others, following Jewish fables, say that the clothes of the children actually grew with them like a snail’s shell. Neither of these matches the obvious nature of the words.

Rather, the simple and understandable reading is exactly what happened. The clothes that people wore did not wear out. It would be ridiculous to speak of the manna in one

verse, a unique and miraculous event, and then to speak of something plain and common like obtaining supplies to make new clothes.

For added surety of this, a complementary verse is found in Deuteronomy 29:5 –

“And I have led you forty years in the wilderness. Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn out on your feet.”

The obvious reason for the change from feet swelling to sandals not wearing out is to show that both occurred, and both were miraculous. Otherwise, if Moses only spoke of clothes and sandals, it might be assumed by those who came later that it was just speaking of an ample supply of material always being available.

In this verse, the words are still in the singular. The Lord is speaking to Israel collectively. Like the manna, it was a lesson concerning the Lord’s faithfulness, even in Israel’s time of punishment.

There is one new and rare word introduced, *batseq*. It is found only here and Nehemiah 9:21, where Nehemiah cites this verse. It is from a primitive root, and it means maybe to swell or blister.

Their garments not wearing out, and their feet not swelling or blistering, was a clear demonstration to Israel that they were being sustained by the Lord as a people, even as they were dying in the wilderness. The same lesson should be learned by Israel today, if they will just think.

They rejected Christ, they are under the punishment of the curses of the law, and yet they are being sustained as a people. As miraculous as garments not wearing out and feet not swelling (or blistering) for forty years, so is the miracle of Israel’s continued existence over these past two thousand years.

They rejected Him, and they have neglected His word, but He has neither rejected them, nor neglected them. That this is the correct interpretation of this is found in the next words...

*Many years you wandered after failing to believe
And during that time, you fell in the wilderness
My promised blessing you did not receive
But you failed to consider how you got in that mess*

*For many generations, you lived in the land
And there were times of want and times of prosperity
But through it all, you failed to understand
That your state was a result of your treatment of Me*

*And so, for many years you wandered after failing to believe
And during that time, you fell in a global wilderness
I held out nail-scarred hands to you that you failed to receive
And even today, you still won't consider how you got in that mess*

II. In Which You Will Lack Nothing (verses 5-9)

⁵You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the LORD your God chastens you.

The context of their being provided the manna, their garments not wearing out, and their feet not swelling, is that it is done through chastening.

The lesson of the chastened son is explained in Hebrews. There, the author writes to Israel, specifically believing Jews, but He carefully shows how Israel – the collective whole – experiences God’s redemptive hand of blessing, cursing, judgment, salvation, and so on. Of this group, he says –

“My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD,
Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;

⁶ For whom the LORD loves He chastens,
And scourges every son whom He receives.

⁷ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? ⁸ But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. ⁹ Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected *us*, and we paid *them* respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they indeed for a few days chastened *us* as seemed *best* to them, but He for *our* profit, that *we* may be partakers of His holiness. ¹¹ Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

-Hebrews 12:5-11

What is clearly evident is that Israel, under the chastening hand of the Lord during this dispensation, is considered a son. They are being corrected by the Lord to teach them the lesson they will eventually learn.

This is all the more evident because the word Moses uses for “chasten” is the same word used three times in Leviticus 26 for the punishment Israel would receive in their rejection of Him.

And yet, at the end of that passage, the Lord promises that He would remember the covenant that He made with their ancestors when He brought them out of Egypt. Their rejection of Christ is not the end of their story. With that understood, Moses again turns to the law...

⁶“Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him.

We have been talking about Israel and their relationship to the Lord. The reason for their exile (meaning rejecting Christ), and God’s faithfulness to them, even in their time of punishment. How can it be, then, that if their rejection of Christ was the reason for their exile, that Moses now, again, harps on them concerning keeping the commandments of the Lord?

If Christ offers grace, how does keeping the commandments of law fit into that? It is, as we have seen – time and again – because the Law of Moses anticipates both the coming of Christ and the ending of the law. Hence, to “keep the commandments of the Lord your God” is to believe in Christ unto salvation. As it says in Deuteronomy 18:18, 19 –

“I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. ¹⁹ And it shall be *that* whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require *it* of him.”

This is further anticipated by Jeremiah, a prophet under the Mosaic Covenant, who said that the Lord would cut a New Covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. Therefore, to obey the commandments of the Lord God is to come to Christ – the One who embodies, fulfilled, and annuls the Mosaic Covenant.

It is this act which then will bring Israel into the harmonious relationship with God. Theirs will finally be a heavenly promise, of which crossing the Jordan into Canaan only anticipated...

⁷ For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land,

Moses now describes what is an almost idyllic setting. And it is intentionally meant to be that way. The description of Eden and its garden is described no more beautifully than what Moses speaks of now. Further, Moses ensures that they know it is the Lord their God who brings them in.

They rejected Canaan the first time by simply not believing the Lord. They will enter only through believing the Lord. It takes us back to verse 1. They were to observe so that they would live, receive the reward, and go in and possess.

But if this is speaking of only Israel's entering Canaan, it makes no sense. Moses will speak out the words of the law, ascend Mt. Nebo, and there he will die. There will be a period of mourning for him, and then Israel will enter Canaan.

The obvious typology is that the observing of the command is to receive Christ by faith and then enter the promise. That will become as obvious as the nose on one's face in Joshua. For now, the description of the land continues. It is...

^{7 (con't)} a land of brooks of water,

erets nakhale mayim – "land wadis water." This speaks of flowing water, typically of wadis that run during the times of rain.

^{7 (con't)} of fountains and springs,

ayanoth u-tehomoth – "eyes and depths." The *ayin*, or literally "eye," speaks of a spring that issues forth water from the ground. The *tehom*, or "depth," would be the much larger fountains that produce a river right at its issuing forth. It is where vast amounts of water gush forth to water the land.

^{7 (con't)} that flow out of valleys and hills;

yotseim babiqah u-bahar – “flowings out in the valley and in the mountain.” The meaning is that at any point in a given valley or mountain, there may be either, or both, of these flowing forth to water the land. And that then leads to other abundance...

⁸ a land of wheat and barley,

erets khitah u-seorah – “land wheat and barley.” There is promised both grains – the greater and the lesser. The wheat is for standard human consumption and the barley for both the poor and for cattle and horses.

The story in Genesis 26 of Isaac reaping one hundred-fold would be happily anticipated by those to whom it had been conveyed. The labors would be well-rewarded for those who entered the promise.

Because there are two crops, it means two harvests. The barley began around Passover and the wheat began around Pentecost. The account of the supplies for King Solomon in 1 Kings 4:22 shows the magnificent abundance the land could produce.

^{8 (con't)} of vines and fig trees and pomegranates,

v'gephen u-teenah v'rimmon – “and vines, and figs, and pomegranates.” The vines for grapes can be found in every climate of Israel, from the wettest to the driest spots. Each produces its own special grape for its own particular use/taste.

The fig is mentioned throughout the rest of the Old Testament and in almost every book. It is noted abundantly in the New Testament as well. The prominent use of it carries its own symbolic meaning – that of a connection to God, or its lack. This can be seen as one winds through the Bible and notes its many uses.

The pomegranate is derived from a word that signifies high or exalted. It gives the sense of mental maturity. It is seen much less in the Old Testament than the fig, but it is highlighted in the little book the Song of Solomon where it is mentioned six times – more than any other book in the Bible.

^{8 (con't)} a land of olive oil and honey;

erets zeyit shemen u-debash – “land olive oil and honey.” Olive oil has multiple uses and much value, and the land is filled with areas where it grows in abundance. Again, the

account of King Solomon and his dealings shows the immense amount of oil that was used and traded as a commodity.

Honey signifies both abundance and health of the land. Where there is honey, it means bees have been productive. Cross-pollination occurs, the flowers will bloom, the fruit will come out, and the byproduct of honey can be gathered.

However, the term honey can mean more than just bee honey, it is also believed to extend to dates, and even syrup made from grapes. The word comes from a root meaning to be gummy, so all are possible.

After the first exile, the people had returned from Babylon and were still in troubled times in the land. However, the Lord spoke through Haggai of the blessing He would again pour out upon the people, speaking of all of these commodities except honey, He said to them –

“Consider now from this day forward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, from the day that the foundation of the LORD’s temple was laid—consider it: ¹⁹ Is the seed still in the barn? As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded *fruit*. *But* from this day I will bless *you*.”

-Haggai 2:18, 19

This is what Moses’ words now anticipate – a land of the Lord’s blessing. And that only looks forward to the true land of promised blessing which can only be realized for humanity through God’s provision of Jesus Christ. For now, Moses continues...

⁹ a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity,

erets asher lo b’mskenuth tokal bah lekhem – “land which no in scarcity you will eat in bread.” Here is a word found only this once in the Bible, *miskenuth*.

It comes from *misken*, meaning poor. Thus, there will be a great abundance which anticipates wealth and prosperity if rightly handled. Therefore, there will always be bread on the table and abundance for the family. It is a complete contrast to what the Lord promises when they reject Him –

“When I have cut off your supply of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall bring back your bread by weight, and you shall eat and not be satisfied.” Leviticus 26:26

Again, Moses continues with a greater note of abundance...

^{9 (con't)} **in which you will lack nothing;**

Certainly, the words here extend to more than just what the land produces, but to that which can be traded for. In other words, a great amount of trading is noted in the Old Testament. So much so that there were commodities not available in the land that could still be easily acquired.

In this, the people would have no lack at all. The ground would be so fertile and productive that there would be a superabundance by which to amass even greater wealth. And finally, of these promises of the abundance, Moses continues with...

^{9 (con't)} **a land whose stones *are* iron**

Some scholars see the term “whose stones *are* iron” as referring to basalt stones, meaning dark volcanic stones. There is no reason to accept this. Iron, even if limited in quantity, is noted throughout the Old Testament. The words simply mean that iron will be available to mine and to use by the general populace. And finally...

^{*9 (fin)} **and out of whose hills you can dig copper.**

u-meharareha takhtsov nekhoshet – And out of whose hills you dig copper. Copper mines have been found in the Timna Valley in southern Israel. Copper mines have been found in the countries surrounding Israel as well.

As a note of correction, if your Bible says, “thou mayest dig brass” (KJV), please underline that, note that it is in error, and correct it to read “copper.” Brass is an alloy produced by man. It is not found naturally. Copper is dug up and then combined with other metals to produce such alloys.

The point of Moses’ words is that the land promised to Israel was one of abundance, and in which that abundance would keep the people from any lack at all. This is first, and immediately, speaking of the truth that Israel will prosper if they heed the Lord and are obedient to His law.

It is, however, more fully anticipating the abundance that is found in Christ and what He promises His people. Israel was rarely obedient to the Lord. At times, they prospered, and at others, they did not. The time of the law was a time for our learning.

Israel was the object lesson, and we are the recipients of that. Rote observance of the law, without a heart for the Lord, was as unacceptable to Him as ignoring His law. The lesson is given through Israel in many ways, showing that we simply cannot do without grace.

In Christ's coming, that grace is offered. For Jew or Gentile alike, that offer comes by simply calling out to Him and believing the gospel. For Israel as a nation, that will come when they call out to Him collectively and submit to Him.

Next week, we will take what we have learned concerning the promises today, and we will again evaluate the warnings that come with such abundance and blessing.

The back and forth lessons of Deuteronomy are necessary to have a full and complete understanding of what made life for Israel so difficult over these past millennia. In this, it will allow us as individuals to avoid such great pitfalls.

Closing Verse: *You crown the year with your bounty,
and your carts overflow with abundance.*

¹² *The grasslands of the wilderness overflow;
the hills are clothed with gladness.*

¹³ *The meadows are covered with flocks
and the valleys are mantled with grain;
they shout for joy and sing. Psalm 65:11-13 (NIV)*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 8:10-20 *If you don't do it, you will be a complete clod...* (And You Shall Remember the Lord Your God) (30th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Man Shall Not Live by Bread Alone

“Every commandment which I command you today
You must be careful to observe
That you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land
Of which the LORD swore to your fathers; from these things
-----you shall not swerve

And you shall remember that the LORD your God
Led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness
-----that terrible trying spot
To humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart
Whether you would keep His commandments or not

So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger
And fed you with manna which you did not know
-----nor did your fathers know
That He might make you know that man shall not
-----live by bread alone
But man lives by every word that proceeds
-----from the mouth of the LORD, not a word he shall forgo

Your garments did not wear out on you
Nor did your foot swell these forty years; such it did not do

You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son
So the LORD your God chastens you; and you are better off
-----in the long run

“Therefore you shall keep the commandments of
-----the LORD your God
To walk in His ways and to fear Him, on the path that you trod

For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land
A land of brooks of water – just imagine the daffodils!
Of fountains and springs
That flow out of valleys and hills

A land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees
-----and pomegranates too
A land of olive oil and honey; marvelous delights for you

A land in which you will eat bread without scarcity
In which you will lack nothing; the place is over the top
A land whose stones are iron
And out of whose hills you can dig copper

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 8:10-20 **(And You Shall Remember the Lord Your God)**

Introductory comments are the last thing I normally type for each sermon. Some days, it's hard to figure what to say so that we can smoothly blend into the content of what is being given in the sermon text. As I was typing this sermon, Sergio and I were doing what we occasionally do. He was working on a video; I am typing the sermon.

He will say, "I have 4 minutes of a 15-minute video to go." I will say, "I am on verse 2 of 10 verses." In that, we have a competition to see where we each will end when the first person is done. While messaging back and forth (and to frustrate him into thinking he was getting way behind), I said, "I just finished verse XX."

Just a few short minutes later I said, "I just finished verses XX and XX." This would be an otherwise impossible message. One verse can take up to an hour. I snickered for a moment.

Then I copy and pasted the two verses. Under the first verse, I typed, "blah, blah, blah." Under the second I typed, "yada, yada, yada." After that, I said, "I bet nobody will notice."

After sending it, I couldn't help thinking that there are some people who actually treat the word like that. As sad as it is, the goal for them doesn't include remembering that this is the word of God. Nor is it that they care about the Lord who gave the word. They simply put something together to make people feel good on Sunday morning, and it doesn't matter if it conforms in the least to what the Lord is actually conveying. It breaks my heart.

Text Verse: *"Yet I am the LORD your God
Ever since the land of Egypt,
And you shall know no God but Me;
For there is no savior besides Me.
⁵ I knew you in the wilderness,
In the land of great drought.
⁶ When they had pasture, they were filled;
They were filled and their heart was exalted;
Therefore they forgot Me." Hosea 13:4-6*

When our hearts get lifted up, we tend to think more highly of ourselves than we should. In that, we forget the Lord our God. There are other ways to forget the Lord as well. We can do it out of sheer negligence, we can do it out of spite, we can do it because we are just too busy with life.

But I want to tell you today, that for those who are the Lord's, He will never forget us. He will never break the covenant promises to us that He has agreed to. This doesn't mean that we should not worry about our walk with the Lord. On the contrary, I will take you to a passage in the New Testament at the end of our sermon today to show us just the opposite.

But the great thing about the Lord is that, even if we do forget about Him – for whatever reason – if we are His (meaning saved by the Lord Jesus), He will never turn His back on us. As I have said before, national Israel is a template for each of us concerning our own state before the Lord. Today, you will see the faithfulness of the Lord in a way that your Bible fails to show you. Of this, I am pretty sure.

But when you see it, I hope it stirs you as much as it stirred me on 21 September 2020. Great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. And All That You Have Is Multiplied (verses 10-13)

The words of verse 10 fit marvelously into what was said in the previous verses of the chapter. Verse 1 referred to possession of the land. This one does as well. Verse 2 spoke of remembering what the Lord had done for the people in the wilderness. Here, that is contrasted with blessing the Lord in the land.

Verse 3 spoke of hungering in the wilderness and then being granted manna. Here, it speaks of being full because of the produce of the land given by the Lord. Verses 4 & 5 spoke of the Lord's care of the people in the wilderness, including His chastening of them. Here, His care of them in the land of their possession is highlighted.

Verses 7-9 spoke of the things by which the land would be considered good. Here it acknowledges that it is, in fact, a good land. This is a marvelous summary verse of that entire set of verses.

In all of this, it is the Lord, not Israel, who is the center of focus. Israel is the recipient of the Lord's favor, but without the Lord, or with the Lord as an enemy, Israel would not exist. It is not by their hand, their power, or their abilities that the goodness they possess comes about, but by the graciousness of the Lord. As it says...

10 When you have eaten and are full,

v'akalta v'savaeta – “And you shall eat, and you are satisfied.” This is the contrast to verse 3 where it noted that the people hungered in the wilderness. At that time, they complained against Moses and Aaron, which means they complained against the Lord.

Here the words are a statement of fact – “you shall eat,” and “you are satisfied.” Just as they complained in their hunger, they are now actually commanded to do the opposite in the times when they are filled...

10 (con't) then you shall bless the LORD your God

u-berakhta eth Yehovah elohekha – “and you shall bless Yehovah your God.” It is to be taken as a positive command, not simply a general principle. In receiving, you are to bless. To not do so, then, must be considered a transgression of the law. This is shown to be exactly fulfilled by Christ, even before His meal and being filled, in the gospels. When feeding the multitudes, it says –

“And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke *them* and gave *them* to His disciples; and the disciples *gave* to the multitude.” Matthew 15:36

Likewise, it says that He blessed the bread on the night of His crucifixion as well. The law is given, and the Lord was obedient to the precept.

10 (con't) for the good land which He has given you.

al ha'arets ha'tovah asher natan lakh – “upon the land, the good, which He has given you.” In this, Moses uses the word *al* – “upon the good land,” not “for the good land.” It isn't that they possess a piece of land in another area that they go to visit from time to time, and from which abundance is received. Rather, it is a land upon which they live and receive constant benefit from.

The Lord gave them the land, it is a good land, and the Lord has provided for them from that same land. They are to remember, and they are to actively bless the Lord for that which they receive from the land upon which they reside.

The idea is that the Lord was always to be at the center of their attention. It is not the land, and it is not those who dwell upon the land, but rather it is the Lord who gave the land who is to be praised. And there is an important reason for this command...

11 “Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God

In the Hebrew, the words from now until verse 18 are one long, continuous sentence. It is a detailed explanation of what is sure to come, and a warning of what not to forget when it does come.

Blessings lie ahead, but in the abundance of those blessings will come an assumption that what has been received has come about through personal effort and not through the blessing of the Lord. In this, Moses first warns them with the word *shamar* – to keep, watch, or be attentive to.

In this, they are to be attentive to not forgetting Yehovah their God. He then explains how they will, in fact, forget Him. It is...

11 (con’t) by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes

The word commandment is singular. The commandment, judgments, and statutes are from the Lord. It logically follows that in remembering what He has commanded to do, the people will remember the One who has so commanded.

In other words, we know the difference between federal crimes and state and local crimes. If someone carries a gun into a post office, the penalties will be different than if he carries a gun into a 7-11 in a town where that is not allowed. We remember the source of the law when we remember to observe the law.

To *shamar*, or be attentive to, those various laws means that we are showing regard for the source of them. We may keep the federal laws because we might otherwise be sentenced to many years in federal prison, but we may neglect the local laws because the penalty is a slap on the wrist.

The respect given to the laws of the Lord thus signifies whether a person has a fear of the Lord, a love of the Lord, or some varying degree of contempt for the Lord. And the individual's attitude toward the Lord will inevitably be tied up in the leader's attitude toward the Lord.

When the leaders of a nation have no fear of the Lord, the people will follow in that same attitude. The leader is the enforcer of the laws. If he will not enforce the laws set forth, then the people will not either. This is the lesson of the kings of Israel, and it is seen again and again in their record, such as –

“Now it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom and had strengthened himself, that he forsook the law of the Lord, and all Israel along with him.” 2 Chronicles 12:1

The opposite attitude was seen in the record of King Asa –

“So they gathered together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. ¹¹ And they offered to the LORD at that time seven hundred bulls and seven thousand sheep from the spoil they had brought. ¹² Then they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul; ¹³ and whoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel was to be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman.”
-2 Chronicles 15:10-13

Of these commands of the Lord, Moses says...

¹¹ (con't) **which I command you today,**

Here, the concept of divine inspiration is once again clearly presented. Moses says that what he conveys are the commandment, statutes, and judgments of the Lord, and yet it is he who is commanding them to Israel. Jesus clearly confirms this as well when He asks, “What did Moses command you,” or something similar. It is both the word of Moses and the law of the Lord.

¹² **lest—when you have eaten and are full,**

Here is a contrast to the manna. The people simply received what the Lord provided. They couldn't take credit for it at all. Rather they received it, knowing exactly where it

came from. They could, and in fact they did, complain about the manna, but they could not deny its Source.

Here, the food has come from the ground. Vines were pruned, trees were trimmed, land was tilled, stalks of grain were cut and threshed, and so on. Man's labor was involved in the process. In the exercise of the labor, it is easy to forget the ultimate Source of the good things that fill the stomach. Further...

¹² (con't) **and have built beautiful houses and dwell *in them*;**

Again, there is the contrast to the time in the wilderness. The people dwelt in tents, and they moved at the command of the Lord. There was no tending to farms and gardens. There was a reliance on the Lord. It is reminiscent of the family of Rechab who is mentioned in Jeremiah –

“But they said, ‘We will drink no wine, for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, ‘You shall drink no wine, you nor your sons, forever.’⁷ You shall not build a house, sow seed, plant a vineyard, nor have *any of these*; but all your days you shall dwell in tents, that you may live many days in the land where you are sojourners.’⁸ Thus we have obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, in all that he charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, or our daughters,⁹ nor to build ourselves houses to dwell in; nor do we have vineyard, field, or seed.¹⁰ But we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us.”

-Jeremiah 35:6-10

These Rechabites were used by the Lord as an object lesson to Israel of failing to adhere to this exact premise now being set forth by Moses in Deuteronomy.

¹³ **and *when your herds and your flocks multiply,***

Animals take effort. They have to be tended to, fed and watered, and stores need to be set aside for the winter when the land isn't producing. The more herds and flocks a person has, the more people he will need to tend to them.

The more people beneath a person, then for that person feelings of greatness tend to result. Further, in having an abundance, one tends to trust in that abundance. He forgets the commands of the Lord to have an open hand to the needy. This is what

happened with Nabal in 1 Samuel. David came forth looking for assistance in a time of need. Nabal's response was –

“Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers, and give *it* to men when I do not know where they *are* from?”

-1 Samuel 25:11

Nabal was a man who did not care about the law of the Lord, because he failed to care about the plight of his fellow Israelite. He trusted in his wealth and forgot the Source of that wealth.

13 (con't) and your silver and your gold are multiplied,

The possession of silver and gold means that the person's wealth extends beyond the property and that which subsists from the property. A person with silver and gold has increased so much from the property that he now has sufficiency beyond the annual harvest season.

If there is drought, the money is a buffer for such a time. If the equipment breaks down, it can be fixed by paying someone who is handy in that way. And so on. In the possession of silver and gold, that which is otherwise out of reach becomes readily available. In such a state everything else increases as well...

13 (con't) and all that you have is multiplied;

With the coming of surplus, if one is wise, more can be obtained – more land to produce more crops; more animals to produce more meat, wool, leather, and so on; more wives to increase the stress; more children to help with the chores.

The cycle of increase leads to personal gain as well – extra shoes, more garments, extra rooms which can then be rented out. The multiplication of an industrious man can be great. But for most, that leads naturally to another state...

Where does your ability come from?

A day at the gym and eating right?

Is that the place from whence these come?

And also, from getting a good sleep at night?

*Is your wealth amassed high because you are great?
Do you have expensive things because of your skill?
Is filled your cupboard, and is overflowing your plate?
How did it happen? Tell me the drill?*

*But if you say, "It was because I am great."
Or if you say, "It was because of my skill."
I say to you, "Empty is your plate."
You will be unable to pay the final bill*

*Call on the Lord Jesus, and include Him in every detail
Bless the Lord for each thing He provides
And when you are weighed on His judgment scale
You will receive all the wonder His heaven provides*

II. Parsing Matters (verses 14-20)

¹⁴ when your heart is lifted up,

v'ram l'vavekha – “And lifted to your heart.” The heart is the seat of reason, understanding, and intelligence. In the acquisition of many things, a person thinks within himself, “Look at all that I have, and all that I have done.” It is the sin of pride which takes credit for that which one is blessed with. In this...

¹⁴ (con't) and you forget the LORD your God

There is room for only one in the heart of a prideful man. If he is consumed with himself, then he will not remember the Lord his God. It is a certainty. Only a man of humility through and through can avoid the trap of thinking that what he possesses is solely because of his own efforts and greatness.

Moses knows this, and so his warning is also a reminder. It isn't just that the Lord is on high and blessing people who were already industrious and blessed to start with. Rather, he notes that Israel is the people of Yehovah, the God...

¹⁴ (con't) who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;

ha'motsiakha me-erets mitsraim mibeth abadim – “who the bringing out of you from land Egypt, from house slavery.” The people of Israel, from the least even to the

greatest, were all as one in Egypt. Egypt means “Double distress.” They were in bondage, and they had no way of obtaining their freedom. Their lot was permanent misery.

But in the impossibility of their situation, and with no chance of relief from it, Yehovah brought them out. Thus, whatever they possessed, from a thread to a sandal strap, or from a boundary stone to a king’s palace – all of it was because the Lord had first delivered them to it, and then He had delivered it to them.

The words here are prophetic in nature. It’s not just that such might happen. Moses knows it is certain to happen. And it did. 2 Chronicles 26 details the greatness of King Uzziah and how it came about. It says there, “as long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper.”

What is then said of him mirrors the thought of verses 11-13. So exactly that after the many received blessings it then says –

“But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to *his* destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD his God by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. ¹⁷ So Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him were eighty priests of the LORD—valiant men. ¹⁸ And they withstood King Uzziah, and said to him, ‘*It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have trespassed! You shall have no honor from the LORD God.*’” 2 Chronicles 26:16-18

Though the king of Israel, and a man of wisdom and great achievement, Uzziah was a son of slaves. Were it not for the Lord, he and his people would still be in bondage. Were it not for the Lord, his line would not have ascended to the throne. Were it not for the Lord, Jerusalem would not be the city of Israelite kings, but the city of the Jebusites.

There is no part of the existence of Uzziah, or any of us for that matter, that is separate from the Lord’s hand in our lives. Our very breath is derived from Him and will someday return to Him. And yet we look to our own greatness and forget the Lord our God.

Most importantly, we were in bondage, we could not save ourselves, and yet He intervened to free us unto Himself. And even in our salvation, we are still not free from the world in which we live. Our walk is one of trial to this day, just as Israel’s was...

¹⁵ who led you through that great and terrible wilderness,

ha'molikakha bamidbar ha'gadol v'ha'nora – “who the leading of you in the wilderness, the great, and the terrible.” This is referring to the march from Egypt to Sinai and then to the border of Canaan. It may also include the time after turning from Canaan under punishment, but that is not necessarily so.

The term *ha'gadol*, or “the great,” speaks of the vastness of the area. The term *ha'nora*, or “the terrible,” speaks of that which is fearful or awesome. The location is so barren and dry that it cannot be plowed and planted. It is a vast wasteland leading to a land of abundance and promise. This wilderness is a land...

^{15 (con't)} in which were fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty land where there was no water;

nakhash saraph v'aqrav v'tsimaon asher ein mayim – “serpent fiery, and scorpion, and thirsty ground which no water.” These words are given to parallel the words “the wilderness, the great, and the terrible.” In them, there are no articles and the nouns, except “water,” are singular. This then emphasizes and highlights the terrible nature of the land.

Here, the word *tsimmaon*, or thirsty ground, is introduced. It comes from *tsame*, meaning “thirsty.” It will only be seen three times. It is concerning this horrifying, terrifying, and deadly spot that Moses recalls the Lord’s caring hand for Israel...

^{15 (con't)} who brought water for you out of the flinty rock;

ha'motsi lekha mayim mi'tsur ha'khalamish – “who the bringing forth for you water from rock the flinty.” Bringing Israel out of Egypt was only a part of the process. There was the wilderness to traverse, and that wilderness was both inhospitable and unforgiving. And yet, the Lord was the Leader of them and the Bringer forth of water. In other words, their Guide and Sustainer.

As before, the parallel to Christ should not be missed. Christ certainly led us out of bondage, but He also leads and sustains us on the path to glory. As Paul says in Philippians 1:6, “being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ.”

No matter how difficult the trek is, He is there for His people, and He will see them through to the end of what He has purposed for them. If this is not true for Israel, it is true for none of us. And neither Israel's disobedience, nor ours, will affect the final outcome of what is promised.

In this verse is another new word, *khalamish*, or "flint." It will be seen five times. It comes from *khalam*, meaning to be strong or healthy, or to dream. Not only did the Lord bring water from the flinty rock, but Moses says it was He...

¹⁶ who fed you in the wilderness with manna,

ha'maakilkha man bamidbar – "who the feeding of you manna in the wilderness." In the wilderness, the land is barren. Without water, nothing will grow. Without the growth of vegetation, there is nothing to eat. And yet, Israel survived through the ordeal. The Lord Himself became the Feeder of Israel through the giving of manna.

From verse 14 to verse 16, Moses ascribes four aspects of the care of Israel by the Lord. He is –

- the bringing out of you from land Egypt, from house slavery (14)
- the leading of you in the wilderness, the great, and the terrible (15)
- the bringing forth for you water from rock the flinty (15)
- the feeding of you manna in the wilderness (16)

One can see Christ in each description. He redeems us from bondage to sin – meaning from the power of the law (Galatians 3:13); He leads us through the trials of this earthly life (Philippians 1:6); He gives us of the Spirit (1 John 4:13); and He feeds us with Himself (John 6:54). As is consistently seen in such passages, Israel as a collective is given as a type of each one of us.

¹⁶ (con't) which your fathers did not know,

This is a general repeat of verse 3. The manna was to be instructive. The fathers had never known it, nor had those who received it known it. It was something entirely new. In a place where no food could be obtained, food was made available. This was so...

¹⁶ (con't) that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do you good in the end—

l'maan anotekha u-l'maan nasotekha l'hetivkha b'akharitekha – “to end purpose He might humble you, and to end purpose He might test you, to do you good in your latter end.” Everything about the process has an end goal and is thus given with a set purpose.

The “end” spoken of here, then, is to be the result of the time of humbling. Thus, it is entry into the promise. The humbling and the manna, however, began before the giving of the law. Therefore, the manna was to be a step into the time of the law.

But Israel failed even after the giving of the law. They did not enter the promise. And yet, they continued to be sustained for the entire forty years in the wilderness. Thus, the “end” obviously speaks of their actual entry into the promise.

Understanding this, the only two references to the manna in Deuteronomy are in this chapter. The first was in verse 3, and now Moses refers to it again here –

** So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every *word* that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.

** who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do you good in the end.

In the end, the purpose of the humbling, the hungering, and the manna was a test. How does one do good? By living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord, and by a continued dependence on the mercies of the Lord.

As we know, Christ is the Word of God. He is the embodiment of all that proceeds from the Godhead, and He is the fulfillment of the law. Therefore, for God to do good to Israel “in the end” means that Israel must come to the One who embodies the words now being given by Moses.

David lived by the word of the Lord, even if he didn't always obey it. Others obeyed the word of the Lord, but they didn't live by it. Others did neither. Thus, as much as anything else, the precept spoken here by Moses is one which ultimately involves faith and a right condition of the heart. That is clearly seen in the next words...

¹⁷ then you say in your heart,

v'amarta bilvavekha – “And you say in your heart.” The thought now returns to the words of verse 14 (when your heart is lifted up) and the time in Canaan. Moses has explained that which led up to entry into Canaan and the purpose of everything that occurred in the process. But the tendency of man is to look around, see all of his wealth and his many possessions and to say...

¹⁷ (con't) **‘My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.’**

Again, and again, the record of Israel reveals this attitude. It happened to Rehoboam, it happened to Uzziah, and it happened to King Hezekiah –

“In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death, and he prayed to the LORD; and He spoke to him and gave him a sign. ²⁵ But Hezekiah did not repay according to the favor *shown* him, for his heart was lifted up; therefore wrath was looming over him and over Judah and Jerusalem.” 2 Chronicles 32:24, 25

This is the lesson that Moses is conveying to the people. The Lord put them through times of want in order for them to remember Him in the times of abundance. Essentially, he is saying, “Remember where you came from. If not for the Lord, you would still be there. Remember the goodness of the Lord.” As he next says...

¹⁸ **“And you shall remember the LORD your God,**

For Israel, everything is contingent on remembering the Lord, the God of Israel. If they forget Him, then everything else falls to the wayside. The relationship is broken, and they will suffer. If they remember Him, then all will be well with them. Again, Moses confirms this...

¹⁸ (con't) **for *it is* He who gives you power to get wealth,**

Moses now uses the same words (power and wealth) that he used in the previous verse. There, he spoke as if one of Israel, “My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.” Here he says it is otherwise. It is the Lord who gives you power to get wealth.

Only in the recognition that the Lord is the Giver of the ability will Israel be right with Him. And Moses says that they are to acknowledge this so...

18 (con't) that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day.

The covenant Moses is referring to is that which was sworn to Abraham, and then to Isaac, and then to Jacob, as He said in Exodus 33 –

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Depart *and* go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘To your descendants I will give it.’”

-Exodus 33:1

That is repeated in Leviticus 26, also while the law was being given –

“...then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember; I will remember the land.”

-Leviticus 26:42

The words, “as *it is* this day,” mean that Israel is right on the banks of the Jordan. The promise is established, and in a short amount of time, they will cross over into the land. And yet, Moses has been speaking about the time in which Israel is in the land.

Thus, the words, “He may establish His covenant,” are ongoing. The covenant is established, and it will remain so as long as Israel remembers the Lord. That is evidenced by the next words...

19 Then it shall be, if you by any means forget the LORD your God, and follow other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish.

There is a stress in the Hebrew that is missed in the English. Twice, Moses repeats the same word to intensify the warning – “If forgetting you forget...perishing you will perish.”

However, the first repetition is second person singular – “if you, Israel, forget,” while the second repetition is second person plural – “you (all) of Israel will perish.” It is a hugely important change. The Lord does not say that Israel will perish, only those of Israel will perish.

Israel the nation must be attentive to the words being presented to them. If not, punishment will come upon Israel the people.

The Lord will only establish His covenant with the fathers as long as Israel remembers the Lord. In forgetting Him, and in serving other gods, the promised curses of the Mosaic covenant will be meted out upon them.

This was true in the exile by the Assyrians, it was true in the exile by the Babylonians, and it was true in the exile by the Romans. Israel perished because they forgot the Lord. And again, Moses says to them...

²⁰ As the nations which the LORD destroys before you, so you shall perish,

The word translated here as “nations” is *goyim*. It is the plural of *goy*, meaning a gentile. Thus, it can mean nations, gentiles, people, heathen, etc. It is even used to speak of Israel as a people at times, such as in Exodus 19:6 (and etc).

Out of twenty-seven translations checked for this sermon, all twenty-seven say “nations.” And they are all incorrect. Moses is being absolutely specific. If Israel (the nation) forgets, Israel (the people) will perish.

Now in this verse, it says, “As the gentiles (or people) whom the Lord destroys before you (plural), so you (plural) shall perish.” A comparison is not being made to the nation of Israel, but to the people of Israel. Otherwise, it would mean that Israel (the nation) would perish like all the other nations.

The importance of this is immense. Moses has been speaking to Israel in the singular since we started today, and indeed since verse 1 of the chapter when the only other second person plurals were used.

Only in the last clause of verse 19 does he switch to the plural. That continues here. The change is so obvious and striking, and yet it is completely passed over by the hand of the translators, as if the Lord could be unfaithful to His promises. Such will never be the case.

What is happening, is that Moses is now telling the people that they are actually no different as individuals than the people of the nations whom they are to dispossess.

They will be treated exactly the same. Though Israel, the nation, is peculiar and unique, Israel the people are... just people – something I'm sure they would hate to hear. Moses tells them that they, like the peoples whom the Lord destroys before them, will likewise be destroyed...

***20 (fin) because you would not be obedient to the voice of the LORD your God.**

Here Moses uses the word *eqev*, or “because,” for the second and last time in Deuteronomy. It was used in verse 7:12, and now here. It speaks of consequence and so “because” is fine. But I will again explain the word’s etymology to help you get its meaning.

It comes from the verb *aqav*, meaning the hind part, or following after. That comes from the noun *aqev*, meaning the heel, or a footprint. What Moses is conveying is that one thing will be the consequence of the other. Just as the peoples of the land were vile and were set to perish, the people of Israel can expect the same for their conduct. Where one foot steps, so will the next.

As I was typing the sermon for you today, I came to verse 19 and the change to the plural and it brought tears to my eyes. Before reading the Hebrew, I couldn't reconcile in my mind how the nation could be treated the same as the other nations.

When I realized the change to the second person, plural, I was moved enough to message Sergio, and he and I shared a few messages as I conveyed the faithfulness of God to him concerning Israel.

The word of the Lord is about many things, but one of the things it is clearly and unambiguously about is God's faithfulness. The Lord made a covenant with Israel, and He will never, never, never break faithfulness with them. As a nation, they will stand. Salvation came at their calling and it continues on forever.

As a group of people, they will perish – not entirely, but in relation to their conduct before Him. Looking for a New Testament parallel to the passage we have looked at today, we come to 2 Peter 1. There, Peter speaks of the calling of each person, the call to put their faith into practice, and of the consequences for not doing so.

Like national Israel, the Lord has made a covenant with us that He will never break. This goes so far as our actually forgetting the Lord completely. Like Israel who has done just that, and remains a nation, we can go so far from the Lord that we actually forget we

were once saved, but He never will. When the terms of the covenant are met, the salvation is guaranteed. Here is how Peter explains it –

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³ as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴ by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

⁵ But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶ to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷ to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. ⁸ For if these things are yours and abound, *you* will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; ¹¹ for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:2-11

The God we serve is awesome, glorious, and beautiful. He is ever faithful to His unfaithful people, and He will never, never, never forsake those who come to Him by faith. If you want proof of that, look to Israel. If you want reassurance of that, come back to Deuteronomy 8, verses 19 and 20 and remind yourself of this fact.

Thank God for Jesus Christ our Lord who has given us an eternal hope and an absolute guarantee of our salvation. Praise be to God for Jesus Christ our Lord. And all of God's people say....

Closing Verse: *“For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?” 1 Corinthians 4:7*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 9:1-6 *If it were up to you, your state would be a mess... (Not Because of Your Righteousness) (31st Deuteronomy Sermon)*

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of

Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

And You Shall Remember the Lord Your God

When you have eaten and are full
Then you shall bless the LORD your God
For the good land which He has given you
To Him you shall shout with joy and applaud

“Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God
By not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His
-----statutes which I command you today
Lest—when you have eaten and are full
And have built beautiful houses and dwell in them
----- as to you I say

And when your herds and your flocks multiply
And your silver and your gold are multiplied too
And all that you have is multiplied
Listen to the warning I give to you

When your heart is lifted up and you forget the LORD your God
Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from your distress
From the house of bondage
Who led you through that great and terrible wilderness

In which were fiery serpents and scorpions
And thirsty land where there was no water to drink
Who brought water for you out of the flinty rock
You must stop, consider, and think

Who fed you in the wilderness with manna
Which your fathers did not know
That He might humble you and that He might test you
To do you good in the end—even so

Then you say in your heart, cunningly and by stealth
‘My power and the might of my hand

-----have gained me this wealth

“And you shall remember the LORD your God
For it is He who gives you power to get wealth, so to you I say
That He may establish His covenant which He swore
To your fathers, as it is this day

Then it shall be, if you by any means forget the LORD your God
And follow other gods, and serve them and worship them
I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish
Famine, destruction, and mayhem

As the nations which the LORD destroys before you
So you shall perish on the path you trod
Because you would not be obedient
To the voice of the LORD your God

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 9:1-6 (Not Because of Your Righteousness)

Insightfully, and right off the bat, Albert Barnes comments on this chapter saying, “The lesson of this chapter is exactly that of Ephesians 2:8, ‘By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.’”

As obvious as that seems once you have somebody tell you, it is not something one would normally think of while toiling away through the Law of Moses. The people have been given law, they will be given more law, and in the process, they are told – again and again – that adherence to the law is necessary for them.

However, throughout the law, and even in the passage today, more than mere observance of the law is defined. Living out the law, without an upright heart, means nothing. That is testified to elsewhere – outside of the covenant people – as we will briefly look at today.

And so, as we progress, we continue to see hints of what God is up to in our return to the paradise we lost so long ago. Adam was covered by the Lord after he demonstrated faith in the Lord’s promise. Abraham was counted as righteous by simply believing the Lord; accepting His word at face value.

People outside of the covenant line are considered upright and blameless by the Lord. And even those who were under the law have found righteousness apart from the law by a mere act of faith, as Paul says in our text verse today –

Text Verse: *“Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! ³ For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, ⁴ though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: ⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*

⁷ But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by

faith; ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, ¹¹ if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.” Philippians 3:2-12

Israel is being schooled on what pleases the Lord. Through Israel’s schooling, we too can be instructed. Their history is recorded for exactly that reason, and it is a history that calls out for something more than anything they, or we, can bring out of ourselves.

Rather, it calls out for a yielding to God and a submission to what He offers at whatever time in history we live. We will see that today, and we will also begin a short chiasm with our last verse from our text today. As it begins there, we will lay it out today and then go through the rest of it next week.

Deuteronomy 9:6-13 – Breaking the Covenant

While Moses was on the mountain of God (6/3/2008 – refined in 2020)

a 9:6 You are a stiff-necked people

---- b 9:7, 8 You who came out of Egypt provoked the LORD to wrath

-----c 9:9, 10 I received two tablets of stone when on the mountain 40 days and nights

X 9:10 the words which the LORD had spoken to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire

-----c 9:11 At the end of 40 days and nights, the LORD gave me the two tablets of stone

-----b 9:12 The people who came out of Egypt acted corruptly and disobeyed the LORD

a 9:13: Indeed, they are a stiff-necked people

Great things such as justification by grace through faith, and interesting patterns such as chiasms, are just a few wonderful aspects of the marvels to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. As the Lord Has Said to You (verses 1-3)

¹“Hear, O Israel: You *are* to cross over the Jordan today,

shema Yisrael atah ober ha’yom eth ha’yarden – “Hear, Israel: you *are* passing over today the Jordan.” The words of Moses are as if it is happening right at the moment, and thus it is as if the action is already assured – it is happening, and it is today. Because of this, the word “today” is to be taken as at a point in time, and not literally on the day the word is spoken.

It places the speaking out of Deuteronomy in the light of one moment in time – regardless as to how long that time is. When we speak of “the Day of the Lord,” it doesn’t mean a single day, but a period of time that is set before the people of the world, regardless as to its actual length.

This then takes us back to the thought of the previous chapter. Moses reminded the people to observe the commandment of the Lord when they went in to possess the land. He recounted the Lord’s care of the people in the wilderness, showing them that their chastening was a part of their instruction.

Just as the Lord cared for them, so He would do so in Canaan, but they were to remember that it was the Lord who brought them in, not they themselves. To complete the chapter, he said –

“And you shall remember the LORD your God, for *it is* He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day. ¹⁹ Then it shall be, if you by any means forget the LORD your God, and follow other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish. ²⁰ As the nations which the LORD destroys before you, so you shall perish, because you would not be obedient to the voice of the LORD your God.” Deuteronomy 8:18-20

Now, Moses continues the instruction of “this day” by explaining what those nations the Lord will destroy before them are like...

^{1 (con’t)} **and go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourself,**

The thought here rotates back to the words of Chapter 7 –

“When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you,” Deuteronomy 7:1

Moses has already said who they will face. He has also explained that not only are the inhabitants jointly greater and mightier than Israel, they are individually greater and mightier than they are. And yet, they will possess the land because they will dispossess the inhabitants of the land. And this, despite them having...

¹ (con't) **cities great and fortified up to heaven,**

arim gedoloth u-betsuroth bashamayim – “cities great and fortified in the heavens.” Here Moses uses the exact same words that the moaners of Israel spoke in Deuteronomy 1:28, as they complained about the land when it was first presented to them –

“The people *are* greater and taller than we; the cities *are* great and fortified up to heaven;” Deuteronomy 1:28

Like at that time, Moses’ words now contain no article before “cities.” Also, the word “heavens” is plural and prefixed by an article – “in the heavens.” The words would normally be expected to elicit awe and fear as Moses repeats this hyperbolic statement that goes all the way back to Genesis 11. There, it said that the people determined to build a tower “whose top is in the heavens.”

The idea is that to any other army, those in Canaan would seem like gods, dwelling in inaccessible strongholds that could not be defeated. However, the Lord was to be with Israel, and so the victory was assured. Paul uses Moses’ terminology in Ephesians 6 to make a spiritual application of what is stated here –

“For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens.” Ephesians 6:12 (Holman)

Paul, being trained in the Law of Moses as a Pharisee, and then coming to Christ who is the fulfillment of the law, was able to see the direct connection between what occurred with Israel in a temporal way and what believers now face on a spiritual level.

Just as Moses reminds Israel that it is the Lord who made the victory possible, and who was then due the glory of it, so Paul makes the same connection, saying that we prevail when we put on the whole armor of God. If it is the armor of God that makes the victory possible, then it is the Lord who is to receive the glory. With this advanced understanding, Moses continues...

² **a people great and tall, the descendants of the Anakim,**

Again, Moses reaches back to the second clause of the same verse from Deuteronomy 1–

“moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakim there.” Deuteronomy 1:28

He is taking the words of the pusillanimous people who stood at the door of Canaan, and he is turning them around for this new generation to consider and understand. The Lord is, in fact, with Israel. They didn't just have the Exodus from Egypt, but they also had the Lord's care of them throughout the wilderness wanderings.

This is why in Chapter 7 Moses so carefully explained the Lord's care of them in the wilderness. As we saw then, it was to demonstrate 1) His greatness in not destroying them for rejecting Him, 2) that it is by His power that the inheritance is acquired because they are the “least of all the peoples,” 3) His love for them as a people, and 4) His faithfulness to the oath He swore to their fathers.

As was noted then concerning the third point, the Lord's love for Israel is one originally based on His love for the fathers. There is nothing intrinsically worthy of that love in them, but rather because of His nature – which is love – He then directs it to those of the covenant promises.

Before going on, we have to remind ourselves of what all of this is typologically representing, meaning salvation and obtaining a heavenly inheritance in Christ.

Israel had rejected the Lord's offer of Canaan after they left Mount Sinai. Because of that, they were sent into exile in the wilderness. And yet, they were preserved as a people through that exile. The land now stands before them, but it must be acquired through faith – the same faith that their fathers lacked.

That scenario pictured Israel's rejection of Christ, their exile among the nations, their preservation as a people because of the four points just noted a minute ago, and His offer to them – once again – to enter the inheritance.

What the Gentiles received, by faith, two thousand years ago, will be offered once again to Israel. It is good to keep reminding ourselves of the typology so that we don't get too far from what the Lord is telling us.

For those in the world who have never received Christ, or who are attempting to earn God's favor through the law, the offer is being shouted out for them to consider – “Just look at the Lord's faithfulness to unfaithful Israel! Consider it, take it to heart, and come to Christ through faith. The inheritance awaits!” For now, we return to Moses' ongoing words to the people...

² (con't) **whom you know, and of whom you heard it said, 'Who can stand before the descendants of Anak?'**

The words of Moses bear an emphasis, *asher atah yadata v'atah shamata* – “which you know and you heard.” The people standing before Moses now had heard the words of their fathers after the spies' report, which said –

“There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.”

-Numbers 13:33

The spies described the Anakim, and out went the word throughout the camp. Though it is not recorded before, Moses ironically repeats what the people called out, “Who can stand before the descendants of Anak?”

Egypt had been destroyed, water came from the rock, manna came to the people daily, the law had been received accompanied by the terrible and awesome display of the Lord, and on and on... and yet! The people worried about the descendants of Anak!

In their faithless conduct, they were rewarded for that conduct – death in the wilderness. And it was those standing before Moses now who had seen these things with their own eyes. They had watched their grandparents and parents die in the wilderness...

³Therefore understand today that the LORD your God is He who goes over before you as a consuming fire.

The Hebrew bears a strong emphasis and uses a verb to describe the Lord: *v'yadata ha'yom ki Yehovah elohekha hu ha'ober lephanekha esh okelah* – “And understand today, for Yehovah your God, He, the Passer Over before your face, fire consuming.”

In other words, “What your fathers failed to accept, you are to now understand and to acknowledge. The Lord is the One who is the Passer Over before you. He is the consuming fire.

The sight of the Lord on the mountain was, to the people, like a consuming fire. The fire of the Lord came out to consume the offerings on the altar, the fire of the Lord consumed the moaners at Kibroth Hattaavah, and the fire of the Lord consumed the two hundred and fifty rebels.

The people had seen these and other such things, and they had survived. If the Lord wanted to, He could have destroyed them all. The fact that they were there on the shore of the Jordan after the many years in the wilderness testified to the fact that the Lord both had positive intentions for them, and that He had the power and ability to destroy their enemies before them. As Moses says...

³ (con't) **He will destroy them and bring them down before you;**

Again, the Hebrew is emphatic: *hu yashmidem v'hu yakniem lephanekha* – “He will overthrow them, and He will humble them before your face.” The path will be cleared, and every obstacle will be removed from before Israel.

Further, in the use of the word translated as “bring them down,” Moses is making a pun. The word is *kana*, the root of Canaan. It signifies to humble. The Lord is the one who will humble those who are humbled. In this, it will allow for what will then be a synergistic accomplishment, as is seen in the next words...

³ (con't) **so you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly,**

Using two different words than the previous clause, Moses says, *v'horashtam v'haabadtam maher* – “and you shall dispossess them, and you shall annihilate them quickly.” The words are not in any way contradictory to Chapter 7, where it uses the same word as here which is translated as “quickly” –

“And the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you little by little; you will be unable to destroy them **at once**, lest the beasts of the field become *too* numerous for you.” Deuteronomy 7:22

It is a subjective term, used the first time in the sense of the overall process of clearing out the inhabitants of the land. Here, it is referring to the destruction of the various nations as they are brought forward for individual destruction, highlighted by the Anakim who were just mentioned. They will be destroyed quickly.

What is important about the words stated here is that the previous clause said the Lord would accomplish the destruction. Now Israel is said to be the instrument by which that occurs – “you shall.” Thus, there is a synergy between the two.

The question before us is, “Has Jesus accomplished everything necessary for us to enter the promised inheritance?” The answer is, “Yes.” And yet, if we do not act, there will be

no reception of the inheritance. The lie of the monergistic model of salvation is exposed in these Old Testament passages.

The Lord paved the way for Israel to enter the promise, but they at first rejected that path. He now sets before them the same opportunity, but Israel must choose to believe the Lord and cross the Jordan. And so, it is true with our own spiritual walk now, even after salvation.

The Lord has saved us. It is a done deal. And yet, there are battles that must be fought. We can lie down before the enemy, just as Israel could have, or we can take up the implements (Ephesians 6) of our salvation and use them to actively go forward.

Have we heard the truth? Have we been given the breastplate of righteousness? Have we been provided the gospel of peace? And so on. Of course, we have! The Lord has already accomplished all of this for us, and He has already made these things available to us.

And yet, we must do our part. As Paul says, we must “stand,” we must “gird,” we must “put on.” If we don’t, we will remain ineffective in our salvation just as Israel became ineffective in the possession of the land of their inheritance.

And when we do our part, we cannot take a mote of credit for it. We simply did what we were supposed to do because of what He has already done for us. And this is what Israel must face in the future as well. They must acknowledge that the entire process is solely of the Lord, and yet they must do their part in order to receive what the Lord has already provided.

For Israel ready to enter Canaan, they must remember the past and act upon it. Crossing the Jordan and subduing the land is as simple for them as trusting the Lord’s past performance, and then acting upon that.

For Israel in relation to Christ Jesus, they must remember the past and act upon it. They rejected Him, they went into exile, and yet they were tended to and maintained as a people through that. They will be brought forward to the place where they must face Him again. Israel must learn from their past failures, acknowledge that the Lord has faithfully proven Himself, and respond accordingly...

^{3 (con’t)} **as the LORD has said to you.**

Not only has He said it, He has done so repeatedly both from His own mouth, and through Moses who speaks forth His word –

“If you should say in your heart, ‘These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?’ — ¹⁸ you shall not be afraid of them, *but* you shall remember well what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt:” Deuteronomy 7:17

Understanding these things, and reflecting on them – whether speaking of Israel in Canaan, or a believer in Christ – all need to consider why the Lord does these things. It is not that Israel was righteous, nor is it because we are righteous. None should ever come to that conclusion...

*Our God is a consuming fire
He will destroy the enemies arrayed against you
Though their fortifications go up higher and higher
They will be torn down, and you shall go through*

*What have you to fear? The Lord is on your side
He has promised that He will carry you through
He will bring you near; the one without pride
It is just as He has promised to do*

*Nothing in all of creation can separate you
From the love of God that is found in Jesus Christ our Lord
Be confident of this; God will carry you through
There at the end stands our glorious Reward*

II. You are a Stiff-necked People (verses 4-6)

⁴ “Do not think in your heart,

al tomar bilvavekha – “Not do say in your (singular) heart.” Translating this as “think” is perfectly fine, because the heart is the seat of reasoning and understanding. To “say” in one’s heart implies thinking something is so. Because of this, the heart is the source of many woes for incorrect thinking. As Jeremiah says –

“The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*,
And desperately wicked;
Who can know it?” Jeremiah 17:9

Moses is careful to admonish Israel (the collective – as indicated by the singular “heart”), in advance, of the error of incorrect thinking concerning what is happening in relation to their entry into Canaan. It is a lesson we also need to consider as we continue. What is the inevitable conclusion Israel is bound to make...?

⁴ (con’t) **after the LORD your God has cast them out before you,**

Israel will go into a land that the Lord prepared for them. It is a good and productive land, it is a land that had everything necessary for them already available to just pick up life as if they had been there for generations, and it will come through their simply acting in obedience to what the Lord told them to do.

What is it that will inevitably go through their minds, unless they are told – in advance – that it is otherwise? The answer is that they will be...

⁴ (con’t) **saying, ‘Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land’;**

“Look at all the Lord has done for us! We must be pretty swell for the Lord to have done it. We must be deserving of what has happened, and because the Lord is righteous, we must – likewise – be righteous! We are the cat’s meow and the bee’s knees.”

Examples of this type of thinking are found throughout the Old Testament. Isaiah 65 provides a beautiful example –

“I was sought by *those who* did not ask *for Me*;
I was found by *those who* did not seek Me.
I said, ‘Here I am, here I am,’
To a nation *that* was not called by My name.
² I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people,
Who walk in a way *that is* not good,
According to their own thoughts;
³ A people who provoke Me to anger continually to My face;
Who sacrifice in gardens,
And burn incense on altars of brick;
⁴ Who sit among the graves,
And spend the night in the tombs;
Who eat swine’s flesh,
And the broth of abominable things is *in* their vessels;

⁵Who say, 'Keep to yourself,
Do not come near me,
For I am holier than you!
These *are* smoke in My nostrils,
A fire that burns all the day.'" Isaiah 65:1-5

Paul uses Isaiah's words to describe Israel –

"But to Israel he says:
'All day long I have stretched out My hands
To a disobedient and contrary people.'" Romans 10:21

But who is the New Testament's premier example of self-righteousness? The Pharisees. They looked to their selves as the epitome of righteousness and favor with God. They were of the covenant people, they possessed wealth and status, and therefore they thought that the Lord must truly be pleased with them.

But from what tradition did Paul arise? Yes! From the Pharisees, just as we saw in our text verse today. Did Paul deserve the inheritance? Was it because of his righteousness that it came about? On the contrary, he said, "and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness."

Paul understood that the inheritance was not because of who he was, what culture he came from, what schooling and instruction he had, or in his obedience to the law. He obtained the inheritance by faith. He crossed the Jordan, or believed in what Christ did, and nothing more. And so, in obtaining the inheritance, he wasn't there because of his righteousness. Nor was it so for us in Christ or for Israel in Canaan...

⁴ (con't) **but *it is* because of the wickedness of these nations *that* the LORD is driving them out from before you.**

A new noun, *rishah*, is introduced here. It will be used again in the next verse. It signifies a wrongdoing, but especially in the moral sense. Thus, it is wickedness. The Lord has a land of promise where Israel is to dwell. He will dwell with His people in that land. But the Lord is holy and therefore His people are to be separate from unholiness. He is righteous, and therefore the people are to be righteous.

The assumption of Israel, and the assumption of many in the church, is that because we are selected to participate in this state of holiness and righteousness that we must possess our own righteousness. This is the lie that our heart is brimming over with.

It was (and remains to this day) an infection in Israel, and it is an infection in the hearts of the church right now. But Moses is telling Israel, in advance, that they are not to claim it is because of their righteousness at all. Rather, there is wickedness that must be purged from the land.

And that wickedness is reflected in those things that are contrary to the holiness of the Lord. If Israel participates in those unholy things then they will, by default, demonstrate their own wickedness. The law is supposedly given to avoid that. As Leviticus says –

“For I *am* the LORD who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I *am* holy.” Leviticus 11:45

Why would the nations of Canaan need to be exterminated if Israel was already righteous? They have the Law! If that were a means to righteousness, then the inhabitants would not need to be exterminated. Israel could do its thing and the nations could do their thing, and everything would be fine. But such is not the case.

Now put the church in place of Israel. We are given the inheritance. That is assured already. And yet, we cannot claim it was because of our righteousness. The fact that we accepted Christ because He died for our sins means that we were sinners.

And the fact that we – we who have entered the inheritance – must put on the whole armor of God, shows us that we are still unrighteous in and of ourselves.

Israel’s position in Canaan was as a holy people to the Lord. Because of this, they were to conduct themselves in righteousness before the Lord – driving out the wicked in order to be kept from their unrighteousness.

Our position is a holy people of the Lord. Thus, we are to display His righteousness to the people among whom we dwell. The way we do that is to drive out the wickedness from ourselves, conforming ourselves to Him.

Israel is the template, the law is the standard, and perfect execution of the law is the expectation. Israel failed because the expectation was impossible for them to meet. We

(Israel someday and we today) will prevail because the expectation is realized in Christ – who alone is our righteousness. This is what Israel will someday realize –

“Behold, *the* days are coming,” says the LORD,
“That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness;
A King shall reign and prosper,
And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.
⁶In His days Judah will be saved,
And Israel will dwell safely;
Now this *is* His name by which He will be called:
THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Jeremiah 23:5, 6

Israel is being schooled in the Source of righteousness, it is something they – in and of themselves – did not possess...

⁵ ***It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart***

lo b'tsidqatekha u-b'yosher l'vavekha – “Not in your righteousness, and in uprightness to your heart.” Now, another new noun is introduced, *yosher*, or uprightness. That comes from the verb *yashar*, signifying what is straight or right.

Moses is rewording the previous verse to ensure that not only does Israel not think to themselves that it is because of their righteousness, but so that they know that the notion is entirely excluded.

But in these words, he goes further. In saying, “or the uprightness of your heart,” he is showing that righteousness is not an externally achieved state. In other words, as Keil says, it is “to indicate briefly that outward works do not constitute true righteousness.”

Rather, works must be of faith. If they are not of faith, then they are useless. This is more fully fleshed out by the author of Hebrews, and then the examples are used by James in some of the most misunderstood verses of the Bible.

Everything comes back to the heart and its properly directed faith in, and love of, the Lord. Understanding this, Moses says...

^{5 (con't)} ***that you go in to possess their land,***

The pronoun is emphatic, *atah ba lareshet eth artsam* – “you go in to possess their land.” Not only should Israel not think the Lord is dealing with them because of their righteousness, such is definitely not the case. In them, there is absolutely no reason that they are preferred above anyone else.

The Lord could have chosen any people group and there would have been as much righteousness in them as in Israel. Rather, they are being brought in for an entirely different reason. Actually, two reasons, beginning with...

^{5 (con't)} **but because of the wickedness of these nations *that* the LORD your God drives them out from before you,**

The first reason is based on the moral nature of the Lord in relation to the conduct of the land’s inhabitants. It goes all the way back to Genesis 15, but it is also connected to the second reason. The Lord said to Abraham that He is Yehovah who brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give him the land of Canaan. After that, He said –

“Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet complete.” Genesis 15:15, 16

The Lord had a set marker placed upon the Amorites who dwelt in Canaan. That marker was one of incurred iniquity. When the level of their iniquity had risen to the height of His marker, as is based upon His moral character, the time for their judgment was set.

This shows the gracious and patient nature of the Lord. The promise to Abraham was made, but it would not be implemented until the Amorites had been given the chance to seek Him while He could be found.

We can know this is true because Job, a man not of the covenant people, was considered a blameless and upright man before the Lord. Among others, who were outside of the covenant line, Job was considered a “son of God” through faith in the promise of the coming Messiah, as is recorded in Job 1:6.

Moses is clear that the Lord was driving out the inhabitants of the land because of the people’s wickedness, not because of either Israel’s righteousness, or because of the uprightness of their heart. But there is a second reason, notably connected to the first...

^{5 (con't)} **and that He may fulfill the word which the LORD swore to your fathers,**

u-l'maan haqim eth ha'dabar asher nishba Yehovah la'avotekha – “and to the end purpose to confirm the word which swore Yehovah to your fathers.” The words here are based on the Lord’s love for the fathers (Deuteronomy 4:37), and on His covenant-keeping faithfulness to them (Deuteronomy 7:8).

It is the covenant faithfulness that Moses highlights here. The love is what leads to the word, the word of the Lord is an oath, and the oath must stand because it is the word of the Lord. This oath to the fathers was specifically...

⁵ (con't) **to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.**

l'avraham, l'yitshaq, u-l'yaaqov – “to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.” It wasn’t just to Abraham, which was then inclusive of Isaac and Jacob, but rather it was to each of them in turn. The word which the Lord swore to these men was given, it was binding, and it continues to this day.

And this brings in an important point. If the promise is made to these fathers – all three of them – and that promise is of the land inheritance, and if that land inheritance is typologically picturing Christ and the inheritance of the heavenly kingdom, then how can it be that the church has replaced Israel?

If the promise were only made to Abraham, one could make that argument, and indeed the world is full of such people. But because the promise is to Isaac and Jacob as well, and because Israel is the recipient of that promise, then it cannot be that the church has replaced Israel. No land promise is given to the gentile-led church.

The author of Hebrews specifically says that entering the land of Canaan did not equate to entering the promised rest. He proves that by citing David who wrote his words many years after Joshua was dead. Israel, the collective whole, is who is being addressed in these verses by Moses. They are consistently in the singular.

Though the earthly inheritance of Canaan is being referred to, it is only given as a typological picture of the final inheritance found in Christ. And it will come upon them someday when they come to understand what Moses finishes our verses with...

⁶ Therefore understand that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness,

Moses again repeats the same thought. The good land set before them is being given to the people not because of their righteousness. Rather, because of the continued repetition, such an idea is wholly excluded.

And it thus typifies the salvation of each one of us. Again, as Paul says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God,⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.” Israel had done nothing to merit what they were being given, and the believer has done nothing to merit what is bestowed upon us by God.

These words in Deuteronomy shout out that Moses is truly the author. Any other person would have lessened the force of the constant repetition we have seen, and they would certainly have excluded our final words of the day...

***6 (fin) for you *are* a stiff-necked people.**

ki am qesheh oreph atah – “for people stiff neck you.” This is a favorite expression of both the Lord and of Moses concerning them. It is used by one or the other eight times in the books of Moses.

The phrase is normally explained as being obstinate, but it is more than that. It signifies a perverse people who want to behave in a way that is both unacceptable and unreasonable, even in spite of the consequences they will face.

It is a metaphor which finds its source in an animal which will not submit itself to yoke or bridle. It stiffens itself against the pull of the rein, even if it hurts.

These closing words of today set the stage for the many charges against Israel that Moses will lay out in the coming verses, proving to them that the term “stiff-necked” is both appropriate and just. His words will also confirm the fact that they are lacking any righteousness at all.

They are the sons of their fathers who acted corruptly from the moment they left Egypt. Moses will instruct them in how they can avoid continuing on in that vein and to be considered as right and acceptable before the Lord.

And though Moses will speak out words of law to them through the rest of the book, it will not be that law that will bring them closer to the Lord. It will be the right and

pleasing state of their heart which softens their neck and makes them pliable to the reins of their Master.

Until that state is realized, the battle between the two will continue. It is a battle which continues for them today, and it is a battle that continues on in the lives of most of the world as well. The Lord has done the work, He has laid out the path to glory, and He stands as the door at the end of it for any to come through.

And yet, man stubbornly turns his neck and attempts to walk his own path. Like unreasoning animals, we buck against the goads, and we only harm ourselves in the process. The Lord cannot accept us in such a state. Only when our hearts are willing to acknowledge that we need the righteousness of Christ can we then call out for what He offers.

The good news for us is that when we do, He will hear, He will respond, and He will give us our part in the inheritance offered to His people. May you yield your stiff neck to Him today.

Closing Verse: *“But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,²² even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Romans 3:21-24*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 9:7-17 *While the people stayed below, Moses climbed up higher...* (And the Mountain Burned with Fire) (32nd Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Not Because of Your Righteousness

“Hear, O Israel: You are to cross over the Jordan today
And go in to dispossess nations, at least seven
Greater and mightier than yourself
Cities great and fortified up to heaven

A people great and tall
The descendants of the Anakim, but don't be in shock
Whom you know, and of whom you heard it said
'Who can stand before the descendants of Anak?

Therefore understand today
That the LORD your God – He who is infinitely higher
Is He who goes over before you
As a consuming fire

He will destroy them and bring them down before you
So you shall drive them out, so you shall do
And destroy them quickly
As the LORD has said to you

"Do not think in your heart, after the LORD your God has cast
-----them out before you, saying
'Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in
-----to possess this land
But it is because of the wickedness of these nations
That the LORD is driving them out from before you
-----please understand

It is not because of your righteousness
Or the uprightness of your heart that you go in to possess their land
-----that He will so do
But because of the wickedness of these nations
That the LORD your God drives them out from before you

And that He may fulfill the word (His word is true)
Which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac
-----and Jacob too

Therefore understand that the LORD your God
Is not giving you this good land
To possess because of your righteousness
For you are a stiff-necked people; so you shall understand

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word

Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 9:7-17 **(And the Mountain Burned with Fire)**

In today's passage, Moses takes us through the account of what occurred when he was on Mount Sinai after the initial giving of the Ten Commandments. Moses is recounting this story to give weight to a point that he made in the passage we looked at last week.

For Israel, they should pay heed to what is said because it still applies to them today – in several ways. They have the same nature and character that Moses proclaimed then, and which he will explain today. They also have the same need for mercy that was needed towards the end of our passage.

It is the repeated theme of the Bible, man needs release from sin, sin comes through law, and therefore, man needs release from the law. If that doesn't happen, all that man can expect is a sad ending when he is forever separated from the goodness of God.

But please understand, this is our default position because of what Adam did. God doesn't want it this way. That is evidenced in the fact that He has gone through the entire plan of redemption, as is outlined in the Bible, to have our default setting changed. For those of us who have come to Christ, that is done. For Israel as a people, that time is yet ahead...

Text Verse: *"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—³² not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD.³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."* Jeremiah 31:31-33

Israel, the people who God covenanted with, failed to see the importance of Christ Jesus. In their rejection of Him, they remained (and remain to this day) a people bound to the law. It is a law that demands a penalty for violating it.

Moses understood that, and today he will begin to take action to rectify it for his people. But they remained a people under the law. Yes, they were granted temporary release, year by year, under the provisions of the renewed covenant they received, but even that only anticipated a future, final, and full release that can only be found in their Messiah. Someday, they will get it right.

For now, the lesson of the law continues, as does a short chiasm that we began last week. We can look at that in review before we get into our sermon verses –

Deuteronomy 9:6-13 – Breaking the Covenant

While Moses was on the mountain of God (6/3/2008 – refined in 2020)

a 9:6 You are a stiff-necked people

---- b 9:7, 8 You who came out of Egypt provoked the LORD to wrath

-----c 9:9, 10 I received two tablets of stone when on the mountain 40 days and nights

X 9:10 the words which the LORD had spoken to you on the mountain from the
midst of the fire

-----c 9:11 At the end of 40 days and nights, the LORD gave me the two tablets of stone

----b 9:12 The people who came out of Egypt acted corruptly and disobeyed the LORD

a 9:13: Indeed, they are a stiff-necked people

As you can see, the center of the chiasm speaks of the words of the Lord that were spoken from the midst of the fire. And, you can see that the outer parts of the chiasm speak of Israel as a stiff-necked people. The two thoughts together don't bode very well for Israel.

Do they want to remain under this law? Do you? The very thought is suicidal because we are all a bit like Israel. We are stiff-necked and incapable of submitting ourselves to such a weight and a burden.

We all have choices to make, and we will continue to look over the choice of the law today. Hopefully you will decide to opt for another avenue, one with a light and easy yoke that you can readily submit to. That is the one Christ Jesus offers. It is a precious truth that is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Written with the Finger of God (verses 7-10)

⁷“Remember! Do not forget

The translation is correct. There is a stress on the words: *zakor al tishkakh* – “Remember! Do not forget.” The words are second person singular. Moses is speaking to the people collectively. He is heavily stressing his words in order to ensure that Israel does not ever feel they deserve what they have received. In fact, exactly the opposite is

true. Not only did they not deserve being granted the inheritance, the opposite is the case.

The promise was to the fathers, and they, as a group, were the recipients of it. And yet, it is they, Israel, who should have been completely destroyed for their behavior. Moses wants them to not only know it for what he will convey concerning their past actions, but for their state at any given time in the future...

7 (con't) how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath

The words of this verse take us back to last week's passage –

"It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God drives them out from before you, and that He may fulfill the word which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. ⁶Therefore understand that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people."
-Deuteronomy 9:5, 6

Moses said that inheriting the land was not because they were righteous or upright in heart. Rather, they are a stiff-necked people. He is now reminding them of that fact. It is they, Israel, who provoked the Lord their God to wrath. Again, the words are in the singular. He is the Lord God of Israel, and it is they as a nation that provoked Him to wrath. But more, it was...

7 (con't) in the wilderness.

Israel had been in bondage in Egypt. The fact that they were in the wilderness meant that they were not in Egypt any longer. That didn't come about by their own power – for they had none. Rather, as Moses said to them in Chapter 7 –

"...you shall remember well what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt: ¹⁹the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs and the wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm, by which the LORD your God brought you out." Deuteronomy 7:18, 19

Moses is building his case, step by step, to solidify the facts of Israel's history, its state before the Lord, and their state as the people of the Lord. They are, but it is only

because of His covenant promises, and not because of anything of value in them. They had proven it to be otherwise...

7 (con't) From the day that you departed from the land of Egypt until you came to this place,

A transition takes place in these words. The Hebrew says, *"l'min ha'yom asher yatsata meerets mitsrayim ad boakem ad ha'maqom hazeh* – from the day which you (singular) departed from land Egypt until you (plural – you all) came to the place, the this."

This change to the plural will continue into Chapter 10. He goes from speaking to all the people collectively to speaking to them all individually. In essence, "from the day that you, Israel, departed from the land of Egypt until all of you Israelis came to this place."

The words of this clause define the term of the previous clause, "in the wilderness." They provoked the Lord to wrath when they left Egypt, and they continued to do so, even until the place where they now sat, right on the border of the inheritance. The period extends throughout the entire time of their specific calling as a people.

As this is so, it also includes their time since the giving of the law. They had entered into the covenant with the Lord, and yet they continued to provoke Him to wrath after that.

7 (con't) you have been rebellious against the LORD.

Rather than "'against' the Lord," it reads *mamrim heyitem im Yehovah* – "rebellious you have been with Yehovah." Using the word *im*, or with, makes the act especially personal. They are His people, and He is their God, and yet they were constantly rebellious with Him.

It is reflective of the meaning of the name Israel, or He strives with God. The striving can be with God, for God, or with God, against God. Moses notes they had been rebellious with Him, against Him. As this happened even until the present time, it means that the law was not something that brought them any nearer to Him. Rather...

8 Also in Horeb

u-b'khorev – "And in Horeb." The sense of the word "and" is "even." In other words, "Even in the very sight of the mountain where the Lord's glory was on display, and where you received the law. Even there..."

8 (con't) you provoked the LORD to wrath,

It is the same word that was just used in verse 7 –

7 – “You (singular, Israel) provoked the Lord your God to wrath.”

8 – “You all (plural) provoked the Lord to wrath.

Moses is probably doing this to let every person know that they are equally to blame. They cannot blame their fathers. They cannot blame “everyone else.” And, they cannot blame just a few miscreants. Rather, each and every person must shoulder a part of the blame of provoking the Lord to wrath. There He was, on top of the mountain, right in full sight. As it said in Exodus 24 –

“The sight of the glory of the LORD *was* like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel. ¹⁸ So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.” Exodus 24:17, 18

Just because Moses was the only one at that time receiving the law, the presence of the Lord was right there, in full sight. Despite this, they provoked the Lord to anger even then...

8 (con't) so that the LORD was angry *enough* with you to have destroyed you.

Here Moses uses a word, *anaph*, that he introduced into the Bible in verse 1:37. He used it again in verse 4:21. It comes from a primitive root meaning, “to breathe hard.” In both instances, he was referring to the anger of the Lord against him, but on account of the doings of the people.

Now, he says that the anger was *bakem*, or “in you,” meaning with the people themselves. The Lord’s fury was so great that it was as if He was huffing against them for what they had done. Moses now recounts exactly what brought that about, saying...

⁹ When I went up into the mountain

ba’aloti ha’harah – “In my going up the mountain.” Saying, “In my going up,” it ties the words to the previous verse which said, *u-b’khorev*, or “And in Horeb.”

The last thing Moses would have considered is that in His going up the mountain, the very mountain in which the people were located and where they saw the awesome display of the Lord – while he was up there – they would fall into apostasy. In fact, Moses highlights the reason for his going up. It was...

⁹ (con't) **to receive the tablets of stone,**

These words were specifically stated in Exodus 24 –

Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, ¹⁰ and they saw the God of Israel. And *there was* under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in *its* clarity. ¹¹ But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. So they saw God, and they ate and drank.

¹² Then the LORD said to Moses, “Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them.” Exodus 24:9-12

Not only had the people seen the display of the Lord, but Aaron, Aaron’s two oldest sons, and seventy chosen leaders of Israel had also gone up and eaten a meal in the presence of the Lord. This is especially important to remember when we get to verse 20. It was only after these events that Moses then ascended alone with Joshua to receive...

⁹ (con't) **the tablets of the covenant which the LORD made with you,**

lukhot ha'berit asher karat Yehovah imakem – “tablets the covenant which cut Yehovah with you (plural).” Moses is continuing to make this personal for each and every person before him now. It is true that many were born after the event happened, and yet he is indicating that they are all complicit in what occurred.

The Lord had cut a covenant with them, Moses was going to get the tablets that contained the very words of that covenant, and to bring them back as a witness to the people of what they had agreed to. Moses next describes his situation during that time...

⁹ (con't) **then I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights.**

This is recorded in Exodus 24:18. It was during this time that Moses received all of the details for the construction of the tabernacle and everything associated with it, including who would fabricate everything, who would minister as priest, and so on.

The number forty in Scripture signifies “a period of *probation, trial, and chastisement.*” This was certainly the case for Israel while Moses was on the mountain. They were under probation and they failed to measure up. They stayed below, eventually committed their great sin, and as it says in Exodus 32 –

“‘Tomorrow *is* a feast to the LORD.’⁶ Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.” Exodus 32:5, 6

While they were below with their false god feasting, Moses was on the mountain with the Lord fasting. As he says...

⁹ (con’t) **I neither ate bread nor drank water.**

This was not previously recorded in the Exodus account. Moses fills this detail in for the people to see the contrast between themselves and their conduct, and him and his conduct, before the Lord. This time of probation and trial parallels that which Jesus faced after He was baptized –

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.² And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.³ Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”

⁴ But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”

⁵ Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple,⁶ and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written:

‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’

and,

‘In *their* hands they shall bear you up,
Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’”

⁷ Jesus said to him, “It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’”

⁸ Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.”

¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’”

¹¹ Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

Matthew 4:1-11

¹⁰ Then the LORD delivered to me two tablets of stone written with the finger of God,

After the Lord laid out the details of the law, He delivered a written copy of it to Moses. The words are similar to Exodus 31 –

“He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.” Exodus 31:18

In Exodus 31, it calls them *shene lukhot even* – “two tablets stone.” Here it says *shene lukhot ha’abanim* – “two tablets the stones.” This shows us that the words are not simply copied from Exodus, but that Moses is recalling to mind what he was given.

It is a subtle proof of Mosaic authorship. If this was written by another person who simply copied the Exodus account, it would have said the same thing both times. In both, however it says *ketuvim b’etsbah Elohim* – “written in finger of God.” This term, “in finger of God,” is then explained in Exodus 32 –

“The tablets *were* written on both sides; on the one *side* and on the other they were written. ¹⁶ Now the tablets *were* the work of God, and the writing *was* the writing of God engraved on the tablets.” Exodus 32:15, 16

It is God who accomplished the task of writing the words upon the stone. It is not that Moses received the words and then chiseled out what he was told, but that the Lord Himself engraved the words upon the stone. In this, the same word for write, *katav*, is used both here and in Jeremiah 31 – our text verse.

The Lord wrote the law upon the tablets of stone, and He promised that He would write His law upon the people’s hearts. Each step of the process is intended to show us our need for Christ, and of how God will work through Him to make our reconciliation complete.

¹⁰ (con't) **and on them were all the words which the LORD had spoken to you on the mountain**

In other words, the tablets contained the Ten Commandments that were spoken out by the Lord in the presence of all of the people. Just what was conveyed to them was exactly what was written.

What this means is that what was recorded there was to be feared. The people feared the display of the Lord, but the display was to alert them to the nature of the Lord in relation to His law. The words of this clause and the next form the center of the chiasm we looked at earlier. The terror and power were conveyed because of the giving of the law. That is seen in the next words...

¹⁰ (con't) **from the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly.**

The people were assembled to hear the law. The fire accompanied the speaking forth of the law, and it is from where the words issued forth. The fire was to impress upon their minds the nature of the word of the Lord. As it says in Jeremiah 23:29, “‘Is not my word like a fire?’ says the Lord.”

*The word of God, written on tablets of stone
It is His word and we must obey
But for our sins, He will atone
Yes, our transgressions and sin He will put away*

*This is possible when we have faith in His promise
It is what pleases Him – faith in His word
When we are not like a doubting Thomas
He grants forgiveness when our faith is heard*

*This is the marvel of what God has done in Christ
He offers us life where once death reigned
He set the value and the condition has been priced
Through faith in His Son, eternal life can now be gained*

II. You Had Sinned Against the Lord Your God (verses 11-17)

¹¹ **And it came to pass, at the end of forty days and forty nights, that the LORD gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant.**

One can see the purpose of the set period of forty days here. As noted, it is a period of *probation, trial, and chastisement*. Moses didn't know this. He simply went up the mountain and received the law. He was totally unaware of what was occurring at the base of the mountain, and his reaction shows that he never expected such a thing to occur.

He, representing the law, thought that obedience to the law was possible. But the Lord already knew that this was not the case. The Lord had set the period of time, that period was now complete, and He gave to Moses the tablets as a witness to the fact that what the people heard was exactly what the people had violated.

In fact, He ties the handing over of the tablets to Moses in with exactly that thought, as is seen in the next words...

¹² “Then the LORD said to me, ‘Arise, go down quickly from here,

The words follow closely after Exodus 32:7, 8 and they carry a sense of urgency: *qum red maher mizeh* – “Arise! Descend quickly from this (place).” This is then followed by the same surprising words from Exodus...

^{12 (con't)} for your people whom you brought out of Egypt have acted corruptly;

The Lord says *ammekha*, “your people.” As seen in Exodus, this carries one of two possibilities – 1) The Lord is telling Moses that the people have sinned and they require a mediator to intercede for them. Or, 2) the Lord has disavowed them. The covenant which united them was broken and they are no longer His.

It is actually a mixture of both. The Lord distanced Himself from the people, but He knew the tie of Moses' blood relationship was permanent. In verse 14, He offers a new beginning through Moses, but because of Moses' faithfulness to his people, the Lord will continue the covenant between Himself and Israel. For now...

^{12 (con't)} they have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them;

saru maher – “they have turned aside quickly.” Using the same word, *maher*, or quickly, the Lord is tying in the command to Moses with the actions of the people. If they have turned so quickly from the proper path, you must quickly appear before them. Time is of the essence, because...

¹² (con't) **they have made themselves a molded image.'**

Not only had they made a molded image, but they had substituted it for the Lord. Aaron had said, "This *is* your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!" After that, he said, "Tomorrow *is* a feast to the Lord." In other words, he had equated the calf to Yehovah.

The irony of this action was immense. Israel had waited for the Lord's promise to Abraham for over four hundred years. And yet, they could not wait for Moses' return from the Lord for a mere forty days. Their shortsightedness and rebellion reflected the nature of their hearts. Moses continues, showing this...

¹³ **"Furthermore the LORD spoke to me, saying, 'I have seen this people, and indeed they are a stiff-necked people.**

The Hebrew doesn't say "spoke," it says, "And the Lord said to me, saying." The difference is minor but significant. When using *amar*, or said, it signifies participation by the one being addressed. In this case, the participation will be revealed in the next verse.

For now, these words close out the chiasm that began in verse 6. Moses told the people that they were stiff-necked. He then set about to explain to them why this was so. Even at the most important of all times, while camped around the mountain of God – and just after having received the law from the midst of the fire – the people rebelled against the Lord and provoked Him to anger.

If nothing else were to be held against them, this would be enough to prove that they were, in fact, stiff-necked, just as the Lord had said, and just as Moses had repeated. They were unwilling to bend their necks and submit to the yoke of the Lord's law. Such an attitude rightly deserved the Lord's punishment...

¹⁴ **Let Me alone,**

hereph mimeni – "Desist from me." The word is *raphah*. It conveys the idea of letting go or to slacken. The Lord begins testing Moses through this word. "If you will back off, I will take action against them..."

¹⁴ (con't) **that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven;**

The Hebrew is plural – “heavens.” It says in both Exodus and Deuteronomy that the Lord spoke to the assembly from the heavens. That was from the fire, and so now the meaning behind the fire is revealed. The Lord who spoke to them from the fire out of the heavens would turn that display of fire into judgment, blotting out their name from under those same heavens. Next...

¹⁴ (con't) **and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they.'**

This is where the use of *amar* is significant. The Lord “said” to Moses. That includes a sense of participation. After completing His destruction of Israel, the Lord would then build up a new nation through Moses. If Moses desisted from the Lord and stood back while He destroyed Israel, the Lord would then build up a house through him. But Moses was having none of that...

¹⁵ **“So I turned and came down from the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire;**

It is two separate clauses, but the symbolism has to be taken as a whole. The mountain represents the governmental authority of the Lord. Moses, or He Who Draws Out, draws out from the Lord the law of the Lord. It is he who descends from the place of governmental authority where, as it says, *v'hahar boer baesh* – “and the mountain is burning in the fire.”

The same fire of verse 10, where the Lord spoke *mitok ha'esh*, or “from midst the fire,” is referred to here. Moses represents the law coming from that place of government authority in judgment. As it says...

¹⁵ (con't) **and the two tablets of the covenant were in my two hands.**

u'shene lukhot ha'berit al shete yadai – “And two tablets the covenant upon two my hands.” The wording is precise and specific. The tablets were resting upon his hands. Unless they were teeny, or unless he worked out with Schwarzenegger – neither of which would be the case, and both for obvious reasons – they were on his hands and resting upon his breast as he carried them down the mountain.

The symbolism is perfectly clear. The law, the law broken by Israel – open and in full view – is coming down the mountain of governmental authority from the fire of judgment, and thus only judgment should be expected. The voice spoke from the fire, the words of command were given, and the people feared greatly.

But their fear was misplaced. It wasn't in the law, but in the display that accompanied the law. However, the display only came because of the giving of the law. Lesson: the law can only bring judgment; it cannot bring life.

¹⁶ And I looked, and behold,

The translation is precise. Moses was literally astonished at what he beheld. He had gone up the mountain to receive the word of the Lord at their request. When they made that petition, the Lord said –

“I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They are right *in* all that they have spoken. ²⁹ Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!” Deuteronomy 5:28, 29

Moses was surely proud of them for their heart, and he left them feeling secure that they would persevere in that state while he was gone. And yet...

¹⁶ (con't) you had sinned against the LORD your God—had made for yourselves a molded calf!

Here is Moses coming down, as instructed, with the tablets of stone. What is written in stone is permanent; it cannot be erased. The very words inscribed on the tablets were broken by the people who had agreed to them.

The law stood as a witness against them, and against what they had done. The first two of the Ten Commandments testified to this. They had another god before the Lord, and they had made it as an image, calling it the Lord. Within the span of a mere forty days, they had failed in their probationary test...

¹⁶ (con't) You had turned aside quickly from the way which the LORD had commanded you.

Moses repeats the word of the Lord to him from atop the mountain. The people had turned aside *maher*, or quickly. Earlier, we saw that Jesus was baptized and then He immediately went through his forty days of testing. This is what happened to Israel, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians –

“Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, ² all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³ all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. ⁵ But with most of them God was not well pleased, for *their bodies* were scattered in the wilderness.

⁶ Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. ⁷ And do not become idolaters as *were* some of them. As it is written, ‘The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.’” 1 Corinthians 10:1-7

The people had been baptized into Moses in the cloud and the sea. They were driven into the wilderness and presented with the law, and within forty days they failed. Jesus was baptized into Moses (to fulfill all righteousness) by John, a prophet of the Law of Moses. He was driven into the wilderness while under the law, and through forty days of testing, He prevailed. For now, Moses says...

*** 17 (fin) Then I took the two tablets and threw them out of my two hands and broke them before your eyes.**

In Exodus, it says that Moses broke these at the foot of the mountain. Here, it says that he broke them before their eyes. They must have seen him coming at some point, and jointly looked towards him. At this time, and because of his anger at what he saw, he threw them down in their sight.

This shows that his act was purposeful. He didn't just drop them in a fit of passion, but what he did was intentional and specifically for them to see him do it. It, thus, signifies the annulment of the covenant.

In their agreeing to the law and then breaking it, the word of God was made of no effect. But just as important, it is actually a petition for mercy. If he wanted Israel destroyed, as the Lord suggested He would do, Moses would have brought the tablets forward and held them over the people, showing them that the coming punishment was just and asking for it to be meted out.

Rather, in their breaking of the covenant, Moses, as the designated mediator, was anticipating its annulment by destroying what the Lord had written on the tablets. This act of breaking the tablets is never mentioned in the negative by God later. In other

words, it is to be considered as a justifiable act by Moses. As the mediator, the Lord has seen his actions and will next hear his petition for mercy.

But what we see here is giving us a picture of a portion of the story of redemption. It is a picture of our spiritual state. The laws of God are fixed and unchanging, but they can be annulled. In this, God knew that Moses would break them.

This first set of tablets pictures Adam. The tablets were made by God and engraved by God. Adam was created by God and he was given a law by God, but he broke that law. What Adam needed after that was mercy. What Israel needs is mercy as well. This is what Moses will petition for in our next set of verses and it is what will be granted.

In Chapter 10, we will see how this will be accomplished in another pictorial display. What is important to understand here is that the law of God is set. It cannot be amended by man. It can either be adhered to, or it can be annulled by God who gave it, but we either have to meet the law, or we will face the judgment of God. This is the message of the Bible.

God has given law to man, man has broken that law, and man stands condemned before God because of that. Israel's reception of the Law of Moses only highlights that fact. It is God's standard, and it must be met. But God gives us an option as to how that can come about.

We can attempt to meet His standard on our own, or we can meet it vicariously, through another. God does give us that option. In the first option, we will fail, and we will be condemned. In the case of the second option, if we choose the right Substitute to fulfill its demands for us, we will be saved.

And the only suitable Substitute for that to accomplish this is Jesus Christ. Only He was born without original sin, and only He fulfilled the law perfectly. It is only through Christ that we can meet God's perfect standard, and so I would ask you today to consider this and to be sure that you settle your eternal destiny with God right away. Call on Christ, be forgiven for the sins of your soul, and be reconciled to God through the perfection of His Christ, our Lord Jesus.

Closing Verse: *"You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; ³ clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart."* 2 Corinthians 3:2, 3

Next Week: Deuteronomy 9:18-29 *During this time, will Israel be restored?* (Forty Days and Forty Nights Before the Lord) (33rd Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

And the Mountain Burned with Fire

“Remember! Do not forget how you provoked
The LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness
From the day that you departed from the land of Egypt
-----until you came to this place
You have been rebellious against the LORD; you are such a mess

Also in Horeb you provoked the LORD to wrath
So you remember, and as you did do
So that the LORD was angry enough
With you to have destroyed you

When I went up into the mountain to receive the tablets of stone
The tablets of the covenant which the LORD made with you
Then I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights
I neither ate bread nor drank water; neither did I do

Then the LORD delivered to me two tablets of stone
-----written with the finger of God
And on them were all the words, from the day when you all
-----were trembly
Which the LORD had spoken to you on the mountain
From the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly

And it came to pass
At the end of forty days and forty nights, as time does track
That the LORD gave me the two tablets of stone
The tablets of the covenant, to take back

“Then the LORD said to me, ‘Arise, go down quickly from here
For your people whom you brought out of Egypt

Have acted corruptly; they have quickly turned aside from the way
-----which I commanded them
They have made themselves a molded image; into idolatry
-----they have tripped

“Furthermore the LORD spoke to me, saying
‘I have seen this people, and indeed they are a stiff-necked people
-----what more about them can I say?
Let Me alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their name
-----from under heaven
And I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they

“So I turned and came down from the mountain
And the mountain burned with fire on that day
And the two tablets of the covenant
Were in my two hands as I headed your way

And I looked, and behold, you had sinned against
-----the LORD your God
Had made for yourselves a molded calf! A terrible thing to do
You had turned aside quickly from the way
Which the LORD had commanded you

Then I took the two tablets
And out of my two hands them I threw
And broke them before your eyes in my outburst
Because of my anger at you

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 9:18-29 **(Forty Days and Forty Nights Before the Lord)**

While going through our verses today, for those who did not follow the Numbers sermons – or for those who have forgotten what they said – we need to remember the symbolism of the law and those who are under it.

And this is not some stretch made up out of someone's head to fit a personal theology. Rather, it is exactly what God is revealing in Scripture. The symbolism of Israel's rejecting entry into Canaan in Numbers 14 is that of their rejection of Christ.

They were led from Sinai (meaning Horeb) to Kadesh Barnea, spies were sent in to inspect the land, the spies came back with a bad report, and the people rebelled. The typology was and is clear – that of being presented Christ Jesus. From there, they went into two thousand years of the punishments of the law. Paul indicates this when he describes those under the law in Galatians 4 –

Text Verse: *“Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? ²² For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. ²³ But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, ²⁴ which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— ²⁵ for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children— ²⁶ but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.” Galatians 4:21-26*

Israel received the law, symbolic of giving birth to bondage. Israel was under that bondage until the time God set forth for the Messiah to come and deliver them from it. Christ Jesus came, they rejected Him, and the curses of the law came upon them.

However, in His faithfulness to the covenant, He has kept them as a people. His faithfulness is seen to have been established in our verses today. The words are clear, precise, and unambiguous.

Despite this, we are going to have to go back and forth and back and forth, and then we will have to go back and forth again throughout the books of Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy to really get this. Don't get bogged down in it. It is typed, and it is always there for you to refer to should you forget the layout.

For now, sit back and enjoy in an hour what took me an entire, tiring, day to put together. But it was worth it. Throughout the day, I called out loud to the Lord – again and again – “Thank You, Lord. I love Your word.” It is a joy and a delight to have sermon typing day set before me. And it is a joy to have the fruits of that to set before you. And so, I now present the passage to you.

Wonderful things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. But the Lord Listened (Verses 18-24)

In the previous passage, we ended with these words –

“So I turned and came down from the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire; and the two tablets of the covenant *were* in my two hands. ¹⁶ And I looked, and behold, you had sinned against the LORD your God—had made for yourselves a molded calf! You had turned aside quickly from the way which the LORD had commanded you. ¹⁷ Then I took the two tablets and threw them out of my two hands and broke them before your eyes.” Deuteronomy 9:15-17

Moses now continues with the events, but he leaves out all of the detail concerning what happened at the foot of Sinai after he broke the tablets. That is recorded from Exodus 32:20-30. With that context understood, Moses continues with the narrative to this generation, explaining the events that followed, saying...

¹⁸ And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights;

The words, “as at the first,” could refer to either the words, “And I fell down before the Lord,” or “forty days and forty nights.” Both are true. First, Moses interceded before the Lord in Exodus 32, just before descending the mountain. There it said –

Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said: “LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? ¹² Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, ‘He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth’? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people. ¹³ Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, ‘I

will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit *it* forever.”¹⁴ So the LORD relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people.

-Exodus 32:11-15

However, Moses' first time before the Lord was also forty days and forty nights. That is recorded in Exodus 24 –

“Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud.¹⁷ The sight of the glory of the LORD *was* like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel.¹⁸ So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.” Exodus 24:16-18

As you can see, the timeline is rather hard to follow. He came down from the mountain, went through the events recorded in Exodus 32, and then went back up the mountain. But even here in Deuteronomy, he will speak of those events, while off the mountain, in just a couple verses. The narrative goes back and forth, and it is not always chronological.

For now, Moses simply states that a second period of trial and probation is now set before Israel. They had to wait below as Moses ascended a second time to the Lord atop the mountain. Of this time, he says...

^{18 (con't)} **I neither ate bread nor drank water,**

This is referring to the ascension to receive the second set of tablets. That is specifically recorded in Exodus 34 –

“So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.” Exodus 34:18

This period of ascension will be the subject of the narrative at the beginning of Chapter 10 as well.

^{18 (con't)} **because of all your sin which you committed in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger.**

The major sin was that of the making of the golden calf, but the words *kal khatatkem*, or “all your sin,” signifies more than just that. It includes unbelief, idolatry, ingratitude, and so on. Further, the word “your” is plural.

It wasn't just Israel as a nation, but the people individually. They had done *ha'ra*, or “the evil,” in the sight of the Lord. Their wickedness was so great that Moses knew he had to intercede for them. As he says...

19 For I was afraid

Here, Moses introduces a new word into Scripture, *yagor*, or to be afraid. It is an uncommon word found only five times total. By introducing a new word, it is its own stress. Moses truly dreaded what might be the outcome of the matter.

19 of the anger and hot displeasure with which the LORD was angry with you, to destroy you.

mipene ha'aph v'ha'khemah asher qatsaph Yehovah alekem l'hashmid etkem – “from face the nose and the hot displeasure which furious Yehovah with you to destroy you.” The sentence is full of descriptive language. The idea is that the face of the Lord was burning with rage to the point of shooting forth flames of fury and entirely consuming the people. And yet...

19 (con't) But the LORD listened to me at that time also.

The words *gam ba'paam ha'hiv*, or “also in the time that,” reflect more than just his petition before going down the mountain. They include Moses' intercession for the people when they moaned in Exodus prior to arriving at Sinai, and even his intercessions for them after they left Sinai.

This is certain because he will refer to the events after leaving Sinai in just a few verses. He is speaking to the people in an after-the-fact manner, reminding them that they have been disobedient moaners and evildoers all along, and he has had to intercede for them again and again.

But, we cannot allow ourselves to get too far from the typology. Moses is shown to be the mediator of the covenant. As this is so, he is a type of Christ who is the more perfect Mediator of the New Covenant. If the Lord was willing to forgive the transgressions of

Israel because of the mediation of Moses, how much more secure are we in the mediation of the New Covenant in Christ!

As Israel the nation is a pattern of individual salvation, we can be completely confident in holding to the doctrine of eternal salvation for believers. The Bible teaches nothing less.

²⁰ And the LORD was very angry with Aaron *and* would have destroyed him;

The words are emphatic: *u-b'aharon hitanaph Yehovah meod l'hashmido* – “and in Aaron was enraged Yehovah, greatly to destroy him.” This is the last time Moses will use the word *anaph*, or enraged. It is from a primitive root meaning, “to breathe hard.”

In verse 9:8, he used this word, saying the Lord was enraged at the people for what they did while he was on the mountain receiving the law. Now, he singles out Aaron for that same infraction, emphasizing the severity of what he did.

Not only had the people seen the display of the Lord, at the giving of the Ten Commandments, but Aaron, Aaron's two oldest sons, and seventy chosen leaders of Israel had gone up and eaten a meal in the presence of the Lord before they had made the golden calf.

Aaron not only saw the display of God in the magnificent effects that came with the giving of the law, but he had seen the Lord and dined before His glory. Could he be saved after doing such a thing as trading the glory of the Lord for a worthless idol?

²⁰ (con't) so I prayed for Aaron also at the same time.

It is wholly apparent, without it being said, that Aaron was singled out by the Lord. He had been with Moses throughout the miracles from the time prior to the exodus, he had been with Moses throughout all of the miracles since the time of the exodus, he had been at the foot of the mountain to see the sight and hear the words of law, he had been on the mountain to have a meal in the presence of the Lord, and yet, he had led the people into the sin of worshipping the golden calf.

He had not just partially, but completely walked away from the faith. His actions were wholly inexcusable and could not be any more exactly described than those Paul speaks of concerning certain believers –

“This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, ¹⁹ having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, ²⁰ of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.” 1 Timothy 1:18-20

Aaron had suffered a complete shipwreck of the faith, and yet Moses interceded for him, and the Lord responded. Again, if this is what Moses was able to do as a mediator of a law of sin and death, how much more Christ who is the Mediator of the gospel that brings life!

²¹ Then I took your sin, the calf which you had made,

The word “then” is not correct. The Hebrew reads *v’eth* and should say, “And I took your sin.” The intercession for Aaron comes later in the chronology, not before. Concerning the words, “your sin,” that is explained by the next words, “the calf which you had made.” Their sin was a tangible fact that stood before them.

^{21 (con’t)} and burned it with fire and crushed it *and* ground *it* very small, until it was as fine as dust;

One can feel the anger in Moses’ words – “and burned it in the fire, and crushed it, grinding thoroughly, until that fine to dust.” He was utterly appalled at what they had done, and his actions – and his words of memory now – were a testimony to the magnitude of the offense.

As great as their idol supposedly was, he was determined to turn it into exactly the opposite – utter nothingness. When he could do no more to reduce it in size, he says...

^{21 (con’t)} and I threw its dust into the brook that descended from the mountain.

The result of this is explained in Exodus 32. The two accounts must be taken together to understand Moses’ intent –

“Then he took the calf which they had made, burned *it* in the fire, and ground *it* to powder; and he scattered *it* on the water and made the children of Israel drink *it*.”
-Exodus 32:20

Their source of drinking water would become the reminder of their sin. Each time they went there, it would be as if they were drinking in a reminder of what they had done to offend the Lord.

Yehovah their God, their true Source of life, was at the top of the mountain in smoke and fire. Their false idol, and the source of their shame, was there at the bottom of it drowned in the water they had to come to daily in order to drink and stay alive.

They were to remember the contrast between the two all the days they remained at the mountain. However, Moses next reveals to them that as soon as they left the mountain, they again forgot the Lord and failed to respond to Him in faith...

²² **“Also at Taberah**

u-ve-taverah – “and in Taberah.” Moses now continues the narrative of Israel’s constant failings. In verse 9:7, he had said –

“Remember! Do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day that you departed from the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD.” Deuteronomy 9:7

That took them from Egypt to Sinai. In 9:8 until 9:22, he described their failings while at Sinai. Now, he progresses on to the next stage of their ongoing failings, speaking first of their time just *after leaving* Horeb (Sinai).

The departure of Israel from the mountain is recorded in Numbers 10. In the turn of the page, and – literally – one verse after their departure was explained, it says in Numbers 11:1 –

“Now *when* the people complained, it displeased the LORD; for the LORD heard *it*, and His anger was aroused. So the fire of the LORD burned among them, and consumed *some* in the outskirts of the camp.” Numbers 11:1

Without the water from the brook to remind them of their failing, they immediately began to complain, once again, against the Lord. In response, fire came out from the Lord against Israel. At that time, Moses had to intercede for them again –

“Then the people cried out to Moses, and when Moses prayed to the LORD, the fire was quenched. ³ So he called the name of the place Taberah, because the fire of the LORD had burned among them.” Numbers 11:2, 3

The name Taberah signifies a part of the area they stopped at, not the name of the entire encampment. Before going forward in time from this event, Moses quickly goes back to the last event *before* arriving at Sinai, saying...

22 (con't) **and Massah**

u-ve-massah – “and in Massah.” This was the last stop *before arrival* at Sinai (Horeb). There the people complained about having no water, and so the Lord provided them with water from the rock. In other words, what we see in the first two names of this verse – Taberah and Massah – is that Mount Sinai is the center of the thought.

Nothing changed in their attitude during their entire time at the sacred mountain. The receiving of the law, and the cutting of the covenant with them did not change the people.

With that sobering thought in mind, Moses next more precisely names the first recorded stop after leaving Sinai, saying...

22 (con't) **and Kibroth Hattaavah you provoked the LORD to wrath.**

Taberah is a part of the location named Kibroth Hattaavah. Not only did the outskirts of the camp complain, but all of them did – lusting after the foods they had left behind in Egypt. In response, the Lord sent them quail to feed them, but before the quail was finished, it says –

“the wrath of the LORD was aroused against the people, and the LORD struck the people with a very great plague. ³⁴ So he called the name of that place Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had yielded to craving.”

-Numbers 11:33, 34

The name *Qivroth* comes from *qever*, a grave, or a place for burial. *Ha* is the definite article, and *taavah* means desire. Thus, the place means Graves *of* the Lusting. Instead of craving the Source of all life, the people craved what they had left behind when they were in their bondage.

It is a perfect picture of us, being saved by Christ and yet continually going back in our hearts and desires, longing for the things Christ redeemed us from. For now, Moses is not yet done with his chiding of the people. After their short journey from Sinai (Horeb) to their arrival at the very border of the land of promise, he continues with the mournful words...

²³ Likewise, when the LORD sent you from Kadesh Barnea, saying, ‘Go up and possess the land which I have given you,’

This is the spot where, in Numbers 13, the twelve spies were sent out from to see the land and bring back a report to the people. Upon their return, they were to provide their report and then accept the word of the Lord and go forth to possess what had been promised – even since the time of Abraham. However...

²³ (con’t) then you rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God,

The translation is incorrect. Instead, it says: *va’tamru eth pi Yehovah elohekem* – “and you rebelled mouth of Yehovah your God. No command was given to go up to the land. The Lord spoke and He expected them to believe. This is confirmed by the author of Hebrews, saying, “So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief” (Hebrews 3:19).

The typology is important because coming to Canaan pictures Israel coming to the time of Christ. He came and offered them the New Covenant and eternal life. They rejected the words of His mouth...

²³ (con’t) and you did not believe Him nor obey His voice.

The word translated as “obey” is *shama*. It means to hear and be attentive to. As this was not a command, it means, “you did not believe Him and hearken to His voice.” The typology, again, anticipates Christ. It is what Paul says concerning the gospel –

“But what does it say? ‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith which we preach): ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” Romans 10:8, 9

Israel failed to believe and hearken to the word of Christ. As far as the ongoing narrative from Moses, it is at this location that the spies – minus Joshua and Caleb – came back and gave a bad report. And it is here that the people then rebelled against the Lord.

Israel's history, up to the present time, is recorded here in these verses. They were called as a people, and until they were given the law, they failed to have faith in the Lord. They were given the law, and during their time of law, they failed to have faith in the Lord. Remember our text verse, Paul says that the time of the law is equated to the receiving of the law at Sinai.

And then, they were offered Christ, symbolized by bringing the people to the very doorstep of Canaan. And yet, they failed to have faith in the Lord. In that, they were turned back into the wilderness – a picture of their exile for the past two thousand years.

Their entire history, both in the biblical narrative being spoken forth by Moses, and in what that pictures – meaning their actual historical record – has been one of failing to have faith in the Lord. Of this list of stops, the scholar Keil incorrectly says –

“The list is not arranged chronologically, but advances gradually from the smaller to the more serious forms of guilt. For Moses was seeking to sharpen the consciences of the people, and to impress upon them the fact that they had been rebellious against the Lord (see at Deuteronomy 9:7) from the very beginning, ‘from the day that I knew you.’”
Keil

It is not from the “smaller to the more serious forms of guilt.” This is certain because those infractions before the giving of the law are to be considered less serious than those after the giving of the law, and – indeed – after having seen the continued glory of the Lord in the various ways He manifested Himself.

Rather, the list is not arranged solely chronologically in order to highlight the fact that *the giving of the law changed nothing in the people* in regard to their relationship with the Lord. This is precisely why the Lord promised the people a New Covenant.

Here, Moses (the law) is remembering the sins of the people. In the New Covenant, their sins will be remembered no more (see our closing verse). However, one cannot truly appreciate the grace of the New Covenant without understanding the magnitude of the burden of sin in man – both apart from the law, and even more especially

because of the law. Without the Christ Covenant, only sin and rebellion are remembered...

²⁴ You have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you.

The Hebrew says *im*, with. “Rebellious you have been with Yehovah.” It is a reflection of the name, Israel, or “He strives with God.” They can strive with God for God, or they can strive with God against God. In this case, it is “against.”

From their calling as a people out of the bondage of Egypt, they have remained rebellious against the Lord, and against the law that the Lord has given them. As Israel is simply a template for the individual person called by the Lord, it is prudent that we don’t point our fingers too accusingly at them.

Even on the best of days, when we direct our hearts to the Lord in the most heartfelt manner that we can, we still fall short of giving Him all of who we are. There is always a streak of rebellion in our hearts. With his short snapshot of their history stated, Moses now returns to the thought of verse 18...

*The Lord has covenanted with you and will never forget
Even when you stray away
He will fulfill every promise, you can bet
And will bring You to Himself some glorious day*

*And this, despite yourself; so, He has revealed
And He will continue to save, because He has spoken
When You believed by faith, the deal was sealed
He has given You His Spirit as a sure token*

*And so, let us live for the Lord, remembering Him always
And let us not forget the great things He has done
Let us live for the Lord, for all of our days
For God, in Christ, has given us His Son*

*Great is the Lord and worthy of all praise
Great is our God; let us honor Him for all of our days*

II. Your People and Your Inheritance (Verses 25-29)

²⁵ “Thus I prostrated myself before the LORD; forty days and forty nights I kept prostrating myself, because the LORD had said He would destroy you.

That this is a repetition of the thought of verse 18 is seen in the words he will say in the next verse. Moses was on the mountain with the Lord, receiving the tablets and the instructions for the tabernacle and priestly service. While there, the people made the golden calf and celebrated. It was at that time, while he was on the mountain, that we read –

“And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted *themselves*.⁸ They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, “This *is* your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!”⁹ And the LORD said to Moses, ‘I have seen this people, and indeed it *is* a stiff-necked people!¹⁰ Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation.’” Exodus 32:7-10

In response to the Lord’s words, Moses petitioned the Lord for the people. The Lord relented, as we saw earlier in this sermon, and Moses went down the mountain to see what the Lord had described concerning their behavior.

Once down, he cast the tablets out of his hands, destroyed the golden calf, had the Levites go through the camp to destroy those who participated, and so on.

Eventually, he went back up the mountain with two new tablets (Exodus 34:1/Deuteronomy 10:1) and fell before the Lord as he did before going down the mountain. This was, again, for forty days and forty nights (Exodus 34:28). With this timeline understood, Moses now substantially repeats what he had said before going down the mountain...

²⁶ Therefore I prayed to the LORD, and said:

As we just saw, Moses had petitioned the Lord before coming down, and the Lord relented concerning destroying the people (32:14). As this is so, why would Moses need to petition the Lord to not destroy the people? The answer is then found in Exodus 33 –

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Depart *and* go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your descendants I will give it.' ² And I will send *My Angel* before you, and I will drive out the Canaanite and the Amorite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. ³ *Go up* to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you *are* a stiff-necked people."

⁴ And when the people heard this bad news, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments. ⁵ For the LORD had said to Moses, "Say to the children of Israel, 'You *are* a stiff-necked people. I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you. Now therefore, take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do to you.'" ⁶ So the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by Mount Horeb. Exodus 33:1-6

In other words, Moses had stayed the wrath of the Lord concerning the destruction of Israel for the sin of the golden calf. However, the Lord had not relented concerning the complete destruction of Israel for some other *future* offense.

It was Moses' petitioning of the Lord now, which forever secured them from total destruction. That is seen in the renewal of the covenant in the words of Exodus 34 during this forty-day period –

So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped.

⁹ Then he said, "If now I have found grace in Your sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray, go among us, even though we *are* a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your inheritance."

¹⁰ And He said: "Behold, I make a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among whom you *are* shall see the work of the LORD. For it *is* an awesome thing that I will do with you." Exodus 34:8-10

^{26 (con't)} **'O Lord God, do not destroy Your people and Your inheritance whom You have redeemed through Your greatness, whom You have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand.**

In verse 9:12, The Lord said to Moses, "Arise, go down quickly from here, for your people whom you brought out of Egypt have acted corruptly."

Moses' got it. He understood that even after receiving the Ten Commandments and beholding the splendor and terror of the Lord, it was not enough to keep Israel from

disobeying Him. In that state, He could – at any time – disinherit them and stretch out His hand and destroy them.

And so, Moses says to Yehovah, “do not destroy Your people and Your inheritance whom You have redeemed through Your greatness, whom You have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand.”

In this petition, he mirrors his words previously spoken while on the mountain, but this petition goes beyond anything stated before. This is because they have not yet done anything else wrong. The Lord had relented from destroying them because of the calf, but He had also threatened He might destroy them for a future infraction.

Knowing this, Moses is asking for the Lord to state, in advance and without any possibility of changing His mind, that He will never utterly destroy Israel. And Moses received that guarantee. The Lord will lead them into the promise, and He will be their people. In fact, He later codified it in the written law –

“Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, nor shall I abhor them, to utterly destroy them and break My covenant with them; for I *am* the LORD their God.

⁴⁵ But for their sake I will remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I *am* the LORD.” Leviticus 26:44, 45

Moses appeals to the Lord in this verse for the people “whom You have brought out of Egypt.” The Lord repeats that when He speaks of Israel, “whom I brought out of the land of Egypt.” Israel would forever stand, even in their rejection of the Lord, because the Lord spoke that it would be so.

This is the glory of the grace of God in Jesus Christ. It is grace that extends even to the complete turning away from Him by His people. He has covenanted, and He will perform.

It has taken almost an entire sermon to get to this, but this is one of the major points of the entire passage. Israel is guaranteed to always remain a people before the Lord, even when they are not His people. This is so that He might be their God.

Yehovah has spoken; it is, and it shall be – despite the conduct of the people. And this came about not because of their righteousness, nor because of their goodness. This is because, as Moses acknowledges, that is totally lacking in them. Rather...

27 Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; do not look on the stubbornness of this people, or on their wickedness or their sin,

In this verse is a noun found only here in the Bible, *qeshi*, or “stubbornness.” Moses’ appeal is, as has been seen again and again, based on the promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The promise was made, and it could not be revoked. But the Lord promised to destroy the people and to accomplish it through Moses. Moses, instead, petitioned for all of the people – his own stubborn, wicked family.

But more, Moses petitions this because even if the Lord established the promise through him, the people of Egypt might misunderstand. Moses’ petition, then, is truly for his people, but it is more especially for the honor of the Lord. As he says...

28 lest the land from which You brought us should say,

Here, the land is referred to as the people of the land. It is a poetic way of conveying the thought where he uses the singular “land,” but the verb translated as “should say” is plural. And their words...

28 (con’t) “Because the LORD was not able to bring them to the land which He promised them, and because He hated them, He has brought them out to kill them in the wilderness.”

It is a double attack, first against the ability of the Lord, and secondly because of the relationship between the Lord and the people. Just as an inability to bring them into the good land He promised would mean He was not the true God, so hating His people would be contrary to His initial choice of redeeming them. In such fickleness, it would – again – mean that He was not the true God.

Moses’ words here are similar to what he will later refer to in the Song of Moses concerning the Lord’s annihilation of Israel –

“I would have said, ‘I will dash them in pieces,
I will make the memory of them to cease from among men,’
²⁷ Had I not feared the wrath of the enemy,
Lest their adversaries should misunderstand,
Lest they should say, ‘Our hand *is* high;
And it is not the LORD who has done all this.” Deuteronomy 32:26, 27

The honor of the Lord – even to this day in human history – is tied up in the preservation of Israel. How people in the church cannot see this is, literally, astonishing. It shows that they are untrained in the word, unschooled in proper theology, and they have no understanding of the nature of God, nor of His covenant promises.

It is exactly why people teach and believe that salvation can be lost. What a miserable state we are in when we cannot rightly discern these things from passages that are so clear and obvious. Yes, there is difficulty in the study, but proper theology is – after all – hard work. For now, Moses continues...

²⁹ Yet they *are* Your people and Your inheritance,

The words are precise, and they are specific. And further, they are often repeated in Scripture. Israel is the Lord’s inheritance. That did not change, nor has it gone from a literal body to a spiritual body. Rather, they remain so. Paul says as much in Ephesians –

“Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—¹² that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” Ephesians 2:11-13

Believing Gentiles are brought into the commonwealth of Israel. Even if Israel is temporarily excluded from those covenant promises, it is because of disobedience and punishment, not because of rejection. Understanding this, Moses says...

***²⁹ (fin) whom You brought out by Your mighty power and by Your outstretched arm.’**

The final words of Moses for the passage, as he lay there before the Lord and which he repeats now to the people before him, is that Israel had nothing to do with being

brought out. They were weak; He was strong. They were hemmed in; He stretched out His arm.

They could not boast in their freeing themselves, and Moses' words of the entire passage show that they could not boast that the Lord did this because they were great, righteous, deserving, or better than any others.

All of those, and any other positives they could lie about to themselves – about themselves – are shown to be false. The honor of the events, the glory of what has transpired, and the majesty of the unfolding redemptive narrative belongs solely to the Lord.

With that understood, and again remembering that Israel is a template, or pattern, of the individual believer, we must remember (and never forget) that our salvation – how the events came about, the glory of what transpired, and the majesty of including us in the redemptive narrative – belongs solely to the Lord.

He did the work, and all Israel had to do was to follow. He did the work, and all we have to do is believe. No credit belongs to us for the things we have received. Rather, all of the credit, the praise, the marvel... all of it is to be directed to the One who sits on heaven's throne, and who was willing to come and redeem us from the land of bondage and toil.

Praise God for Jesus Christ who has set us free, and who will see us through to the end that He has promised when He covenanted with us. Praise God for Jesus Christ.

Closing Verse: *“For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. ⁸ Because finding fault with them, He says: “Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— ⁹ not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. ¹⁰ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ¹¹ None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. ¹² For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” Hebrews 8:7-12*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 10:1-11 *Moses is in the sweet zone, the Lord's anger is reversed...* (Two Tablets of Stone Like the First) (34th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Forty Days and Forty Nights Before the Lord

And I fell down before the LORD in an emotional outburst
Forty days and forty nights, as at the first

I neither ate bread nor drank water
Because of all your sin which you committed on that day
In doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD
To provoke Him to anger in that way

For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure
With which the LORD was angry with you, as you know
To destroy you, which He could do
But the LORD listened to me at that time also

And the LORD was very angry with Aaron
-----and would have destroyed him for his crime
So I prayed for Aaron also at the same time

Then I took your sin, the calf which you had made
And burned it with fire and crushed it and ground it very small
-----so that calf was ended
Until it was as fine as dust
And I threw its dust into the brook that
-----from the mountain descended

“Also at Taberah and Massah and Kibroth Hattaavah
You provoked the LORD to wrath, so you did do
Likewise, when the LORD sent you from Kadesh Barnea, saying
'Go up and possess the land which I have given you

Then you rebelled against the commandment of the
-----LORD your God; such was your choice
And you did not believe Him nor obey His voice

You have been rebellious against the LORD, it is true
From the day that I knew you

Thus I prostrated myself before the LORD
Forty days and forty nights I kept prostrating myself as if dead
Because the LORD had said He would destroy you
Therefore I prayed to the LORD, and said:

'O Lord GOD, do not destroy Your people
And Your inheritance whom You have redeemed, a deed so grand
Through Your greatness
Whom You have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand

Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
Do not look on the stubbornness of this people let it not
-----be this way
Or on their wickedness or their sin
Lest the land from which You brought us should say...

"Because the LORD was not able to bring them to the land
Which He promised them (that would only cause a huge mess)
And because He hated them
He has brought them out to kill them in the wilderness

Yet they are Your people and Your inheritance
Whom You brought out, safe from Egypt's harm
By Your mighty power
And by Your outstretched arm

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone

We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 10:1-11 **(Two Tablets of Stone Like the First)**

My friend Will Groben got his Master's Degree at Dallas Theological Seminary in biblical Hebrew and Greek. I remember him emailing me once and saying how complicated the simple Greek word *eis* was to translate. In fact, in his email, he said that he felt like he had broken his brain, and I believe the word *eis* was a large part of that.

I felt bad for him. A broken brain is a difficult thing. Can't do much good until the brain gets fixed. I broke my brain over this passage we are looking at today. It happens from time to time. There are things that are so complicated, it is hard to think them through.

This is especially true with verses 6 and 7. They seem to have absolutely nothing to do with the surrounding text, and – on the surface – they seem completely contradictory to anyone who has read the parallel passages in Numbers. Indeed, that is what Albert Barnes said about them –

“After this we have now four verses, (Deuteronomy 10:6, Deuteronomy 10:7, Deuteronomy 10:8, and Deuteronomy 10:9), which not only have no kind of connection with the verses before and after them, but also, as they stand in the present Hebrew text, directly contradict that very text; and the two first of these verses have not, in our Hebrew text, the least connection with the two last of them.” Albert Barnes

Is this so?

Text Verse: *Every word of God is pure;*
He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Proverbs 30:5

If Albert Barnes is right, then what we have is not the word of God. He gives several corrective possibilities to restore your confidence in the word. However, I would suggest to you that he is just plain wrong. So would the late scholar Charles Ellicott.

I was grateful to read Ellicott's commentary, as it saved me oodles of time and an even greater broken brain. His insights were well received, even if I didn't go with his conclusions. While typing, I did say out loud to the Lord that I can't wait to thank Ellicott someday when I get the chance.

How can I do that if he is already dead? Because death is just an insignificant blip on the way to glory. For those who have come to Christ, they should be confident that this is

true. And how does such a change come about? Well, a portion of it is found in our verses today.

There is a great and sure hope that we possess, and pictures of it are indeed found in these verses. They are a small, but tasty delight found in the greater tapestry that we call the Holy Bible. Great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Two Tablets (verses 1-5)

The coming verses are closely connected to what ended our verses in the previous passage. There, it said –

“Thus I prostrated myself before the LORD; forty days and forty nights I kept prostrating myself, because the LORD had said He would destroy you. ²⁶ Therefore I prayed to the LORD, and said: ‘O Lord GOD, do not destroy Your people and Your inheritance whom You have redeemed through Your greatness, whom You have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand. ²⁷ Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; do not look on the stubbornness of this people, or on their wickedness or their sin, ²⁸ lest the land from which You brought us should say, “Because the LORD was not able to bring them to the land which He promised them, and because He hated them, He has brought them out to kill them in the wilderness.” ²⁹ Yet they *are* Your people and Your inheritance, whom You brought out by Your mighty power and by Your outstretched arm.” Deuteronomy 9:25-29

In connection with that event, but just prior to it, came the words that open our passage today. In other words, verses 10:1-3 are logically followed by verses 9:25-29. Then verses 10:4, 5 follow that. Understanding the chronology, we begin now with...

¹“At that time

ba’eth hahiv – “in the time, the that.” These words set the tone for what follows. It is speaking of the time at Horeb, as was noted in verse 9:8 –

“Also in Horeb you provoked the LORD to wrath, so that the LORD was angry *enough* with you to have destroyed you.” Deuteronomy 9:8

What is presented here is not a chronological account, but one that is rhetorical. It takes what is more precisely recorded in Exodus and lays it out in a short synopsis of what took place without regard to the order in which the events occurred.

¹ (con't) **the LORD said to me,**

As just noted, this logically precedes what was said at the end of the previous chapter. Without getting bogged down in the chronology which has already been provided, the main focus is on these few lines of historical narrative. Now, the Lord says...

¹ (con't) **'Hew for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and come up to Me on the mountain**

The word "stone" is plural – "tablets of stones like the first." The words here follow after the narrative of Exodus 34. There it said –

"And the LORD said to Moses, 'Cut two tablets of stone like the first *ones*, and I will write on *these* tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you broke. ² So be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself to Me there on the top of the mountain. ³ And no man shall come up with you, and let no man be seen throughout all the mountain; let neither flocks nor herds feed before that mountain.'

⁴ So he cut two tablets of stone like the first *ones*. Then Moses rose early in the morning and went up Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him; and he took in his hand the two tablets of stone." Exodus 34:1-4

There is a difference between the first set of stones and the second that cannot go unnoted. The first set of stones was made by God. As it says in Exodus 32 –

"Now the tablets *were* the work of God, and the writing *was* the writing of God engraved on the tablets." Exodus 32:16

The first set of tablets were made by God, and the words on them were written out by God as well. However, for this second set of tablets, the Lord instructs Moses to hew them and bring them up to Him. As these will be "like the first," they bear the same appearance.

They will also be used for the same purpose as well. The fact that the Lord asks Moses to make the tablets, rather than being made by Him, shows that these are to be

considered just as acceptable for the bearing of the law. Otherwise, He would have again made them Himself. Along with hewing the tablets, the Lord says...

¹ (con't) **and make yourself an ark of wood.**

Like the number of times Moses ascended the mountain, these words provide a second difficulty. Is this a temporary ark for keeping the tablets until the actual Ark of the Testimony is made, or is this simply a reminder that the tablets are to be set in the ark once it is completed?

What seems most probable is that only one ark was made. Verse 5 seems to indicate this. And so, what seems likely is that the tablets were made by Moses, he carried them up to the Lord. The Lord gave His instruction and wrote out the Ten Commandments on the tablets. Eventually, the Ark of the Covenant was made by the artificers, and at that time, the tablets were placed in the ark –

“And it came to pass in the first month of the second year, on the first *day* of the month, *that* the tabernacle was raised up. ¹⁸ So Moses raised up the tabernacle, fastened its sockets, set up its boards, put in its bars, and raised up its pillars. ¹⁹ And he spread out the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent on top of it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²⁰ He took the Testimony and put *it* into the ark, inserted the poles through the rings of the ark, and put the mercy seat on top of the ark. ²¹ And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, hung up the veil of the covering, and partitioned off the ark of the Testimony, as the LORD had commanded Moses.” Exodus 40:17-21

If there was only one ark made, then what Moses is presenting here is simply a snapshot of the events to remind the people of the things that occurred without regard to the lesser details, the specific time frames, or the actual chronology. This will become more evident when we come to the events of verses 6-9.

The intent, then, is to highlight Israel’s times of disobedience, the mercies they received, and the longsuffering of the Lord throughout their time in the wilderness.

For now, the narrative of the tablets hewn out by Moses continues, as he recounts the words of the Lord to him...

² **And I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets,**

It would appear that these tablets were of lesser quality. If the Lord made the first two, there would have been the perfection of the Lord's handiwork on them – both in the tablets and in the writing. However, one would think the tablets made by the hands of man would bear the imperfections of man, and only the words would reflect the perfect character of the Lord.

But as noted, it is obvious the Lord feels both sets were suitable for the purpose of conveying His words, regardless as to how the tablets themselves came to be. It is the words, then, that are considered by the Lord to have the importance above all else.

And there is the truth that the stones, though shaped through man, still came from the Lord originally anyway. It is His creation, and so the stones are His, regardless as to how they came to reflect the words which bear His moral standards. Concerning the first set that bore that moral standard, He said to Moses...

² (con't) **which you broke;**

Moses, who stands as representative of the law, is said to be the one who broke the tablets. The Lord reminds him of this. The Lord has Moses make a new set of tablets that will replace the first...

² (con't) **and you shall put them in the ark.'**

Moses will receive back the tablets, and it is he who is to deposit them in the ark. In obedience to the words of the Lord, it says...

³ **"So I made an ark of acacia wood,**

Three possibilities can be supposed from these words. Either 1) a temporary ark was made to hold the tablets; 2) Moses had Bezalel make the wooden part of the ark, having it ready for his descent from the mountain; or 3) Moses is simply speaking out events in an order for the people to understand that what he was instructed was accomplished.

Based on Exodus 40:20 (cited earlier), the last option seems the most likely. Moses is simply relaying the events in accord with the word of the Lord without regard to set chronology. It is no different than when it later says that Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem. The meaning is that he is the one who instructed and oversaw the building of it, just as it is here with Moses and the ark.

What is of note is that because of how the events are relayed here, Mosaic authorship is absolutely certain. Anyone else would have entered the words as they had read them from Exodus, not wanting to confuse the narrative and diminish the reliability of their cause in the process of conveying it. Moses, however, would be unconcerned with such things. For now, he next notes...

3 (con't) hewed two tablets of stone like the first,

The ark is mentioned first, followed by the hewing of the stones. And then, thirdly, Moses says...

3 (con't) and went up the mountain, having the two tablets in my hand.

With the stones prepared, Moses (the law) ascended the mountain with the stones in his hand – meaning in His possession. Upon ascending the mountain, Moses next speaks of the work of the Lord...

4 And He wrote on the tablets according to the first writing,

As noted in verse 2, it is the Lord who wrote on the tablets, despite the fact that they were hewn out by Moses, or someone Moses appointed to do it. Everything that was written on the first set was again written by the Lord on the second set. It was...

4 (con't) the Ten Commandments,

asheret ha'devarim – “the Ten Words,” meaning the commandments...

4 (con't) which the LORD had spoken to you in the mountain from the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly;

This was recorded in Exodus 20, and then it was repeated to Israel on the banks of the Jordan in Deuteronomy 5, reminding them of what occurred, even before the eyes of the people. Those same words were inscribed on the tablets...

4 (con't) and the LORD gave them to me.

Like before, the Lord gave the tablets to Moses (the law). The first time he received them, he came down the mountain and cast them out of his hands, breaking them. The second time, however...

⁵Then I turned and came down from the mountain, and put the tablets in the ark which I had made;

As the first time, Moses descended with the tablets, but this time, they were tablets he had made, and upon which the Lord had written. And this time, instead of casting them out of his hands, he secreted them away in the ark, as he then notes, “which I had made.”

An important point is that the timing of an event in the Hebrew is based on the context of what is occurring. Thus, the words “had made” depend on what Moses is referring to. As he is speaking almost forty years after the event, it is in relation to what he had once instructed those many years ago.

In other words, Moses instructed Bezalel to make the ark according to the word of the Lord. That was done, and so for Moses to say, “I put the tablets in the ark which I had made,” could have been some time after descending the mountain. Hence, as we saw earlier, it is probable that only one ark was made, and he is referring to that. With this in mind, he then says...

^{5 (con't)} and there they are, just as the LORD commanded me.”

The tablets were placed in the ark, and they remained in there, even until the day where Israel sat on the banks of the Jordan, receiving the words of Moses in preparation for their entry through the Jordan and into the land of promise.

Further, they are even recorded as having remained in the ark hundreds of years later, at the time when Solomon built the temple, as is seen in 1 Kings 8:9.

1a. Pictures of Christ

With varying detail, what Moses has said in these first five verses was also detailed in Exodus 34:1-4, which we cited earlier.

There are two sets of tablets that were made. The first were by the Lord and written on by the Lord. The second were hewn by Moses and the same words as at first were written on them by the Lord. Therefore, what is written on the tablets, meaning the basis for the law, is what calls for the main attention.

The law is on both, but one set is broken while the other is secreted away in an ark. In this, we have a picture of Adam and of Christ. This first set of tablets pictures Adam. The first tablets were made by God and engraved by God. As it said in Exodus 32 –

“Now the tablets *were* the work of God, and the writing *was* the writing of God engraved on the tablets.” Exodus 32:16

Adam was created by the Lord God (Genesis 2:7) and he was given the law by Him (Genesis 2:16, 17). However, Adam broke that law (Genesis 3:6).

The second set pictures Christ. They were made by Moses (Deuteronomy 10:1), but the words were still engraved by the Lord (Deuteronomy 10:2). Jesus came through man – He was not directly created by God as Adam was. Rather, His body was prepared by God throughout the history of man under law. It is reflective of the words of Hebrews 10 –

“Therefore, when He came into the world, He said:

‘Sacrifice and offering You did not desire,
But a body You have prepared for Me.

⁶In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin
You had no pleasure.

⁷Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—
In the volume of the book it is written of Me—
To do Your will, O God.’” Hebrews 10:5-7

Christ came to do the will of God. He was born under God’s law. Thus, the second tablets were also written by the Lord.

In contrast to Adam who broke God’s law (pictured by Moses destroying the first set of tablets), Jesus never broke it. Rather, to fit the pattern of Christ, Moses secreted them away in – as it says – the ark of acacia wood. Remembering the typology of that from Exodus shows us Christ’s humanity.

The acacia, or *shittim* wood, is the base material for the ark. Its heartwood is dark reddish-brown and is beautiful when sanded and polished.

That pictures Christ’s humanity. He, a Son of Adam from the Middle East, would bear the same general color as the wood. As *shittim* is an incorruptible wood, it pictures His incorruptible nature. Though a Man, He never sinned.

Further, *shittim* is a thorny tree, its name coming from a root, *shotet*, signifying scourging thorns. The very wood testifies to the trials Christ would endure in His passion for the reconciliation of man.

It is into this ark that the unbroken tablets were deposited, signifying Christ's perfect fulfillment and embodiment of the law. On the top was placed the mercy seat, and the picture of the work of Christ as our place of propitiation before God is then seen.

Considering what we have here, it is evident that God's law is permanent – the same law was inscribed on both sets of tablets. However, being permanent, they can still be broken.

In the first, God knew Moses would break them, picturing the breaking of the law by Adam (and all in Adam). However, the second set was unbroken. In this, it reveals Christ, and all who are in Christ. It shows us that sin comes through the law, but for those in Christ, they are no longer under law, but under grace. Sin is no longer imputed to those who have moved from Adam to Jesus.

*Tablets of stone which bring words of condemnation
Words which prick my very soul
How can I live up to such a standard? I see only damnation
How can my name ever be written on heaven's scroll?*

*The words stand against me and show me my sin
They were meant to bring life, but only death do they bring
The man who lives by them, who is he? We are all done in!
From where can life come? Show me such a spring*

*So, has ended the strife! I now fully see
God Himself has condemned sin in the flesh, through Jesus
Marvelous words of life! To God the glory be!
Such a marvelous thing He has done for us!*

II. Inheritances of Water (verses 6 & 7)

We now arrive at a couple verses that are probably the most difficult of all to be found in Deuteronomy. So much is this the case, that they are claimed to be incorrect, contradictory, later insertions, and so on. If they were later insertions, they would not be inserted in such a difficult manner. So that can be tossed out on its ear.

As being incorrect, the Samaritan Pentateuch claims to be the correct text, realigning things as they supposedly should be. But then why would someone intentionally twist up the Hebrew text? Rather, it appears the Samaritan purposefully changed the text to avoid the difficulties. Further, the Greek matches the Hebrew.

Assuming there are contradictions is as simple as assuming that one's opinion as to why these verses are written as they are is correct, and that there are – in fact – contradictions.

It could be as simple as that Moses is trying to make a spiritual point concerning a particular issue, and he is doing it by purposefully making the text overtly complicated in the process.

One fact to note is that the other historical writings in Deuteronomy are in the first person, "We did this, and we did that." However, here they are in the third person, "The children of Israel did this, and the children of Israel did that."

Moses is obviously tying in what occurred in the reception of the tablets with what he is speaking of now. This is especially so because he will return to the time at Horeb for verses 8-11.

The NKJV makes verses 6-9 parenthetical, but this is not correct. Only 6 and 7 are. From there, the narrative returns to the time at Horeb. Because these two verses are parenthetical, we have to try to determine why this diversion is being made. He begins it with...

⁶(Now the children of Israel journeyed from the wells of Bene Jaakan to Moserah,

u-bene Yisrael naseu mi'beeroth bene yaaqan moserah – "and children Israel set out from wells Bene Yaaqan to Moserah." Numbers 33:31 seems to say exactly the opposite, and so it is immediately assumed the text is corrupt, contradictory, etc. –

"They departed from Moseroth and camped at Bene Jaakan."

Bene Yaaqan means "Sons of Twisting," meaning perverting. Moserah, here, is singular. In Numbers 33, it is plural. One must assume they are the same place. Moserah comes from a word meaning bond, but that comes from a word signifying chastisement.

It could be, like several of the other locations that they visited in their travels, they simply named a particularly unhappy spot Moserah, signifying the chastisement of the place. This is especially so because it does not say they encamped at these locations as it did in Numbers; only that they journeyed.

Or, if the same location, a change in the direction of travel is as simple as recognizing that in Numbers 20, the people had petitioned to enter Edom in order pass through, but Edom came out against them and they turned back. Thus, the reversal of the order can be explained by them backtracking from the land they had previously encamped at. In Numbers 21:4, it says –

“Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way.” Numbers 21:4

As they had been turned back, and as these are not encampments, it would explain why they were so discouraged. They were travelling in a somewhat back track way, to places they had already been to.

Other than the direction, the main difference in the names is the note of traveling “from the wells” of Bene Jaakan, or “the Sons of Twisting.” According to the words, Moserah is...

⁶ (con’t) **where Aaron died, and where he was buried;**

Here, it says Aaron, or “Very High,” died and was buried in Moserah. This appears contradictory to Numbers 33 also –

“They moved from Kadesh and camped at Mount Hor, on the boundary of the land of Edom.

³⁸ Then Aaron the priest went up to Mount Hor at the command of the LORD, and died there in the fortieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, on the first *day* of the fifth month. ³⁹ Aaron *was* one hundred and twenty-three years old when he died on Mount Hor.” Numbers 33:37-39

Again, understanding that this is probably not the same place as Moseroth, and that the name is given to the place based on the events the people faced, calling the place Moserah, or Chastisement, fits the narrative of Aaron’s death. Even if it is the same place, it could be that Mount Hor is located at Moserah.

⁶ (con't) **and Eleazar his son ministered as priest in his stead.**

Eleazar was installed as priest in place of Aaron. His name means “Whom God helps.”

⁷ **From there they journeyed to Gudgodah,**

Again, this is different than what happened in Numbers 33. There it says they went from Bene Jaakan and camped at Hor Hagidgad, or Cavern of the Gatherers. Here, Gudgodah in Hebrew is *ha'gudgodah*, or “The Gathered.” Again, it doesn't say they encamped as it did in Numbers.

It should be noted that the name *ha'gidgad* and *ha'gudgodah*, are the same spelling with the exception of an additional letter, the h, at the end of Gudgodah. The “h” can simply mean in the area of Gudgod or Gidgad. Next...

⁷ (con't) **and from Gudgodah to Jotbathah,**

In Numbers 33, it says, “They went from Hor Hagidgad and camped at Jotbathah.” Thus, it is apparent, based on the similar spelling that *ha'gudgodah* and *chor ha'gidgad* are the same area, or a similar area, with the name slightly varied. Jotbathah, or Yotbathah, means “Pleasantness.” It is described as...

⁷ (con't) **a land of rivers of water.**

eretz nakhale mayim – “land wadis of water.” The word translated as “rivers” here is *nakhal*. It signifies a wadi. It comes from the verb signifying “to inherit” or “take as a possession.” One could then translate this as, “land of inheritances of water.”

Ila. Pictures of Christ

What we have here is a continued picture of going from the law to grace in Christ. Bene Yaaqan means “Sons of Twisting.” It is reflective of life under the law. The law is given, and those under law – from Adam on – inevitably twist it.

Here, it says that the children of Israel journeyed from the wells of Bene Jaakan. A well is where one derives his source of water. It is a picture of those under the law drawing their spiritual water from the law, and thus are Sons of Twisting. From there, they moved to Moserah, meaning Bond, but in the sense of Chastisement.

When one is bound to the law, he is in bondage to it, and in not meeting it, chastisement comes. It is at this spot where Aaron is said to have died, and where he was buried. It then noted that Eleazar ministered in his stead.

This picture was previously partially explained when Aaron's death was recorded in Numbers. The transfer of the priesthood from Aaron, meaning Very High, and typical of Christ – but who is also the line of the high priest of the law, to the son Eleazar – or Whom God Helps, represents the change of the priesthood from that which pictures Christ in his work, "Very High," to that whom pictures Christ in His person, "Whom God helps."

Christ, in His work, died in Chastisement for the sins of those under the law. He did this by fulfilling the law and establishing the New Covenant, becoming God's true, and final, High Priest. Being fully God, it is He who helps those who come to Him in faith.

Aaron, representative of the Law of Moses, died outside of the Land of Promise, because it is not by works of the law that one can enter, but through faith in Christ. The typology is set because the typology points to Christ.

It then says that after Aaron died, the congregation moved to *ha'gugodah*, or "The Gugodah," meaning, "The Gathered." It signifies those who are brought into the assembly of Christ. From there, it says they journeyed to Yotbathah, or Pleasantness, a place described as a land of inheritances of water. In other words, it is the rivers of water Christ speaks of in John 7 –

"On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' ³⁹ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified." John 7:37-39

This short parenthesis was given by inspiration through Moses to supplement the narrative of the two sets of tablets. There is the broken law in us, or the fulfilled law in Christ. There is living out the law, or there is being granted the righteousness of the fulfilled law.

There is drawing water from the wells of the Sons of Twisting, meaning those under law, or there is a land of inheritances of water from the Source of true life, meaning the grace of God in Christ. In the end, the Lord is giving us beautiful pictures of Christ through

Moses' words. With this understood, the narrative now transfers back to Moses' words concerning the time at Horeb...

*A greater priesthood lies yet ahead
But it cannot come when the old remains alive
Not until the first one is finished and dead
Can the new come in and begin to thrive*

*But the first cannot end until all is complete
Only when that happens can the new one come in
When the law is fulfilled, and the devil suffers defeat
Then! Joyfully then, will the New Covenant begin*

*Let us put our trust in the One who has done it
Let us look to He who died on Calvary's tree
To Him alone shall we our souls commit
Because He alone has set us free!*

III. Arise, Begin Your Journey (verses 8-11)

Prior to the parenthetical verses, the last thing that was mentioned was that Moses placed the tablets into the ark. The narrative now continues exactly by going to those who would bear the ark, Levi.

⁸At that time

ba'eth hahiv – “in the time, the that.” It is the same words that opened the chapter today. They, like those words, set the tone for what is said. It is again speaking of the time at Horeb. And so, we see again that what is presented is not chronological but rhetorical.

It is while at Horeb, and during the time between the reception of the two separate sets of tablets that...

^{8 (con't)} the LORD separated the tribe of Levi to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD,

The holy duties, including bearing the ark of the Lord, was granted solely to those of the tribe of Levi. The priests conducted certain duties that no other Levites could do, but the tribe of Levi – as a whole – was given the honors named now in this verse. This was

based on what occurred after Moses came down the mountain with the original Ten Commandments. At that time, it said –

Now when Moses saw that the people *were* unrestrained (for Aaron had not restrained them, to *their* shame among their enemies), ²⁶ then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, “Whoever *is* on the LORD’s side—*come* to me!” And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. ²⁷ And he said to them, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘Let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.’” ²⁸ So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And about three thousand men of the people fell that day. ²⁹ Then Moses said, “Consecrate yourselves today to the LORD, that He may bestow on you a blessing this day, for every man has opposed his son and his brother.” Exodus 32:25-29

Because of their defense of the honor of the Lord, He separated Levi to bear the ark. The Levites were also...

^{8 (con’t)} **to stand before the LORD to minister to Him and to bless in His name, to this day.**

Levites are shown elsewhere – numerous times – to praise and sing before the Lord. There were certain priestly duties that were reserved for them alone, but the Levites had many duties serving and ministering to the Lord. This was their portion...

⁹ **Therefore Levi has no portion nor inheritance with his brethren;**

This means that those of the tribe of Levi would not be granted a parcel of land as the other tribes would. They would be granted cities within the lands of the other tribes, and they would live off of the tithes and offerings of the people of the land.

This will be expanded on later as Israel is given the particular instructions concerning their tithes. The Lord is their inheritance, and that means that what is offered from the people, to the Lord, would be distributed to them. As it says...

^{9 (con’t)} **the LORD *is* his inheritance,**

There is an emphasis in the Hebrew: *Yehovah hu nakhalato* – “Yehovah, He, his inheritance.” They will possess no tribal land, but rather, the portion of the tribal lands that are dedicated and offered to the Lord would be for those of the tribe of Levi.

⁹ (con't) **just as the LORD your God promised him.)**

This is exactly recorded in Numbers 18. The rights and benefits of their tribe are defined there, and they will be expanded upon again here in Deuteronomy. With those words conveyed, Moses now continues further in his thoughts to the second time atop the mountain...

¹⁰ **“As at the first time, I stayed in the mountain forty days and forty nights; the LORD also heard me at that time, *and* the LORD chose not to destroy you.**

This returns to the thought spoken out in verses 9:18 & 25. There the Lord spoke of the forty days and nights that he interceded for Israel. What is obvious, is that the connection to Levi here is a part of that.

Israel sinned, but Moses called for those who would defend the honor of the Lord to come forward and kill the offenders. Levi did. Moses was instructed to make another set of tablets, which he did. He was then instructed to place them in the ark, which he did.

However, during the time on the mountain, Moses also petitioned the Lord for Israel. The Lord accepted Moses' petition and He chose to not destroy Israel. In the process, he determined to reward the tribe who had stood up for His honor. That would have been a moot point if He had destroyed the people. But in His turning from His anger, He chose to reward Levi.

In other words, the point of what is said here is actually the continued scolding of Israel for their evil behavior, the mercy of the Lord, a demonstration of what pleases the Lord, and what brought the people to the structure in which they now existed.

The Lord was angry enough to destroy all of the people, but He graciously forgave them through the mediation of Moses. At the same time, He elevated the tribe of Levi because of their forsaking even their relations and putting the honor of the Lord first. In doing so, Levi was given a special honor that would continue throughout Israel's history.

It is with these points highlighted that Moses next says...

^{*11} (fin) **Then the LORD said to me, ‘Arise, begin *your* journey before the people, that they may go in and possess the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.’**

The word “Arise” surely has a double meaning here. First, it said in verse 9:25, “Thus I prostrated myself before the Lord; forty days and forty nights I kept prostrating myself, because the Lord had said He would destroy you.”

In telling Moses to arise, it signifies that His decision was made. And that decision was to “Arise, begin your journey.” The single word conveys both events – 1) Arise from before Me; I have forgiven, and 2) Arise from this place and make your journey.

In the chronology of events, it will still be an extended period of time before they actually depart from Horeb, but the assurance has been made. The Lord had said to Moses, “Let Me alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they” (9:14).

Instead, Moses would lead the people, Israel. And in his leading, they would go in and possess the land promised to their fathers. At this time, Moses had no idea that this would mean an extended period in the wilderness while an entire generation would perish, but the promise of the Lord would stand, as testified to by the fact that he is there with Israel on the east side of Jordan.

Though seemingly disjointed and obscure when we started, you can see now that the passage we have looked at is marvelously placed in the ongoing narrative. Each section is carefully building up the contents of the book so that nothing is left unattended to for future generations to read and understand all that has occurred in Israel’s history.

Further, what is presented shows us the very heart of God concerning countless points of His character, and of proper theology. He wants us to know that the law can’t save, but that He can. He wants us to understand our need, and His ability to fill that need.

He wants us to shun self and to, in turn, rely on Him. And He shows us the benefits of what doing so will be. And more, the Lord is showing us, through Moses, that true mediation can overcome even the greatest of evils and offenses against Him.

In this, we can then see the absolute surety we possess. Moses petitioned for Israel for forty days and forty nights. Christ Jesus never ceases to Mediate on our behalf. If the Lord forgave an entire nation of its offences because of Moses’ pleas, how much more can we be certain that we are forever safe in our salvation because of the Lord’s petitions for us.

Let us trust in this and let us be confident in it. To say otherwise to ourselves is to raise our own faults and failings above the cleansing and sanctifying power of Christ's work. Such can never be. Rest in Christ, trust in Christ, and be confident of the effectiveness of the ongoing ministry of Jesus Christ for you.

Closing Verse: *"Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." Hebrews 7:25*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 10:12-22 *This is why to Him our shouts we raise, and to Him we do applaud...* (He Is Your Praise, and He Is Your God) (35th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Two Tablets of Stone Like the First

"At that time the LORD said to me
'Hew for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, so you shall do
And come up to Me on the mountain
And make yourself an ark of wood, too

And I will write on the tablets
The words that were on the first tablets again plainly
The tablets which you broke
And you shall put them in the ark, away from the eyes of Me

"So I made an ark of acacia wood
Hewed two tablets of stone like the first as planned
And went up the mountain
Having the two tablets in my hand

And He wrote on the tablets according to the first writing
The Ten Commandments, which the LORD had spoken to you
In the mountain from the midst of the fire
-----in the day of the assembly
And the LORD gave them to me before saying adieu

Then I turned and came down from the mountain
And put the tablets in the ark which I had made
And there they are
Just as the LORD commanded me; this is where they have stayed

(Now the children of Israel journeyed
From the wells of Bene Jaakan to Moserah, so they were led
Where Aaron died, and where he was buried
And Eleazar his son ministered as priest in his stead

From there they journeyed to Gudgodah, as the Lord had planned
And from Gudgodah to Jotbathah, a rivers-of-water land

At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi
To bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD
To stand before the LORD to minister to Him
And to bless in His name, to this day, according to His word

Therefore Levi has no portion nor inheritance with his brethren
The LORD is his inheritance, as you now know quite well
Just as the LORD your God promised him
Just as the Lord your God did tell

As at the first time, I stayed in the mountain
Forty days and forty nights; that time did accrue
The LORD also heard me at that time
And the LORD chose not to destroy you

Then the LORD said to me
Arise, begin your journey before the people as you live
That they may go in and possess the land
Which I swore to their fathers to them give

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone

We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 10:12-22 **(He Is Your Praise, and He Is Your God)**

Quite often in Genesis through Numbers, pictures of Christ Jesus flew off the pages. There was the surface story, and then there were reasons why the surface stories were given. The Lord would take a simple story about normal human life, and He would turn it into a picture of what was coming in the greater story of redemption, especially concerning the Person of Jesus Christ.

There has been a little of that in Deuteronomy, but much less so far. But this does not mean that Jesus isn't in the details. Rather, we have seen many hints of Him, even through the speaking out of the law. In verses like today, there are implicit hints of Him and what He would be like as well.

In verse 17, it will say that the Lord is *ha'el ha'gadol ha'gibor* – the God, the great, the mighty. It is an expressive term that clues us into the nature of the coming Messiah. In Isaiah 9, using the same word, *gibor*, it says that His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

The term “Mighty God” is *el gibor*. After writing that out, he must have looked at what he had written and said, “How can that be? Yehovah is the God, the Mighty!” And to further confound him, he wrote, using the exact same words (*el gibor*) in the next chapter of his book –

“And such as have escaped of the house of Jacob,
Will never again depend on him who defeated them,
But will depend on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.

²¹ The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob,
To the *Mighty God*.” Isaiah 10:20, 21

If one takes the Bible as a whole meal, and not just in little bite-sized nuggets, the deity of Jesus Christ comes flying off of the pages. Such is the case with our text verse today...

Text Verse: *“I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, ¹⁴ that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, ¹⁵ which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶ who alone has immortality, dwelling*

in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.” 1 Timothy 6:13-16

Our sermon text says that Yehovah is the God of gods and Lord of lords. The psalmist (136:3) will say that Yehovah is the Lord of lords. Paul says that these titles belong to Jesus, and that is followed twice by the words of John in Revelation.

It is true that such terms, at times, can speak in various ways, but when the context demands that they refer to the same thing – as in these cases – it can only mean one thing: Jesus Christ is the incarnate Yehovah.

And so, while we read and study the book of Deuteronomy, let us continue to search for hints of the nature of God in Christ, pictures of Christ in the word, and also apply the proper context to our theology in matters of law verses grace. The law was given by the Lord for various reasons, and grace comes through the Lord for a completely different relationship with Him.

Let us hold fast to the grace and let us be thankful for the lessons of the law. These are things we just should do – to the glory of God who gave them to us. Such wonderful truths as these are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. With All Your Heart, and with All Your Soul (verses 12-15)

The last verses we looked at in the previous sermon said –

“As at the first time, I stayed in the mountain forty days and forty nights; the LORD also heard me at that time, *and* the LORD chose not to destroy you. ¹¹ Then the LORD said to me, ‘Arise, begin *your* journey before the people, that they may go in and possess the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.’” Deuteronomy 10:10, 11

After the incident of the golden calf, the Lord was upset enough to destroy the people and to make a nation of Moses. But through Moses’ mediation, He relented and renewed the covenant and the promises. The journey to the land of promise would come to pass, and the people would enter and possess. It is with this thought in mind, that Moses now begins an appeal to the people, commencing with these eleven verses...

¹² **“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you,**

The words are rhetorical. Moses already knows that Israel has no idea what the Lord God expects of them. If they did, he would not have had to reexplain every detail of what got them to the place where they now are.

They were told what the Lord required of them at Sinai. The words went into their ears, and they went right back out. The pattern repeated itself again and again over the many years in the wilderness.

Moses’ recounting of all of this detail is to, hopefully, get them to pay attention this time. Although, later in Deuteronomy, he will clearly indicate that he knows his words now are wasted breath. But he must speak them anyway. In order to be held accountable for one’s actions, one must first be told what is expected of him.

The word translated as “require” means to inquire or ask for. It is true that this is what is required, but it is stated almost as a treasure hunt – “What does the Lord seek of you?” He is looking for a result, but He is doing it with free-will in mind. And so, Moses’ opens his mouth and speaks out four principles, or precepts...

¹² (con’t) **but to fear the LORD your God,**

Precept 1) The fear of the Lord isn’t merely being afraid of His ability to destroy them. It is understanding that because He could do so, and yet instead tends to them, they were to acknowledge His rightful place above them as such.

Children know that their father has complete power over them, but unless they do wrong, they don’t need to worry. If he is a good father, they will instead know that he has their best interest in mind. They don’t need to walk on eggshells, but rather in confidence – “My father is big and strong, but he loves me. And so, I will fear him in confidence, doing what is right in order to please him.” Paul says likewise to those of the church in 2 Corinthians 7:1–

“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

This reverential fear is then expressed in the next precept...

¹² (con’t) **to walk in all His ways**

Precept 2) To walk signifies the conduct of a person's life. It is how he acts in relation to his surroundings, interacts with those he encounters, and expresses himself in relation to the expectations placed upon him.

The Lord is placing Israel in a land promised to their fathers. Their fathers were promised it based on faith, and thus the people were to be people who walked in faith.

The people of the land would be their own kin, and any strangers who were not of the inhabitants who were to be removed. Their walk and interactions were to be based upon their status as kinfolk, and as people who were once strangers in a foreign land (as will be explained again in the verses ahead).

And the people were given the law of the Lord. They were not to just be obedient to it, but they were to have their hearts directed toward it, as he will explain in verse 16. Thus, their walk was to be mindful of the Lord in the conduct of their obedience. Paul says as much to us today –

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:10

Obedience without a right heart attitude is as distasteful as willful disobedience. To have one's heart properly directed to the law of the Lord demonstrates the next expectation of the people...

12 (con't) and to love Him,

Precept 3) Moses refers to a volitional love, but it does not exclude an emotional love. Being obedient to the precepts of the Lord without a love of the Lord leads to rote obedience, and even a contempt, for what is required.

It can even draw one's attention away from the Lord: The Lord gives the Sabbath. The people don't love the Lord, but rather observe the Sabbath to themselves. Some don't observe it at all. In this, those who observe the Sabbath, even though they don't love the Lord, accuse and mock those who don't.

The attitude becomes one of self-righteousness and of comparing oneself against others. Only when one observes the Sabbath *because* he loves the Lord is the Sabbath, then, properly observed.

Paul expresses this thought to the church as well, saying, “Grace *be* with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen” (Ephesians 6:24). Service without sincere love will create an atmosphere that is both unhealthy and arrogant. To avoid this, Moses next says...

¹² (con’t) **to serve the LORD your God**

Precept 4) The word translated as serve, *abad*, signifies to work or serve. It can include slavery and bondage, or it can mean to till or cultivate. It is a general word that requires context to understand. The context here is that of faithful service with a right heart and certainly to include fear and love of the Lord God. Such is what Paul instructs us concerning the Lord Jesus –

“Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; ¹¹ not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” Romans 12:10, 11

Moses next expresses this in two subpoints, beginning with...

¹² (con’t) **with all your heart**

Precept 4a) *b’kal l’vavekha* – “with all to your heart.” The heart is the seat of reason and understanding. Moses implores them to use all of their intellect, reasoning, and wisdom in the service of the Lord. They are to consider him in all they do, and He is to be fixed in the mind’s eye in their service. It is what New Testament believers are to do concerning Jesus –

“My friends, God has chosen you to be his holy people. So think about Jesus, the one we call our apostle and high priest!” Hebrews 3:1 (CEV)

“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.” Hebrews 12:2 (BSB)

Understanding this, Moses continues with...

¹² (con’t) **and with all your soul,**

Precept 4b) The soul is what animates a person. It is the drive behind his actions and the strength he possesses. To serve the Lord with all of one's soul is to expend himself in the service of the Lord. It is a precept likewise taught to those in the church –

“Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to *Him* in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.” 1 Peter 4:19

It is these things that Moses directs the people to be conscious of and to put forth in the conduct of their lives. Further...

¹³ and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good?

The commandments of the Lord are those things spoken directly from the Lord, starting with the Ten Commandments, but also all of what the Lord directly spoke to and through Moses.

The statutes include the word of the Lord to Moses and that which is spoken through Moses. They are those things that are prescribed or set forth as an ordinance and the like.

Understanding these things, Moses continues with an obvious reason why Israel should pay heed and do these things. He does it by first explaining the position and power of Yehovah...

¹⁴ Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God,

The words are spoken in the superlative: *ha'shamayim u-sheme ha'shamayim* – “the heavens and heavens the heavens.” It is a way of saying, “everything above and in all directions. No matter which way the earth turns, all of it belongs to the Lord.

But more, it certainly is intended to include the spiritual realm itself; the highest, or third, heavens of which man has no free access to, nor understanding of, what occurs there. And more...

¹⁴ (con't) also the earth with all that is in it.

From man's perspective, the earth is where it's at. Before the age of planes and rockets, this was our domain. And even now, it is the center of our universe because it is where we live and move about.

But on this earth, there are animals and sea creatures of great power, ability, and beauty. There are lands far off, there are lands high in the mountains, and there are lands filled with wonder and delight. And there are many nations and peoples and tribes and tongues to fill them. Despite these things...

15 The LORD delighted only in your fathers, to love them;

There is an emphasis in the Hebrew: *raq ba'avotekha khashaq Yehovah* – "Only in your fathers delighted Yehovah." The word is *raq*, which is identical to the adjective signifying thin or lean. Thus, it figuratively speaks of limitation – for example, a teeny portion among a great amount.

Out of all of the heavens and the heavens of the heavens, and out of all of the earth, only in this one line was this attachment formed. The fathers of Israel were selected by the Lord, apart from their own merit. They were given sure and great promises, and they were made to none other...

15 (con't) and He chose their descendants after them,

In other words, at a specific time in their history, a selection was made. Several generations passed in Egypt, but at the time and generation determined by the Lord, the decision was rendered. This was without any input by those selected, and there was nothing in them that merited the call. And yet the call was made specifically for them...

15 (con't) you above all peoples, as it is this day.

bakem mikal ha'amim kayom ha'zeh – "In you (all) from all the people's as day the this." From verses 12-15, Moses has been speaking in the singular to Israel (you). In this one word alone, he switches to the plural "in you (all)." He will then continue this plural until verse 20.

The Lord could have drawn Israel out of Egypt at any given time. But it was at this specific time, meaning that point at which this group of people was chosen. Thus, they cannot say they were better than their fathers who died in Egypt, nor than those who would come after them.

The selection of the people was at the sovereign will of the Lord alone. And it was this group out of all groups of peoples on the entire earth. One can see a tapestry being woven in these words. “I am doing a thing in the earth, and I am using you in the process.”

In this, if you think it through to its logical end, the coming incarnation (which we now look back on) is seen here. “I am doing this thing, I am making decisions which are for My own purposes, and those decisions are leading to a particular end and for a particular purpose.” It is what Paul refers to –

“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” Galatians 4:4, 5

Israel thinks it is all about them. But the Lord is showing that the plan, which includes them, is formed for a purpose that they are only participants in. They are actually not the center of attention at all. He is. As this is so, they must pay heed...

*He is your praise, and He is your God
Great and glorious and mighty is He
Perfect are His ways; of them we applaud
The One who was and who is and who yet shall be*

*We shall serve Him with all our heart and with all our soul
We shall serve Him for all eternity
Those whose names are written in His scroll
The One who was and who is and who yet shall be*

*To Him, we look with all delight and all hope
To the One who we shall forever see
In His hand is all of creation's scope
The One who was and who is and who yet shall be*

II. He Is Your Praise (verses 16-22)

¹⁶ Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart,

This is a new thought introduced into Scripture. Israel bore the sign of circumcision that was passed down from the time of Abraham. And yet, the generation sitting before Moses did not possess it. That is recorded in Joshua 5 –

“At that time the LORD said to Joshua, ‘Make flint knives for yourself, and circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time.’³ So Joshua made flint knives for himself, and circumcised the sons of Israel at the hill of the foreskins.⁴ And this *is* the reason why Joshua circumcised them: All the people who came out of Egypt *who were* males, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way, after they had come out of Egypt.⁵ For all the people who came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness, on the way as they came out of Egypt, had not been circumcised.” Joshua 5:2-5

Despite their state of uncircumcision, which was contrary to the law and an obvious sign of judgment upon the people, Moses turns not to the flesh, but to the heart. In other words, without the heart, the flesh doesn’t matter at all. This is a precept that will be seen again in Deuteronomy 30 and Jeremiah 4 –

“Circumcise yourselves to the LORD,
And take away the foreskins of your hearts,
You men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem,
Lest My fury come forth like fire,
And burn so that no one can quench *it*,
Because of the evil of your doings.” Jeremiah 4:4

It is used one final time in the New Testament, and it explains much to us concerning what Moses is saying right now –

“For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.²⁶ Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?²⁷ And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, *even with your* written *code* and circumcision, *are* a transgressor of the law?²⁸ For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, nor *is* circumcision that which *is* outward in the flesh;²⁹ but *he is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God.”

-Romans 2:25-29

Moses is telling this generation that they are not right with the Lord at all. They are sitting on the banks of the Jordan because the Lord placed them there despite themselves.

As this generation pictures the generation brought back from exile who are in the land of Israel today, it shows us that they are – even now – as unclean as if they were not circumcised. Their boasting in their heritage is entirely misplaced. For now, Moses speaks on...

16 (con't) and be stiff-necked no longer.

v'arepekhem lo taqshu od – “and your (plural) neck no stiffen longer.” There are lots of people, and they have one giant stiff neck. That must end. But how does that come about?

Of this verse, Charles Ellicott uniquely translates it as a cause and effect, “Circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and ye will harden your neck no more.” That would then be comparable to Galatians 5:16, “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

His translation actually seems justified and appropriate. The cause-and-effect nature is seen in both the Old and the New Testaments –

“Nevertheless they would not hear, but stiffened their necks, like the necks of their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God.” 2 Kings 17:14

“You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.” Acts 7:51

One must first circumcise his heart. In this, the stiff neck will end. And the reason for that is clearly seen in the next verse...

17 For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome,

Most English versions completely miss the abundant emphasis and poignant nature of the Hebrew: *ki Yehovah elohekhem, hu, elohe ha'elohim, va'adonei ha'adonim, ha'el, ha'gadol, ha'gibor, v'ha'nora* – “For Yehovah your God, HE, God of the gods and Lord of

the lords, the God, the great, the mighty, and the terrifying.” Of the term, God of the gods, the Pulpit Commentary notes –

“Not only supreme over all that are called god, but the complex and sum of all that is Divine; the Great Reality, of which the ‘gods many’ of the nations were at the best but the symbols of particular attributes or qualities.”

This is certainly so, but it also includes anything of which the term Elohim comprises – angels, the departed souls of man, human judges, and so on. He is the God above all lesser “gods,” be they actual or invented. Nothing compares to Him.

Being Lord of the lords, means that all powers, sovereigns, masters, owners, and other such designations are all below Him. He is THE GOD, meaning the only true God. To Him alone is the greatness, to Him alone is the power, and to Him alone is the fear. All others receive their station and capability from Him.

Because of this, because all things stem from Him and all things belong to Him, it is He alone...

¹⁷ (con’t) **who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe.**

Asher lo yisa panim v’lo yiqah shokhad – “That no lifts faces and no takes bribe.” To lift the face means to regard or show partiality. All flesh stands before God on the same level and all will receive exactly the same treatment based on their conduct, not on their strength, wealth, intelligence, or for any other reason.

And, because this is so, nothing can be offered to Him to change His mind, as if He could accept a bribe. As He is the Possessor of all things, including time itself, there is nothing that can be given Him that He does not own – from eternity past, right now, and to the ages of ages. But despite all of His power and possession, He is not uncaring of His creation or of His creatures...

¹⁸ **He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing.**

The nature of the Lord is drawn out much more clearly here. The same Lord who has told Israel to go in and exterminate every person in the land of Canaan – regardless of age, sex, or any other category, is also the Lord who ensures that those who are not

under the ban are cared for, regardless of their lowly station, and indeed especially because of their lowly station. What this means, however, is only next revealed...

¹⁹ Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Of the previous verse, John Gill (and others) says –

“...and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment; one that is in a foreign country, at a distance from his native land, and destitute of friends; such God in his providence takes care of, and expresses his love and kindness to, by giving them the necessaries of life, food, and raiment.”

This is incorrect. Although all things are provided by God to tend to humans, He does not actively give these things to such people, nor should it be expected to be so. It would defeat the entire purpose of this verse now.

Moses says that Lord administers justice for them. He then, using the last category – that of the stranger – explains what Israel is to do. They are to love such, meaning “care for them.” He then explains the reason, “for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” As He tended to them in their time of loneliness, so they were to act towards the lonely.

What is implied, but unstated, is that as it was with the stranger, so it is to be with the fatherless and the widow. The word translated as “fatherless,” comes from a root signifying “to be lonely.” The word translated as “widow” is from a word signifying “forsaken.”

Israel was without the Lord until He came forth to Pharaoh and said, “Israel *is* my son, My firstborn” (Exodus 4:22). They were as a widow until He came and betrothed Himself to them. Thus, when the Lord says He administers justice for these people, it is that He places it in the conscience of man to naturally feel compassion. Thus, it is man’s job to care for his fellow man.

The man who hardens his heart to this state is the wrongdoer. In such a state, the Lord will then judge and punish him. For this reason, among others, Egypt was so judged. Canaan will be so judged. And when Israel fails, they too would be so judged. The Lord has stated His character, and Israel is expected to emulate it. Rather than hardening their hearts...

²⁰ You shall fear the LORD your God;

Here, and until the end of the chapter, the words go back to the singular. Israel the collective is being addressed. In this verse, the words are emphatic: *eth Yehovah eloheka tira* – “Yehovah your God you shall fear.”

It brings us right back to the thought of verse 12, Q: “What does the Lord your God require of you?” A: “To fear the Lord your God.” But this time, it is with the emphasis – “Yehovah your God you shall fear.”

With that understood, Moses again explains what that means with three principles, or precepts...

²⁰ (con’t) **you shall serve Him,**

Precept 1) As explained above, and as further defined by Moses – “with all your heart and with all your soul.” In this, the service will be acceptable. Further...

²⁰ (con’t) **and to Him you shall hold fast,**

Precept 2) The word is *dabaq*. It signifies “to cleave.” One can think of sticking like glue. When Naomi told Ruth to return to her people, it says that Ruth clung (*dabaq*) to her. She would not let go, and she promised to never let go, but to remain with her always. It is this closeness that is implied in the words now. Further...

²⁰ (con’t) **and take oaths in His name.**

Precept 3) It follows after Deuteronomy 6:13 –

“You shall fear the Lord your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name.”

The order of these three precepts is logical. Service is the basis for the relationship. But that service is to lead to holding fast – continuance. Only after that is established in the soul of the person should he venture to take oaths in His name. Otherwise, the oath is bound to be violated and the name of the Lord will be profaned. But such should never be, because...

²¹ **He is your praise,**

The words are emphatic: *hu tehilatekha* – “HE your praise.” Moses reaches back for a word only seen so far in Exodus 15, just after the crossing of the Red Sea, *tehillah*, or “praise” –

“Who *is* like You, O LORD, among the gods?
Who *is* like You, glorious in holiness,
Fearful in praises, doing wonders? Exodus 15:11

It is a word found mostly in the Psalms, but also quite a bit in Isaiah. It is where the book of Psalms, or *tehillim*, finds its Hebrew name. In saying, He is your praise, the entire verse needs to be considered. He is both the object of their praise –

“Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised
In the city of our God,
In His holy mountain.” Psalm 48:1

But He is also the ground of their praise –

“‘For as the sash clings to the waist of a man, so I have caused the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah to cling to Me,’ says the Lord, ‘that they may become My people, for renown, for praise, and for glory; but they would not hear.’” Jeremiah 13:11

21 (con’t) **and He *is* your God,**

Again, it is emphatic: *v’hu eloheka* – “And HE your God.” It is not another, nor is there another. Though Israel had many gods, and though they still have many gods, it is only Yehovah who is their God. Any other is a lie, and to cling to any other is to profane His name. They are a people because of Him, they are a people named by Him, they are a people called out for Him. It is He alone...

21 (con’t) **who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen.**

Again, Moses has returned in his mind to Exodus 15:11, using now the same word as then – “**fearful** in praises” is now “**awesome** things,” or maybe more poignantly, “**fearful** things.” The Exodus is not the only such thing. Indeed, there had been many – all seen by the eyes of the people.

The Lord is to be feared because it is He who does fearful things. If He can do such for Israel, He will do such against Israel. The choice is up to Israel.

²² Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy persons,

The word order provides emphasis: *b'shivim nephesh yaredu avoteka mitsraiymah* – “in seventy souls went down your fathers to Egypt.” Moses provides a history lesson to close out our verses today. He notes the diminutive size of Israel speaking of them as in the collective “Your (singular) fathers,” highlighting their insignificant number.

But in this, he also tells them that what happened, and what has come about in Israel now sitting outside of Canaan, was prophesied in advance...

***²² (fin) and now the LORD your God has made you as the stars of heaven in multitude.**

The Lord had made a promise to Abraham. Along with that promise were certain statements of fact concerning the future. Moses tells Israel that the promise has been fulfilled, and that the factual statements came true. From Genesis 15 –

“And behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, saying, ‘This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.’ ⁵ Then He brought him outside and said, ‘Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be.’” Genesis 15:4, 5

And then just a few verses later –

“Then He said to Abram: ‘Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land *that is* not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. ¹⁴ And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet complete.’” Genesis 15:13-15

What the Lord had told to Abraham had come to pass. Thus, not only is He “the One who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen,” but He is the One who orchestrated them in the first place.

The divine plan was mapped out, spoken of before it came to pass, and was fulfilled as it was spoken of. Therefore, there is the absolute assurance that what Moses spoke out concerning His nature, was certainly the case. What Moses conveyed concerning their relationship with Him was inviolable, and what he would speak out concerning their future would certainly occur.

However, and this is what Israel needed to understand, the Lord did not determine these things – as if Judah was going to be the largest tribe because the Lord caused more children to be born to that tribe. Rather, the Lord knew that it would occur.

Likewise, the Lord didn't force the brothers of Joseph to sell him off to Egypt, but the Lord used that for His greater purposes. In other words, Moses is not asking Israel to have a fatalistic view of the world, nor of the life they were to lead.

They were to understand that the Lord transcends the events of human history, and He uses them through His foreknowledge of them coming about to effect His purposes. If He intervenes in human history, as He did at the crossing of the Red Sea, He does so to continue that plan for His intended end.

But Israel was to know that they were accountable to the Lord for the choices they made, the allegiances they pursued, their treatment of His commands, and of others who were to be cared for according to His word.

Later in Deuteronomy, Moses will speak to Israel of their coming failures. Speaking of their future as if it is already past, he says –

“But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked;
You grew fat, you grew thick,
You are obese!
Then he forsook God *who* made him,
And scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation.
¹⁶ They provoked Him to jealousy with foreign *gods*;
With abominations they provoked Him to anger.
¹⁷ They sacrificed to demons, not to God,
To gods they did not know,
To new gods, new arrivals
That your fathers did not fear.
¹⁸ Of the Rock *who* begot you, you are unmindful,
And have forgotten the God who fathered you.” Deuteronomy 32:15-18

Knowing this in advance, Israel could not say, “The Lord knew it was coming and so it was predetermined and thus not our fault.” Rather, the Lord is letting them know that it is entirely their fault.

They were instructed, they were warned, and they did not heed. He just knew it would happen. His foreknowledge does not negate their free will. What is unfortunate, is that the same is true with the church today – both in doctrine (aka Calvinism) and in practice, such as in a fatalistic view concerning elections, saving for the future, or in a thousand other ways.

We – each and every person alive – are responsible for our actions, and we cannot blame God for those things that come about – even if He tells us in advance that they will happen. And so, let us take a right and reasonable approach to both our lives and our theology.

Let us live our lives before the Lord, honoring and serving Him as we are admonished to do, and let us look at the future with anticipation, not with a fatalistic view that the book is written, and we can’t change it anyway.

Our small part of the story is unknown to us from moment to moment, and our small effort may actually be the seed of something great and marvelous that happens along the pathway taking us to our final stop in the presence of the Lord.

Yes, the book is written, and yes, the end is already set. But we have a part to do until we get there. If giving flowers to someone will brighten their day, don’t withhold your hands from picking them. And if opening your mouth and speaking out the words of salvation will bring someone to the throne of grace, why would you refrain from speaking?

The only thing certain about our future is contained in a book containing 66 smaller books that total 1189 chapters. Outside of that, the possibilities for what lies ahead are absolutely unlimited. And each day that we live in the process is to be lived clinging to the One who gave us that broad and glorious outline of what lies ahead.

To be certain, if you want to share in the promises contained there, you will need to first be reconciled to the One who wrote out the lines of eternity. Make sure you are sure about that today.

Closing Verse: *Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶ And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written:*

*KING OF KINGS AND
LORD OF LORDS. -Revelation 19:15, 16*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 11:1-12 *You were led by the Lord; by His grace...* (Until You Came to this Place) (36th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

He Is Your Praise, and He Is Your God

“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you
But to fear the LORD your God, not a bit but in whole
To walk in all His ways and to love Him
To serve the LORD your God with all your heart
-----and with all your soul

And to keep the commandments of the LORD, so it is understood
And His statutes which I command you today for your good?

Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong
-----to the LORD your God
Also the earth with all that is in it; everywhere you trod

The LORD delighted only in your fathers, to love them
And He chose their descendants after them, so He did say
You above all peoples
As it is this day

Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart
And be stiff-necked no longer; be sure to do your part

For the LORD your God is God of gods

And Lord of lords, these titles to Him we ascribe
The great God, mighty and awesome
Who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe

He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow also
And loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing
-----as you well know

Therefore love the stranger; his good from you shall not be skipped
For you were strangers in the land of Egypt

You shall fear the LORD your God
You shall serve Him, so I exclaim
And to Him you shall hold fast
And take oaths in His name

He is your praise
And He is your God, who has done for you
These great and awesome things
Which your eyes have seen; He is faithful and true

Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy persons
A very small brood
And now the LORD your God has made you
As the stars of heaven in multitude

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 11:1-12 (Until You Came to this Place)

One of the things I try to do when teaching, especially during the weekly Bible studies, but also at times during the sermons, is to highlight the errors of various scholars. This is not simply nitpicking them, but it rather serves a purpose.

In knowing where the error is, one then might be able to deduce why the error was made. When Thomas Edison was confronted with all of his unsuccessful trials in making a lightbulb, his response was, “I didn’t fail. I just found two thousand ways to not make a lightbulb. I only needed to find one way to make it work.”

When a point of theology doesn’t work, we can then continue searching to find what does work – what does fit – to come to a proper conclusion. Some of these scholars I cite rank as the finest in all of church history, simply because they have several traits about them.

The first is that they hold to the word of God (at least in varying degrees) as inspired. They believe it truly is the word of God. To be a great Bible scholar, this first precept is absolutely necessary.

The next trait is that they take the word as a unified whole. Without doing this, one cannot see how all things weave together into one large picture of the redemptive narrative. At the same time, they do their best to take what is being presented at any given time in its proper context. Just because the Bible is a unified whole, individual passages have individual contexts. Whether people want to admit it or not, 2 Chronicles 7:14 has a specific context, as do all such memorable passages. In removing the context, a pretext is then formed.

Another trait of these great scholars is that they have a resource of previous scholars – good and bad alike – that they refer to and build upon. In this, they demonstrate wisdom in contemplating the efforts of those who came before them.

There are other things needed to make a great scholar, but these are a good starter. But, as I said, these men refer not only to good scholars that they always agree with, but also to those who may not be so good. Even bad scholars can have good insights.

As you probably know, I rank the Old Testament scholars at Cambridge at the bottom of the barrel of those I refer to each week. And yet, I refer to them each week. They do not

hold to the word of God as inspired. They constantly claim, “This was inserted later,” “This is spurious,” “Moses didn’t write this,” and so on.

From this first error, all of the rest of their theology is tainted. And yet, in their time-consuming attempts to nitpick apart the word of God, they bring forth insights that nobody else would, simply because the other scholars wouldn’t think so perversely. In this, they then miss things that would naturally not seem odd.

The lesson that I give concerning such people is to not throw the baby out with the bathwater. Just because I disagree with John Calvin on major points of doctrine (because he is wrong), it doesn’t mean he doesn’t have great insights here or there.

Text Verse: *“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. ¹⁶ But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.” 2 Timothy 2:15, 16*

A couple things about this text verse come to mind. First, I cringe when I see someone doing a Bible study, and these words of Paul are posted on the board behind the teacher. Anyone who is teaching the Bible would be stupid to not think they were rightly dividing the word. “Ok, we’re going to study the Bible completely out of context today, as we always do.”

So, there is no need to make the claim. Secondly, it makes the arrogant assumption that he is, in fact, rightly dividing the word. But if he isn’t, how would he know? However, in making the claim, even while he isn’t rightly dividing, he is then saying that someone who may be rightly dividing is actually wrong – when, in fact, he is actually right.

Another thing about Paul’s words is that we don’t want to use the commentaries of just anyone. When I refer to Cambridge, it is because they are actually trained in theology, and they are schooled in the Hebrew and Greek. And further, despite not accepting the Bible as fully inspired, they do hold to proper orthodoxy in their main theological presentations.

One should not follow the teachings or commentaries of those who fail to do this. As Paul says of them, such people only increase to more ungodliness. We need to first learn what is considered standard orthodoxy, and then go forward.

If someone doesn't teach the Trinity – for example, they teach Oneness Pentecostalism – there is no reason at all to read any of their other work. They have departed from an established norm, and all of their other theology will follow with this taint.

Be reasonable in your theology, be careful not to toss out what is good, just because of the source, keep things in context, and be sure – above all else – to accept the word of God as both fully inspired and as inerrant in all it teaches.

With this, you will be in the sweet spot. Such truths as these are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. His Signs and His Acts (verses 1-7)

The words in this passage, especially in verse 2, are extremely complicated. After spending about an hour on it in the morning, later in the day Sergio, Rhoda, and I spent more than an hour on that one verse, even going to the Dead Sea Scroll fragments to determine what is missing or wrong. In the end, the coming analysis includes our very best efforts.

Also, verses 1-8 form a chiasm that gives us insights into what is being conveyed. In going over it, it will – hopefully – help you to grasp what we will be going through in those verses. If nothing else, it reveals the rather poor nature of many translations of these verses. A very logical and orderly progression of thought is seen, but that is obscured, particularly by insertion of words into verse 2 by many translations – words which are incorrect.

Deuteronomy 11:1-8 (The Acts of the Lord)
From Egypt to the Bank of the Jordan (11/9/2020)

- a. “Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always
- b. And you have known today ... His greatness and His mighty hand and His outstretched arm—His signs and His acts which He did
- c. in the midst of Egypt
- d. to Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to all his land; what He did to the army of Egypt, to their horses and their chariots: how He made the waters of the Red Sea overflow them as they pursued you, and *how* the LORD has destroyed them to this day (judgment on Egypt via the waters)

- x. what He did for you in the wilderness until you came to this place
- d. and what He did to Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben: how the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, their households, their tents, and all the substance that *was* in their possession (judgment on Israel via the earth)
- c. in the midst of all Israel
- b. but your eyes have seen every great act of the LORD which He did
- a. “Therefore you shall keep every commandment which I command you today

With this in mind, let us proceed into today’s passage by first going back. To end the previous chapter, Moses said, “You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him, and to Him you shall hold fast, and take oaths in His name. ²¹ He *is* your praise, and He *is* your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen. ²² Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy persons, and now the LORD your God has made you as the stars of heaven in multitude” (Deuteronomy 10:20-22).

The Lord had shown Himself faithful to this small band of people who had grown into a great multitude. His plan was promised, it was set, and it was sure to come to pass. And indeed, it had come to pass. The promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were kept, Israel was at the border of their inheritance, and Moses was reminding them of this. It is with this context in mind that we come to the opening verse of Chapter 11 –

¹“Therefore you shall love the LORD your God,

As is normal, the word translated as “therefore,” is simply, “and.” It is a continuance of the previous thought –

“Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy persons, and now the LORD your God has made you as the stars of heaven in multitude. And, you shall love the Lord your God.”

Further, the pronouns are singular. Because of what He has done for you (collective Israel), you shall love the Lord your God. It is to be a willful, volitional love based upon what the Lord has done. He has proven Himself trustworthy. Therefore, the nation is to respond in kind. In order to demonstrate this love, they are to act. Moses explains what that means, saying...

^{1 (con’t)} and keep His charge,

The word is *mishmereth*, and it refers to a watch or observance as would be kept by a sentry at his post. But it is not their post; it is His. This is the only time that this *mishmereth*, or charge, is spoken of in Deuteronomy. Only the horrible scholars at Cambridge even made a note of this. The other scholars wouldn't normally bother checking that out because it appears irrelevant to the narrative.

The reason Cambridge even included it was to supposedly demonstrate that the use of this word came from a priestly source and was inserted many years later. As stupid as that sounds, it is of note that they even mentioned it as only being cited here.

The reason isn't because it was inserted later, but because of what Moses just said at the end of the previous chapter. He surely uses this word now to connect it to the fact that the Lord kept His watch over the promise to the fathers, and to the people of Israel, for four hundred and thirty years. As this was so, they were to now keep His watch, guarding what was entrusted to them. This included...

1 (con't) His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments

The statutes are those things which are prescribed, as in ordinances. The judgments are those things which are judicially determined. In this case, as in divine law. And the commandments are those things that are spoken forth by the Lord directly, or through Moses. They are binding precepts. These are to be kept...

1 (con't) always.

kal ha'yamim – “all the days.” As this is His charge, the people are to act in accord with the nature of the Lord and never let slip what He would be attentive to. The substance of this thought is summed up in Psalm 121 –

“He will not allow your foot to be moved;
He who keeps you will not slumber.
⁴ Behold, He who keeps Israel
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.” Psalm 121:3, 4

It is the same thought conveyed by Jesus to His disciples in Matthew 28, where He uses the same term in Greek, *pasas tas hēmeras*, or “all the days” –

“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father

and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.”
Matthew 28:18-20

The Lord never slumbers, and He is carefully watching over His people. In response, His people are to observe His watch and be obedient to all those things that have been directed by Him.

² Know today that I do not speak with your children,

vidatem ha'yom ki lo eth benekem – “and you (all) know the day for no with your children.” The words now are in the plural, “you all,” and they will continue in the plural through verse 9. Moses addresses all of those who had seen the events he will now relay.

Also, the words of this clause lack any verb or predicate, and so a verbal thought either has to be supplied by the reader’s mind, or there is simply no thought that performs an action, even though an action is implied in the structure of the verse.

Various suggestions have been given, but the inserted words of the NKJV “I do not speak” do not convey the right sense. The word spoken forth is for all. To say he is not speaking to the children is to ignore them, something he will not do. Young’s gives the most literal translation, conveying the intent much more precisely –

“and ye have known to-day -- for it is not your sons who have not known, and who have not seen the chastisement of Jehovah your God.”

As you can see, an entire portion of verse 2 is then parenthetical. Offsetting the parenthetical words, it would read, “And you (all) know today (for *it is* not your sons, who have not known, and who have not seen the chastisement of Yehovah your God) His greatness and His mighty hand and His outstretched arm.”

Moses is not ignoring the children, but he is saying that the children were ignorant of the events because they were not alive at the time. Because of this, Moses will give the remedy for their state of ignorance when we get to verse 19, saying –

“You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.”

It is the children who are ignorant of the ways of the Lord, and who will then need to be instructed in them. And this instruction goes both ways, positively and negatively.

² (con't) **who have not known and who have not seen the chastening of the LORD your God,**

Here, Moses uses a new word, *musar*. It is derived from the verb *yasar* which signifies chastisement, through blows or words, leading to instruction. Thus, this is the state of instruction that is so transmitted.

The Greek translation of the verse uses the word *paideia*, signifying the molding of a child into an ideal member of the society. To get the sense of the word, Solomon uses it twice in a row, changing its position in relation to the word “wisdom,” in order to define what is conveyed –

“The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:

² To know wisdom and instruction,

To perceive the words of understanding,

³ To receive the instruction of wisdom,

Justice, judgment, and equity.” Proverbs 1:2, 3

Moses is saying that the Lord has provided Israel with a type of moral education through His instruction, which involves both punishment and mercy, discipline and tender care, and chastisement and protection.

The younger children have not been so instructed. Therefore, it will be incumbent on the elders to ensure the children are properly educated in what they have learned by experience, which was of...

² (con't) **His greatness and His mighty hand and His outstretched arm—**

The Hebrew is more emphatic: *yado ha'khazaqah u-zeroo ha'netuyah* – “hand the mighty and arm the outstretched.”

The words here are similar to verse 7:19 where the “greatness” is explained. There it said, “the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs and the wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm, by which the Lord your God brought you out.”

The greatness here can then be equated to the “signs and the wonders,” along with anything else that Moses will further explain as he continues...

³ His signs and His acts which He did in the midst of Egypt,

There is a play on the word *asah*, to do or make, here. Moses uses the word *maasav*, works, which is derived from *asah*, and he then follows it with that root, *asah*. It thus shows the superlative nature of what the Lord has accomplished: *v’eth ototav v’eth maasav asher asah b’tok mitsrayim* – “and His signs and His workings which He worked in midst Egypt.”

Not only did the Lord show forth signs, but He actively worked His workings to confirm those signs. This was before Israel to see, but they were put forth...

^{3 (con’t)} to Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to all his land;

Egypt was their captor, and Pharaoh ruled Egypt. And yet, Israel was released from his rule and from the bondage they were in. It was not by their rebellion and insurrection. Nor did an invading army come in and destroy Egypt. And yet, Israel was freed.

When they were powerless, and with none to plead their cause but the Lord, they were brought out. It was solely by His greatness and workings that this came about. Moses reminds them now of...

⁴ what He did to the army of Egypt, to their horses and their chariots:

Moses again uses the word *asah* (did), defining the Lord’s next great act. The first was in the midst of Egypt. Moses next turns to what happened outside of the land when Egypt pursued Israel in the wilderness, to the shore of the Red Sea.

He reminds them of the great force that came against them, saying: *v’asher asah l’khel mitsrayim l’susav u-l’rikbo* – “and which worked to army Egypt, to horses, and to chariots.” In other words, the defenseless escapees faced an entire army that was fitted out with strong animals and chariots.

An entire group of people, completely undefended, and with their backs to an impassable sea, faced this onslaught of power. They saw this with their own young and impressionable eyes, and Moses reminds them of...

^{4 (con't)} **how He made the waters of the Red Sea overflow them as they pursued you,**

Without explaining the parting of the Red Sea, Moses simply treats it as a known quantity that it was parted, that they passed through it, and that Egypt followed them in.

And when they did, Israel, safely on the other side watched as *hetsiph eth me yam suph al penehem b'radepham akharekem* – “He made flow water Sea Ending upon their faces as they pursued after you.”

In this, Moses introduces a rare verb, *tsuph*. It will be seen only three times, and it signifies to flow or swim. He is graphically reminding Israel that the waters they had just gone through, and which stood solidly as a wall, reverted to flowing waters, covering the faces of the Egyptians, even as they pursued after Israel. When this occurred, it became a definitive, lasting act...

^{4 (con't)} **and how the LORD has destroyed them to this day;**

During all of the time of their wilderness wanderings, right up until the time that they now stood there on the banks of the Jordan, ready to pass through, Egypt had never recovered enough to come against them again. As John Lange pithily states it, “Perfect redemption.” With this remembered, Moses continues on...

⁵ **what He did for you in the wilderness until you came to this place;**

Here, we come to the middle of the chiasm that is found in this passage. Again, Moses uses the word *asah* (did). He reminds them of how the Lord worked in the wilderness. It is the central thought of what Moses is saying, and it is to be taken in conjunction with what has been said about Egypt so far, and with what will be said in the next verses.

In Exodus 13:18, prior to crossing the Red Sea, it said –

“So God led the people around *by way* of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt.”

And in Exodus 15:22, after crossing it, it said –

“So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water.” Exodus 15:22

As you can see, the wilderness here is being used as an all-encompassing term to describe what occurred both with Egypt, and of the events yet to be described. In other words, the Lord did great works in both contexts.

Further, He did countless things – both positive and negative –toward Israel. They were to remember them all. He gave them manna, quail, the Sabbath, water from the rock, and protection from Amalek. He gave them the law, making a covenant with them. He forgave their transgression in the making of the golden calf, and He renewed the covenant, promising them to never utterly reject them as a people.

He again gave them quail after departing Sinai, He burned among them when they rebelled. He brought them to the door of Canaan, and He offered them the land. He punished them for refusing to simply accept His offer by faith. He directed them back into the wilderness, sentencing them to death while preserving them as a people in accord with His word.

He sent vipers among them, and He gave them the grace of the bronze serpent on the pole. On and on and on, in numerous ways, He trained them – giving them instruction as a Father to His child. These were the workings of Yehovah toward Israel in the wilderness.

Now, in conjunction with that same thought, Moses next singles out one instance of divine judgment upon the people to remind them, and to instruct them...

⁶and what He did to Dathan and Abiram

And again, Moses uses the word *asah* (did) to reveal the workings of the Lord. The event here is described in great detail in Numbers 16. It is an account generally known as “Korah’s Rebellion,” because Korah is both the first named offender, and because he was of the tribe of Levi, attempting to erase the distinction between Levi in general and those of the Aaronic priesthood.

However, Moses doesn’t even mention him. Instead, he focuses on what Yehovah *asah l’dathan v’la’aviram*, or “did to Dathan and to Abiram.” The obvious question is, “Why

would Moses completely skip over Korah and focus only on only these two miscreants?" The answer must be, at least partially, because of the next words...

6 (con't) the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben:

These two were not of Levi, but were of the tribe of the firstborn, Reuben. Levi was just mentioned in the previous chapter as a single unit, despite the priestly line of Aaron –

“At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister to Him and to bless in His name, to this day. ⁹Therefore Levi has no portion nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD *is* his inheritance, just as the LORD your God promised him.)”

-Deuteronomy 10:8, 9

Korah, being a Levite, only attacked the arrangement of the order and structure found within the tribe of Levi. However, Dathan and Abiram had attempted to usurp the entire structure of the leadership of the people and the mediatorial role of Levi – between the people and the priests and the priests and the Lord. Because of this, Moses calls to memory how they were destroyed...

6 (con't) how the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, their households, their tents,

The exciting details are found in Numbers 16, where they focus on Korah rather than these two –

“Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them, ³² and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all *their* goods. ³³ So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly. ³⁴ Then all Israel who *were* around them fled at their cry, for they said, ‘Lest the earth swallow us up *also!*’”

-Numbers 16:31-34

They went alive into *sheol* and were gone, with both their households and their tents...

6 (con't) and all the substance that *was* in their possession,

Here is an idiomatic expression: *v'eth kal haiqum asher b'raglehem* – “and all living thing which in their feet.” This is not referring to their stuff, but their people. All who followed after them and who were under their authority went down alive. The feet signify the sphere of authority. It is seen, for example, in Psalm 8 –

“You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands;
You have put all *things* under his feet.” Psalm 8:6

These two families were utterly consumed and disappeared from Israel. However, such is not the case with Korah. The sons of Korah are noted elsewhere, including as being the authors of eleven psalms. It provides a second reason why Moses refers only to these two and not to Korah.

Because the descendants were not utterly destroyed along with Korah, Moses skips over the name, revealing the mercy that was found in the midst of the Lord’s workings. Moses says that all of this was accomplished...

⁶ (con’t) **in the midst of all Israel—**

It speaks of the entire event, but it may also give a third indicator as to why Korah is overlooked. His action was in and against Levi, of whom he belonged. The actions of Dathan and Abiram were against Levi, to whom they did not belong.

Theirs was an attack against all of Israel as all of Israel was ministered to by Levi – both Levite and priest. Therefore, the term, “in the midst of all Israel,” is doubly pertinent to them. They offended against (in the midst of) all Israel, and the judgment was complete against them among (in the midst of) all Israel when they were entirely wiped out from the people.

⁷ **but your eyes have seen every great act of the LORD which He did.**

Here, we have the completion of the thought from verse 3. There it referred to “His signs and His workings which He worked,” using the plural of the word *maaseh*, and the word *asah*.

Here, using the same words, but with *maaseh* singular this time, it says: *ki enekem ha’root eth kal maaseh Yehovah ha’gadol asher asah* – “For your eyes the seers every working Yehovah, the great which He worked.”

Translating the word *ki* as “but” here makes all of these verses sound as if they are based on a contrast between them and what the children didn’t see. This is incorrect. Rather, it should be translated as “for.” In this, it complements and confirms that the people he has been speaking to are the ones who saw these things.

*What is it that will bring me life?
What thing must I do to be right with my God?
What will end this enmity and strife?
How shall I conduct my affairs on this path I trod?*

*Shall I stand before God and boast in what I have done?
Shall I rely on my deeds accomplished under the law?
Shall I reject the perfection of His Son?
Am I able to stand on my own, without spot or flaw?*

*Not on a bet would I so determine to do!
A single misdeed and I would be done in
I will trust in the work of the Lord, holy and true
Only through Him will I be freed from the penalty of sin*

*Thanks be to God for Christ Jesus my Lord
Only in Him will I to the judgment seat step forward*

II. A Land for Which the Lord Your God Cares (verses 8-12)

⁸“Therefore you shall keep every commandment which I command you today,

And now, these words take us back to verse 1 to complete the chiasm. There, he spoke in the plural – statutes, judgments, and commandments. Now he refers to them in the singular: *kal ha’mitsvah*, or “all the commandment.”

It is a single, unified commandment made up of all of the various parts. In both, the force of the words is the same – “Here is what you have been instructed, and these are (this is) what you are to do.” Let nothing of it fail.

Moses has given justification as to why they were to do as so instructed. Their own eyes were the seers, the witnesses, of all that had transpired. They could not deny that it was the Lord who had done these things, and they were therefore obligated to respond to

His kindnesses and judgments with respect, honor, and obedience. Further, in obedience to this word, there is to be a positive outcome...

8 (con't) that you may be strong,

l'maan tekhezqu – “to end purpose, that you may be strong.” Here, the idea is that in obedience to what is prescribed, they will be encouraged or fortified in their conduct and abilities. The obvious implication is that in failing to obey, they will not be.

He has just shown an example of the Lord’s power to destroy an enemy nation for their sakes. He has also shown an example of the Lord’s power to remove enemies within the nation when they are disobedient. The sword cuts in two directions and the reason for its use for or against comes down to one thought – obedience. Moses next says...

8 (con't) and go in and possess the land which you cross over to possess,

The Lord destroyed Egypt, and He can destroy the nations of Canaan as well. They failed to believe this in Numbers 14, and it cost an entire generation their lives. Instead of entering in and possessing, they were exiled into the wilderness.

Moses tells them that the Lord will cause the opposite to occur if they simply accept the words and act accordingly. They will go in, and they will possess, but it is conditional based on their relationship with the Lord.

And, once they are in the land, their remaining there is also a guarantee to continue, or a guarantee to end, based solely on how they perform in that relationship...

9 and that you may prolong *your* days

u-l'maan taariku yamim – “to end purpose you may prolong days.” In obedience, the days will be prolonged. In disobedience, the opposite will be true. And this prolonging of days is...

9 (con't) in the land

It does not say, “in the land.” Rather, it says: *al ha'adamah* – “upon the ground.” This is an important distinction. Moses isn’t just referring to exile from the land of Canaan, but of living upon the ground in Canaan. In disobedience, some will not even get the opportunity to be exiled, but they will simply die where they are.

This could be from famine, pestilence, inner tribal conflict, or being slain by enemy nations. In disobedience, their days will be cut short. It is this ground, comprising the land of Canaan...

^{9 (con't)} **which the LORD swore to give your fathers, to them and their descendants,**

Again, Moses brings in the fathers as he so regularly does. It is to remind Israel of the Lord's covenant faithfulness. And that covenant faithfulness then extends to their descendants. The land is Israel's inheritance. It is given to them, but the possession of it is conditional – both for individuals, and for the nation.

The promise stands, but it is based upon performance. Israel must accept this. But as an enticement, Moses then again says...

^{9 (con't)} **'a land flowing with milk and honey.'**

It is the second of six times they will be reminded of the quality of the land. The blessings are there, and they await Israel, if only Israel will heed. Here, the word for "land" is *eret*. In this context, it speaks of the land as a whole. With that in mind, Moses continues with the marvelous description of what Canaan is like...

¹⁰ **For the land which you go to possess is not like the land of Egypt**

The words now go to the singular. Moses is speaking to the nation. The land which you, Israel, go to possess is not like the land of Egypt. Your (singular) land is so much better than that land...

^{10 (con't)} **from which you have come,**

Only in this clause of this verse does it go again to the plural: *asher yesatem misham* – "which you (all) have come (out) from." Moses is being precise, probably waving his hand across the multitudes and acknowledging the great number of Israel who were there before him. He then returns to the singular, saying...

^{10 (con't)} **where you sowed your seed and watered it by foot, as a vegetable garden;**

In this, Moses reminds the people what it was like in Egypt. There was little rain, and so the water source was predominantly the Nile and any canals that flowed from it. From

there, water had to be carried in buckets by foot, or smaller channels could be dug out with spades with the foot pressing them into the earth.

Some believe this could also be referring to pumping wheels that were powered by foot in order to bring up water. No matter what, it was a laborious task to have water brought into one's property in order to water the vegetable garden. This is a new word, *yaraq*, coming from *yereq*, meaning green. Thus, it speaks of the vegetable, herb, and so on.

Instead of the laborious labors of Egypt, Moses says...

¹¹ but the land which you cross over to possess is a land of hills and valleys,

Again, Moses returns to the plural – “which you (all) cross over to possess.” He is playing on what he just said. “You all have come out from Egypt, and now you all are going to cross over to possess.” There is no error in the text; it is alive and vivid.

“This land isn't at all like Egypt. There are hills and valleys. And it is this land through the constant watchfulness and caring providence of the Lord...”

^{11 (con't)} which drinks water from the rain of heaven,

It is, at the same time, a note of joy and of warning. Little effort will be needed to raise an abundance of crops. Trees will grow without care; abundance will flow down from the hills and into the valleys. There will be joy and delight because the Lord sends the rains.

And yet... it is the Lord who sends the rains. Without His open hand of grace, there would be no water at all, not even by foot. The land itself is brought alive or brought to its end through the Lord's care of it via the rains.

And that care was based upon Israel's obedience to His word. The notable effects of this condition are to be seen in our closing verse today. For now, Moses continues with his words. It is...

¹² a land for which the LORD your God cares;

It reverts to the singular, your (singular) God. He is Israel's God, and Moses says He *doresh*, or seeks after the land. His eyes search it out, He observes it, and He cares for it.

As Canaan is typical of entrance into Christ, and thus the heavenly promise, the words of Jesus are clearly seen in this –

“I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. ⁴ And where I go you know, and the way you know.” John 14:1, 2

The Lord cared for Canaan for the sake of Israel. He, likewise, has a place prepared for His people which He has tended to. Both require crossing over the Jordan, meaning demonstrating faith in the Lord. In this, the land is received. As for the earthly Canaan, Moses says...

***12 (fin) the eyes of the LORD your God *are* always on it, from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year.**

Both clauses are idiomatic. The meaning of the first is that the Lord is attentive to it as if He was sitting there and watching it, never taking His eyes off of it. The meaning of the second clause is that this wasn't just continuous, but it is unceasing. The beginning of the year comes at the ending of the previous year. And so, there is never a time that the Lord isn't searching out the land.

But this is, like the other words, a double-edged sword. There is no place and no time that His eyes are not on the land. As this is so, then they are also on the people of the land. Their actions are what will drive the Lord's response to how He treats the land.

This is seen time and time again throughout the rest of the Old Testament as the rains came or were withheld. And, at times, the coming of rain was a judgment as well, such as in 1 Samuel 12:19 when rains came during the harvest because the people had rejected the Lord. In this, the people's response to Samuel was –

“Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, that we may not die; for we have added to all our sins the evil of asking a king for ourselves.”

This is the lesson of Israel, and because it is, it is the lesson of the law. When one is under law, he must be obedient to that law. In failure to heed, sin is the result. And with the coming of sin comes the sad expectation of judgment.

Israel's history is mapped out for us so that we can see this. But this lesson of Israel is one that takes us back even further. The first law given to man was broken, and man has

suffered the effects of that ever since. Israel, and the law given to her, has been a lesson for all people to see the gravity of what occurred with Adam.

It wasn't just a sin that led to His punishment and death, but one which then spread to all men, because all men are in Adam. Israel is being used as a typological representation of this. The Person of Jesus is then provided to show us the contrast of that.

Adam failed, Israel is given to reveal the magnitude of that, and Christ, the second Man and the greater Israel, came to show us how to be released from this huge yoke we carry. Unlike Adam, He never sinned. Unlike Israel, He fulfilled the law. And because of this, the beauty of God working in Christ Jesus is then made available to us.

He is the release from the condemnation we all bear. He is the Lifter of the yoke and the Grantor of new life – eternal life. He is the embodiment of the law, and so all who are in Him are freed from the constraint of law. In Him, God is no longer counting men's sins against them.

The land of Canaan is outshined, infinitely and eternally, in the glory that God now provides in Christ. Let us not fail to heed the call, demonstrate faith in His provision, and be saved unto the glory of everlasting life in the presence of God. May it be so for you, and may it be today. Amen.

Closing Verse: *“Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities,
And lack of bread in all your places;
Yet you have not returned to Me,
Says the LORD.”*

*⁷ “I also withheld rain from you,
When there were still three months to the harvest.
I made it rain on one city,
I withheld rain from another city.
One part was rained upon,
And where it did not rain the part withered.*

*⁸ So two or three cities wandered to another city to drink water,
But they were not satisfied;
Yet you have not returned to Me,
Says the LORD.” Amos 4:6-8*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 11:13-21 *So vast is the breadth and the girth...* (Like the Days of the Heavens Above the Earth) (37th Deuteronomy sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Until You Came to this Place

“Therefore you shall love the LORD your God
And keep His charge; that always pays
His statutes, His judgments
And His commandments always

Know today that I do not speak with your children
Who have not known and who have not seen nor stood in alarm
The chastening of the LORD your God
His greatness and His mighty hand and His outstretched arm—

His signs and His acts which He did
In the midst of Egypt, which He had planned
To Pharaoh king of Egypt
And to all his land

What He did to the army of Egypt
To their horses and their chariots as they tried to race away
How He made the waters of the Red Sea
Overflow them as they pursued you, and how the LORD
-----has destroyed them to this day

What He did for you in the wilderness
Until you came to this place, back then
And what He did to Dathan and Abiram
The sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben

How the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up
Their households, their tents, and all the substance
-----that was in their possession, He of them got rid
In the midst of all Israel—

But your eyes have seen every great act of the LORD
----- which He did

“Therefore you shall keep every commandment
Which I command you today; so, to you I address
That you may be strong
And go in and possess the land which you cross over to possess

And that you may prolong your days
In the land which the LORD swore to give your fathers
-----without cost or money
To them and their descendants
A land flowing with milk and honey

For the land which you go to possess
Is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come
Where you sowed your seed and watered it by foot
As a vegetable garden; if you had a green thumb

But the land which you cross over to possess
Is a land of hills and valleys, caressed by heaven’s dew
Which drinks water from the rain of heaven
Such is the land I am giving to you

A land for which the LORD your God cares
The eyes of the LORD your God are always on it
From the beginning of the year
To the very end of the year, this land to watch He does commit

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 11:13-21 **(Like the Days of the Heavens Above the Earth)**

In the Bible, being faithful to the Lord is equated with a spouse being faithful to her husband. In this marriage-type relationship, the Lord is willing to put up with a great deal and yet not put away Israel. Under the law, if a man were to divorce his wife and she were to remarry and then get divorced again, the first husband could not later take her back. That is a point of law found later –

“When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts *it* in her hand, and sends her out of his house, ² when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man’s *wife*, ³ if the latter husband detests her and writes her a certificate of divorce, puts *it* in her hand, and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her as his wife, ⁴ *then* her former husband who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that *is* an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God is giving you *as* an inheritance.” Deuteronomy 24:1-4

The defiling of a woman by another man excluded the man from taking her back again as his wife. The contract was violated, and the law had spoken. And yet, in Jeremiah, we read this concerning the Lord’s love towards His people –

Text Verse: *“They say, ‘If a man divorces his wife,
And she goes from him
And becomes another man’s,
May he return to her again?’
Would not that land be greatly polluted?
But you have played the harlot with many lovers;
Yet return to Me,” says the LORD. Jeremiah 3:1*

This precept came to mind because I use an example of an unfaithful spouse in the sermon today. Despite Israel’s almost complete unfaithfulness to the Lord during their entire history, He has faithfully preserved them, calling them back to Himself – “Return to Me.”

He continues to do so today, and He will continue to do so until the day they are – once and forever – reconciled to Him through Jesus Christ. This is the amazing and glorious Creator we serve. He remains faithful even through the unfaithfulness of His people.

It is a foundational truth that is found in the Word of God, His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Take Heed to Yourselves (verses 13-17)

In the previous passage, in verse 11:1, Moses began with, “Therefore you shall love the Lord your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always.” After this, Moses explained the great acts of judgment that came upon both Egypt and Israel, showing that the Lord is fully capable of such things.

He then repeated the thought of commandment-keeping in verse 11:8, saying, “Therefore you shall keep every commandment which I command you today.” Moses then gave the reason for that, finishing up the passage with –

“...that you may be strong, and go in and possess the land which you cross over to possess, ⁹and that you may prolong *your* days in the land which the LORD swore to give your fathers, to them and their descendants, ‘a land flowing with milk and honey.’ ¹⁰For the land which you go to possess *is* not like the land of Egypt from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and watered *it* by foot, as a vegetable garden; ¹¹but the land which you cross over to possess *is* a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water from the rain of heaven, ¹²a land for which the LORD your God cares; the eyes of the LORD your God *are* always on it, from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year.” Deuteronomy 11:8-12

The keeping of the commandments is paramount to Moses in order for them to possess this good land that he has described to them. Now Moses will, again, bring in the thought of commandment-keeping. This time, however, it isn’t simply for the sake of possessing the land, but of having abundance within the land.

His words are methodical and direct – “Here is how things work, and the outcome is conditioned upon how you respond to the commands you are given.” With that thought in mind, the passage today begins with...

¹³ ‘And it shall be that if you earnestly obey My commandments

v'hayah im shamo'a tishmeu el mitsvotai – “And it will be if hearing you shall hear unto My commandments.” An important change has taken place in these words. It says *mitsvotai*, or “My commandments.” It is the Lord who is speaking through Moses.

One could argue that it is simply Moses speaking about his words to the people as commandments. And, indeed, that is how some translations state it – “my (lowercase m) commandments.” The NKJV, however, rightly says (with a capital M) “My commandments.”

What has happened, is that Moses’ words of the previous verses have now passed into the words of the Lord here. This will become perfectly evident in the next verse. The change is so marked and abrupt that Cambridge says, “It is evidently inserted by an editor.”

How stupid. A later editor would do exactly the opposite and conform the words to the surrounding text, not alter them to make the passage more confusing and/or seemingly more corrupt. But Moses has already done this before. The change is not without precedent, as was seen in verse 7:4.

For now, as is understood from previous sermons, the word “hear” means more than to simply hear, but to hear and then to act upon what is heard. Thus, “earnestly obey” is a good paraphrase.

In the last verse, the pronouns were in the singular. In this verse, they are in the plural – “And it will be if hearing, you (all) hear.” This address to the many will continue throughout the verse.

^{13 (con’t)} **which I command you today,**

Each and every person (you all) is being told that obedience is required across the board. Saying, “which I command you today,” indicates that what the Lord, through Moses, speaks out, during the entire time of the giving of this book, is included in “today.”

He isn’t speaking out individual sections that are separate from one another. Rather, his words continue on in a single body of law that comprises each and every section into one unit. Every time that it says, “which I command you today,” a single law is being added to. This will continue until the book of Deuteronomy is finished.

At times, even quite often, the words are repeated from what has been said elsewhere. Such an instance is found in the next words...

13 (con't) to love the LORD your God and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul,

This is similar to what he just said in the previous chapter –

“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” Deuteronomy 10:12

However, though similar, it is also significantly different. There, Moses spoke to Israel collectively. Here, the Lord speaks to all the people individually–

10:12 – to serve the LORD your (singular) God with all your (singular) heart and with all your (singular) soul.

11:13 – to love the LORD your (plural) God and serve Him with all your (plural) heart and with all your (plural) soul.

Why is it being done this way? It is because, as Jeremiah says –

“The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*,
And desperately wicked;
Who can know it?” Jeremiah 17:9

Think of the commands. “You (Israel) are to do my commands.” Someone could say, “I don’t need to. The nation does.” But that thought is now excluded by changing it and saying, “You (all) are to do My commands.” “Dangit. I have to do all this stuff too!”

Moses is writing under inspiration. The Lord, understanding the nature of man, is being specific to exclude the wickedness of the human heart – both of Israel’s collectively and of each person’s individually. “You, Israel as a nation, are to love the Lord your God and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul. And each of you within Israel, My people, are to do likewise.”

To avoid unnecessary repetition, but to understand the fuller meaning of the words of this verse, you can go back to the comments on verse 10:12 and read them. There, the

thought of loving the Lord God, and of serving Him with all of one's heart and all of one's soul is analyzed in detail.

For now, the word tells the people what good result will come from their obedient love and their service of the Lord God, saying...

¹⁴ then I will give *you* the rain for your land in its season,

v'natati metar artsekem b'ito – “And I will give rain in its season.” How do we know Moses wasn't the one to say, “My commandments” in the previous verse? It is because it says, “And I will give rain” in this verse. Moses can't give rain. Only the Lord can.

The NASB, however, incorrectly translates these words as, “that He will give the rain.” What is normally a careful and precise translation either deferred to a text other than the Hebrew, or they simply made an error in their translation.

It is to be noted that what He promises here in Deuteronomy for obedience, is likewise discussed with the people in their disobedience. In Amos 4, it says –

“I also withheld rain from you,
When *there were* still three months to the harvest.
I made it rain on one city,
I withheld rain from another city.
One part was rained upon,
And where it did not rain the part withered.
⁸So two *or* three cities wandered to another city to drink water,
But they were not satisfied;
Yet you have not returned to Me,
Says the LORD.” Amos 4:7, 8

There, like in this verse in Deuteronomy, the pronoun is plural – “your (plural) land” (Deuteronomy) and “you (plural) have not returned to me (Amos). The Lord was teaching them a lesson with the rains, and Israel was failing to heed the lesson He provided.

As you can see, though the words are transmitted through Moses, it is the Lord who is speaking them out. In obedience to the doing, the Lord promises He will do likewise, giving the people of Israel rain for your (plural) land. With that understood, He says...

14 (con't) the early rain and the latter rain,

There are no articles before the nouns. It says: *yoreh u-malqosh* – “sprinkling and gathering,” but signifying the early and latter rains. They are also known as the autumn and spring rains, or other such variations. Both words are introduced into Scripture at this time.

The first, *yoreh*, or “early rain,” comes from *yarah* – to throw or shoot, as in an arrow. *Yoreh* is an active participle, and thus it gives the idea of lots of arrows, and hence “sprinkling.” The second is *malqosh*. It comes from *leqesh* which is the after-crop, meaning latter growth. That is from the verb *laqash*, signifying “to gather.” Thus, it is “gathering.” Of these rains, Adam Clarke states –

“By the first or former rain we are to understand that which fell in Judea about November, when they sowed their seed, and this served to moisten and prepare the ground for the vegetation of the seed. The latter rain fell about April, when the corn was well grown up, and served to fill the ears, and render them plump and perfect. Rain rarely fell in Judea at any other seasons than these. If the former rain were withheld, or not sent in due season, there could be no vegetation: if the latter rain were withheld, or not sent in its due season, there could be no full corn in the ear, and consequently no harvest. Of what consequence then was it that they should have their rain in due season! God, by promising this provided they were obedient, and threatening to withhold it should they be disobedient, shows that it is not a general providence that directs these things, but that the very rain of heaven falls by particular direction, and the showers are often regulated by an especial providence.” Adam Clarke

The point of these words now is that it takes us back to verse 10 where Israel is contrasted to Egypt. There are no such rains in Egypt. However, in Canaan, and through the obedience of the people, there would be both the early and the latter rains. These were to be provided so...

14 (con't) that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil.

And wahlah, in the middle of the verse, the words suddenly change back to the second person singular: *v'asaphta deganekha v'tiroshkha v'yitsharekha* – “and you may gather in your grain, and your new wine, and your oil. All four pronouns are in the singular. He is speaking to Israel collectively.

The nation's prosperity is dependent on the land of all of the people. The produce that comes from the ground is a national asset and treasure that is dependent upon both national and individual observance of the commands. The words are marvelously structured to teach Israel the important lesson of who they are *as people*, and of who they are *as a people*. With that understood...

¹⁵ And I will send grass in your fields for your livestock, that you may eat and be filled.'

So much for vegetarians. The Lord promises grass in the fields for the livestock – a result of the rains. In turn, the people will have livestock to eat. The words speak of abundance and delight.

Also, the singular continues in this verse. In national and individual obedience, the Lord will graciously provide for Israel. One must remember that if individuals in the nation are disobedient, it is the nation's responsibility to weed them out.

The nation cannot say, "We have been obedient, and yet you have not sent us rains," when they allow disobedience within the nation. This is clearly and explicitly seen in Amos 4, which was cited a moment ago when speaking of the people in the plural.

Likewise, the opposite of the promised blessing in this verse in Deuteronomy is seen in Amos 4:6, where it is again in the plural –

“Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities,
And lack of bread in all your places;
Yet you have not returned to Me,
Says the LORD.” Amos 4:6

For obedience, the Lord promises that they may eat and be filled, implying dirty teeth. However, for disobedience, the Lord provided cleanness of teeth, meaning hunger. In Amos 4, the Lord speaks to the people in the plural, again and again, but then in verse 12, He says to them in the second person singular –

“Therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel;
Because I will do this to you,
Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!” Amos 4:12

This caution in Amos was not without advanced warning. Both from the prophets and through Moses. As it next says...

16 Take heed to yourselves,

The words now return to Moses as the speaker. He implores the people individually as well, returning back to the second person plural. The changes are intricate, purposeful, and marvelously woven together for the reader to consider. These changes call for us to slowly and methodically ponder each verse, and – indeed – each clause. Here, the warning is given: *hishameru lakem* – “You (all) take heed to yourselves.” And this is to avoid a snare...

16 (con’t) lest your heart be deceived,

pen yiphteh l’vavekem – “Lest is opened your (plural) heart.” The word is *pathah*. It was seen in Genesis and Exodus, and it will only be used here in Deuteronomy. It means to be spacious, wide, or open. In other words, if you foolishly open your heart, you will be seduced by it. Job uses the word when speaking of someone simple in his head –

“For wrath kills a foolish man,
And envy slays a simple one.” Job 5:2

One can think of a married woman slowly getting close to another man. The heart opens and trouble follows closely behind. It is allured away, enticed, and the moral grounding is lost. Verse 13 said they were to love the Lord God with all of the heart. However, the heart has been seduced to open to another. The natural reaction that will inevitably follow is...

16 (con’t) and you turn aside and serve other gods

Again, it is plural – “and you (all) turn aside, and you (all) serve them, and you (all) worship them.” In failing to love the Lord God with all of the heart, the heart has space for another. The heart is opened, and the soul turns aside. In this, the enticement has led to serving other gods.

But verse 13 also said to not only love, but to serve the Lord God with all the heart and soul. Thus, the entire connection to God – heart and soul in both love and service – is corrupted. If room is allowed for another, another will fill the room, resulting in...

16 (con’t) and worship them,

The word is *shakhah*. It means to bow down. It was used in the giving of the Ten Commandments – “you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.”

Again, one can follow the progression of this by looking to the woman who opened her heart to another man. She first failed to take heed. She then opened her heart. She then turned aside from her husband and to another. She then served him with gifts and presents. She then did obeisance to him by divorcing her husband and marrying him.

The Lord made a contract with Israel, and they are being told of the consequences of allowing in another – thus violating that contract. In doing so, Moses warns...

¹⁷ lest the LORD’s anger be aroused against you,

v’kharah aph Yehovah bakem – “And burns nose Yehovah in you.” It is the usual graphic way of describing anger. It is as if fire shoots from the Lord’s nostrils as He fumes at the adulterous actions of the people. From here, until verse 21, the words form a chiasm –

Deuteronomy 11:17-21 (Instruction of the Word)

Truth or Consequences (11/16/2020)

- a. and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain
 - b. and the land (ha’adamah) yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you
 - c. “Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.
 - x. You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up
 - c. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates,
 - b. that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land (ha’adamah) of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them
- a. like the days of the heavens above the earth

With this now seen, we can go on to review what the result of His anger will be...

¹⁷ (con’t) and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain,

Here, the word *atsar*, meaning to shut up, or close, is used. It is used of a woman when she is barren. Hence, her womb is closed. Some then equate the heavens to a womb,

but this is not a great analogy. It is more rightly equated to either a woman's breast or even a bottle. The rains are restrained from pouring out...

17 (con't) and the land yield no produce,

v'ha'adamah lo titen eth yebulah – “and the ground no gives her increase.” Saying “land” is incorrect. In the next clause, a completely different word is used to describe the land. Here, it should read “ground,” or “earth.”

Without rain, the soil dries up, the seed will not germinate, and even if it does, it will quickly die without more moisture. Following that, it notes...

17 (con't) and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you.

Moses returns to the thought of verses 11 and 12 –

“...but the land which you cross over to possess *is* a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water from the rain of heaven, ¹² a land for which the LORD your God cares; the eyes of the LORD your God *are* always on it, from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year.” Deuteronomy 11:11, 12

The land is a good land, but the land is one that Yehovah keeps His eyes on. And more, it is the land that He has given to Israel. What the Lord gives by covenant, the Lord can and will control because of that same covenant. In opening up their hearts to other gods, the natural consequence of their actions is His withholding the rains, leading to famine, and resulting in perishing.

Both the blessing of rain, and the withholding of it are at the direction of the Lord. Though it is stated here, Amos (and elsewhere) shows that it is so.

*Blessing upon blessing I shall pour upon you
If you will love Me and serve Me with all of your heart
And with all of your soul; this too
In this, our relationship can start*

*And if you continue to love and serve Me
I will prosper you for all of your days
You will live in a land that produces abundantly
You shall reap and your animals shall graze*

*This for all the days of the heavens will be true
I will prosper you and bless you day unto day
Eternal blessings will come upon you
If you will love Me and serve Me in that way*

II. A Multiplication of Days (verses 18-21)

The coming words are quite similar to those of Deuteronomy 6. Putting them side by side, however, there are some differences –

“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” Deuteronomy 6:6-9

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ¹⁹ You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ²⁰ And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” Deuteronomy 11:18-20

One of the main differences is the order in which the things are given. Also, instead of speaking in the second person singular as in Chapter 6, it is now mostly in the second person plural. If someone were simply inserting words into the book, there would be several things that would have been done differently.

First, they wouldn't have bothered, because the substance of what is said is already there. Secondly, if they were to bother, they would have kept the order the same. And thirdly, if they were to bother, they would have kept the person singular as in Deuteronomy 6.

In other words, what we have here is original, it is from Moses, and he is conveying these words now to ensure that both the collective group, and each individual person, knows that these things apply equally to them.

¹⁸ **“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul,**

All of verse 18 is in the second person plural – you all. Also, the word is *al*, upon – “Each and every one of you are instructed to do these things, beginning with storing up his words upon your heart and upon your soul.”

If the heart has words of law laid upon it, the people will not have room to allow in other influences. If the words are laid upon the soul, there will be no time for actions that direct the body in the wrong direction. The whole person will be directed to what is right and proper in the conduct of their lives. It is what Paul refers to in 2 Corinthians 10:5, when he says to believers, “bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”

One’s mind and actions will be focused on that which he allows in. If one is thinking about Christ, he will shut out that which is not Christian. But it is an active and ongoing process. The words of Ruth 2:4 give a wonderful example of this –

“Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, ‘The LORD *be* with you!’

And they answered him, ‘The LORD bless you!’” Ruth 2:4

Including the Lord in each action, interaction, conversation, mental thought, and so on... This is what laying up the words upon one’s heart and upon the soul includes. This is what loving the Lord with all of one’s heart and soul involves. And as reminders for when the mind is overloaded, and the soul is afflicted or oppressed...

18 (con’t) and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

The words here are similar to verse 6:8 –

“You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.” Deuteronomy 6:8

The main difference is that it was in the second person singular there, but here it is in the second person plural. The meaning, however, is the same.

First, it says, *u-qeshartem otam l’oth al yedkhem* – “And you (all) shall bind them to sign on your hand.” As a review, an *oth*, or sign, is something that represents something else. The hand is what accomplishes tasks.

Therefore, the people are to remember the words Moses is speaking out in everything they accomplish – be it cleaning a bathroom, washing the dishes, or buying a house. It is to be done with the Lord in mind.

It next says, *v'hayu l'totaphoth ben enekhem* – “and they shall be to frontlets between your eyes.” This is the last of three times that the “frontlets,” or *totaphoth*, are used in the Bible. It is derived from an unused root signifying to go around or bind.

The words here are not to be taken literally, but as a metaphor. The place between the eyes is the forehead, the place of conscience and identification. Therefore, this symbolizes that a person is to set his mind on the law of the Lord. In the New Testament, it is reflective of what Paul says to the Colossians –

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ²Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” Colossians 3:1, 2

Moses' words now indicate the state of each person before the Lord. They are to accomplish every task with the Lord in mind and consider Him in all that is done. And they are to mentally acknowledge the Lord by thinking on His law and of His handiwork in everything they do.

In saying this to the people, Moses admonishes them to think on the Lord, live for the Lord, and conduct their affairs to the Lord at all times. Further...

¹⁹ You shall teach them to your children,

The words of this verse form the center of the chiasm that we looked at earlier. Here, Moses begins the verse in the second person plural – “You (all) shall teach them to your children.” This then substantiates what I mentioned in the very complicated verse, 11:2, last week. Most translations there say something like, “Know today that *I do not speak* with your children.” That is shown to be incorrect. Moses is speaking to the children through the parents. His instruction does not ignore them at all. As he says...

¹⁹ (con't) **speaking of them**

l'dabber bam – “to speak them.” The words bring to mind the words of Paul where he implores fathers to bring up their children in the training and admonition of the Lord.”

One cannot train what is not laid down. But once it is laid down, then it can be conveyed. And this is to be...

19 (con't) when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

Two important points come forth concerning these words. First, instead of “when,” the Hebrew repeatedly reads, “in” –

“in thy sitting in thy house, and in thy going in the way, and in thy lying down, and in thy rising up.” YLT

Secondly, if you know your thee’s, thy’s, and thou’s, you noticed that Moses has – in the middle of this verse – returned to the second person singular throughout this entire clause.

However, this wouldn’t be him speaking to Israel collectively as he usually does, but rather, he is surely speaking to each individual personally – You (all) shall teach your children, and you (personally) are to do it at these times.

Also, the words of this section are identical, letter for letter, to Deuteronomy 6:8. It is as if it was a phrase Moses had memorized and probably repeated many times before stating it here. When someone came forward and said, “Moses, my kid is being difficult. What can I do?” His answer would be, “Tell him of the Lord in your sitting in your tent, and in your going in the way, and in your lying down, and in your rising up. This is what you are to do.”

The only difference now is that the words are amended for their time in Canaan. That includes...

20 And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates,

With the exception of a single letter added into the word “doorposts” in this verse, the words are identical to the words of Deuteronomy 6:9. The letter doesn’t change the pronunciation at all, but it is simply a variant way of spelling the word *mezuzoth*, or “doorposts.”

It is another clue to the authenticity of Mosaic authorship. Anyone else would have copied it verbatim. But just as, at times, I will spell the word worshipped with two letters, and at times I will do so with one, so Moses added in a second *vav* to the word.

As I noted in Chapter 6, the idea here is to be taken metaphorically, even if it was literally accomplished by whoever decided to do so.

The two words of focus are *mezuzah* and *shaar* – doorpost and gate. The word *mezuzah*, or doorpost, comes from the same source as the word *ziz*, or “moving things.” That word is used to describe beasts moving in the field, or the bosom of a woman. And so, it means that which is conspicuous.

Hence, the *mezuzah*, is that which is conspicuous and prominent in the life of a person. The *shaar*, or gate, comes from *shaar* meaning to calculate or reckon. As we saw in Chapter 6, that is used only once, in Proverbs 23:7 –

“For as he thinks in his heart, so *is* he.
‘Eat and drink!’ he says to you,
But his heart is not with you.” Proverbs 23:7

The gate is for protection of those within. A gatekeeper is one who actively decides who to let in and who to keep out. He makes a reckoning and acts upon that. Understanding these roots, the symbolism of the two words is then made obvious.

The law of the Lord is to be so ingrained in a person that it is in the prominent place of a person’s life. Every major decision is to be made based on an understanding of the law of the Lord. Further, it is to be so inscribed in a person that it is what is then the basis for making life’s decisions. In this, it will be a guard for the wellbeing of the individual.

One is to evaluate the circumstances set before him, consider what is to be done in relation to the law of the Lord which he is intimately familiar with, and then act upon those things accordingly.

As you can see, Deuteronomy is considered a repetition of the law, a second reading. But even within Deuteronomy, there are repetitions. This is as much of a learning tool as anything else. In repeating an idea, people tend to remember what they have heard. In repeating an idea, people tend to remember what they have heard. Hence, Moses repeating these key thoughts is a tool for Israel to learn and remember by. This is so...

²¹ that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land

To close out the verses today, Moses returns to the second person plural. He is speaking to each person and to every person. In faithfully being obedient to the law, there is the promise of the multiplication of the days of Israel upon *ha'adamah*, or “the ground.”

This then is set in contrast to verse 17, where it said that in the Lord's anger there would be no rain upon *ha'adamah*, or the ground, in order to bring forth produce. In that, they would perish from *ha'eret ha'tovah*, or the land the good, that Yehovah was giving them.

It is this ground Moses reminds them...

^{21 (con't)} of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them,

In verse 17, it said, “the good land which the LORD is giving you.” Here, Moses says it is the land the Lord swore to give to the fathers (them). It is an interesting statement that brings into mind the thought of genealogical inheritance, and what that exactly means.

It is a precept found in Hebrews 7. There, and speaking of Abraham who gave tithes to Melchizedek, the author shows that Levi, who was not yet born, technically pays tithes through his great grandfather, Abraham –

“Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he *receives them*, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. ⁹ Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, ¹⁰ for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.” Hebrews 7:8-10

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, though dead, received the land inheritance through their offspring. At the same time, the offspring receive the land inheritance through their fathers. Stepping back and looking at it in relation to Christ, we see that the same truth applies.

Abraham receives the promise by faith in the coming Messiah, his Offspring, and – at the same time – the Offspring (Christ Jesus) is the One who receives the Promise having come through the fathers (being their Seed). As it says in Galatians 3:19, “What purpose then does the law *serve*? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made.”

This is the beauty of chiasms. When they are properly lined up, we can see what is going on in a much more logical and orderly way. For now, the days of multiplication for Israel are – at least potentially – possible to be...

***21 (fin) like the days of the heavens above the earth.**

The meaning is “forever.” As long as the heavens are above the earth, so will Israel dwell in the land, if – only if – they are obedient to the Lord God. The conditional words spoken earlier are the caveat that Israel must deal with.

Hence, Moses is giving them all of this detailed instruction and exhortation. If Israel fails to observe what is said, they will – as noted earlier – quickly perish from the land. The words “quickly perish” and “like the days of the heavens above the earth,” are set in complete opposition to one another. The choice is Israel’s.

However, we have already seen that Israel’s unfaithfulness to the covenant does not affect the Lord’s faithfulness at all. He has kept, is keeping, and will keep His promises to this covenant until it is fulfilled for Israel in Christ – meaning when they receive Him.

Israel stands because the Lord has said that they will stand. The evidence of it is seen even two millennia after they turned their back on Him. Understanding that His faithfulness to the covenant is that enduring, and understanding that Christ has offered a New Covenant in His blood, we can be even more sure of the enduring nature of His promises to those who come to Him by faith.

He has promised, with a guarantee, that those who come to Him will never be rejected – never. Though spit upon by the very people He has saved, the doctrine of eternal salvation remains. How unfortunate it is that people fail to simply take the word at face value and then accept what it clearly teaches. We are saved, despite ourselves, when we come to Christ.

Please trust in that, rest in that, and be assured of it. Jesus Christ’s blood is effectual to cover every sin that we have ever committed. And He will carry us through to a place of goodness and eternal blessing if we have called on Him. If you haven’t, it’s time for you to do it. Come to the cross and be reconciled to God through our Lord Jesus Christ. May it be so, and may it be today. Amen.

Closing Verse: *“His seed shall endure forever,
And his throne as the sun before Me;*

³⁷ *It shall be established forever like the moon,
Even like the faithful witness in the sky.” Selah” Psalm 89:36, 37*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 11:22-32 It's a tough quiz, but guess which is worse... (The Blessing and the Curse) (38th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Like the Days of the Heavens Above the Earth

And it shall be that if you earnestly obey
My commandments which I command you today
To love the LORD your God and serve Him
With all your heart and with all your soul, so to you I say...

Then I will give you the rain for your land in its season
The early rain and the latter rain, so good for your topsoil
That you may gather in your grain
Your new wine, and your oil

And I will send grass for your livestock in your fields
That you may eat and be filled; abundance shall be your yields

Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived
And you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them
-----doing something in this vein
Lest the LORD's anger be aroused against you
And He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain

And the land yield no produce, as it certainly will do
And you perish quickly from the good land
-----which the LORD is giving you

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine
In your heart and in your soul; thus, being wise
And bind them as a sign on your hand

And they shall be as frontlets between your eyes

You shall teach them to your children
Speaking of them when you sit in your house over a coffee cup
When you walk by the way
When you lie down, and when you rise up

And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house
And on your gates, please understand
That your days and the days of your children
May be multiplied in the land

Of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them
-----long before your birth
Like the days of the heavens above the earth

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 11:22-32 **(The Blessing and the Curse)**

The idea of a curse is that of vilification. There are lots of words translated as “curse” in the Old Testament and together they come up to over 150 uses. All in all, the idea of the curse permeates the Old Testament writings.

Curses are mentioned in the New Testament as well, in various ways and with various Greek words. The story of the Bible is one of man falling under a curse, and how God is working to end that state.

It all started in Genesis 3 when the man disobeyed the Lord by following the lies of the serpent instead of obeying the command of God. But it was the command of God that made that possible. There is nothing wrong with God giving the command, and He had every right to do so. But without a law, no law could be broken.

As for the serpent, for what he did, he received the first curse of the Bible, and the ground that man would till would likewise be cursed, the second noted curse.

Working all the way through Scripture, these various words translated as “curse” are seen. But the most incredible one of all is the one Paul speaks of in Galatians 3:13. That will be cited during our sermon today.

It is an amazing thing that God has done in order to remove the idea of any remaining curse. We got ourselves into the mess we are in, and the Lord got us out of it. We know this is true because the book is written, and on the last page of it, we are told the words of our text verse for today...

Text Verse: *“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ² In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³ And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. ⁴ They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. ⁵ There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.” Revelation 22:1-5*

As we progress through our verses today, we will get to a point where Moses speaks of the blessing and the curse. It is only an introductory thought that will be greatly expanded on later. But the idea of these words is given in relation to the law.

As I said, without a law, there can be no infraction. It is by law that sin comes about, and with the coming of sin we see the coming of the curses. We just saw that the Bible ends with the thought of no more curse. But how does the Old Testament end? It ends with the words of Malachi –

“And he will turn
The hearts of the fathers to the children,
And the hearts of the children to their fathers,
Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.” Malachi 4:6

Malachi was a prophet under the Law of Moses. He was there to call the people to a right standing before the Lord. If that didn't happen, then the earth would be struck with a curse. If the law brings about a curse, and a curse was promised at the end of the Old Testament, and yet there is no more curse at the end of the New Testament, then what does that tell us?

It tells us that what we need is grace, not the law. This is the continued lesson of the law. The curses that Moses will refer to today, and in the chapters to come, mean that grace is not at the forefront of the time of the law. In fact, the law and grace are mutually exclusive.

Let us remember this. It is a most important lesson that is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Just as He Has Said to You (verses 22-25)

²² **“For if you carefully keep all these commandments**

It is singular, not plural: *ki im shamor tishmerun et kal ha'mitsvah* – “For if keeping you (certainly) keep all the commandment.” The word here, *shamar*, meaning to keep, is repeated for emphasis. Further, it is accentuated with a paragogic nun – an additional letter at the end of the word to provide further stress.

Moses is being particularly emphatic that Israel must be extremely attentive and diligent to heed and to act. Further, being in the singular, he is speaking about a codified body that is a unified law. How this is done will be explained in the final clause of the verse.

For now, it is understood that the command is to be carefully *shamor*, or kept. It is a common word already seen many times. It signifies to watch over, take heed to, and so on. Moses is telling them that as a guard watches over a jail, or a gardener watches over a garden, so the people (it is plural – you all) are to watch over the observance of the commandment...

22 which I command you to do—

It is still plural – “you all.” “Each of you is to carefully watch over the words that I am now commanding you. The words I speak are given as authority to you, and they are binding upon you. And the substance of what I say to you is...”

22 (con’t) to love the LORD your God,

The words complement what has been said several times concerning loving the Lord, in Deuteronomy 6, 7, 10, and now for the third of three times in Chapter 11. He has said it in both the singular (you Israel), and in the plural (you all). Here, it is in the plural. He then says...

22 (con’t) to walk in all His ways,

These words complement what has been said in Deuteronomy 8 and 10. In those two references, Moses was speaking to Israel in the singular, but here he is speaking to them in the plural. In Chapter 8, he said, “in His ways.” In Chapter 10, he said, “in all His ways.”

The reason for these changes is certainly to avoid any hint of manipulation concerning the precept on the part of the people. By speaking to them in the singular and the plural, nobody can say, “As long as the nation is obedient, my faults are excused.” And, no one can say, “As long as I am obedient, I won’t see any trouble in my life.”

Further, nobody can say, “Moses said to walk in His ways, but not necessarily in ‘all’ of His ways.” The wickedness of the human heart is what is being dealt with here. This is obvious from the manifold ways of saying basically the same thing by Moses.

It is, essentially, the lesson that Jesus spoke to the leaders of Israel concerning their attitude towards matters of the law –

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier *matters* of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. ²⁴ Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!”

-Matthew 23:23, 24

The weightiest matter of the law is first and foremost loving the Lord, followed by loving one’s neighbor. The Pharisees failed, legalists in the church fail, and those who think they can manipulate the relationship between themselves and the Lord by simply straining out gnats prove their attitude is inexcusable. Understanding this, Moses proceeds....

²² (con’t) **and to hold fast to Him—**

The word is *dabaq*, to cleave or hold fast to. One should get the sense of not just grabbing and holding on but doing so with the impossibility of letting go. It is used in this way concerning the relationship of Israel to the Lord four times in Deuteronomy.

The use of the word in those four times speaks to both Israel the nation, and to the individual Israelite. The nation cannot blame the individuals, and the individuals cannot blame the nation if the consequences of failure come upon them. But in obedience to the precept...

²³ **then the LORD will drive out all these nations from before you,**

The clause is still in the plural – you all. But the same thing has been said in the singular to the nation elsewhere – you, Israel. Again, it is important to see what Moses is doing by stating it in both ways.

Because it speaks of the people in the plural, it would be preferable to translate this as “peoples” instead of “nations.” The people of Israel will drive out the peoples of the land.

And more, as elsewhere, the word *yarash* is used, and it is used in both clauses of this verse. It signifies possession or inheritance. One might say, “And the Lord will disinherit all these peoples from before your faces.”

What they have owned as a possession will be removed from them by the Lord. But, in an act of synergy (two working as one), Moses then also acknowledges it is Israel who will do the task...

²³ (con't) **and you will dispossess greater and mightier nations than yourselves.**

v'rishtem goyim gedolim va'tsumim mikem – “And you (all) will disinherit peoples greats and mighties from you.” Moses just said the Lord will disinherit the peoples. Now he says that Israel will do so. In this, some translations will say “drive out and dispossess,” “dispossess and possess,” and so on. But the thought is the same.

The idea is that the Lord is the force behind what is accomplished, and Israel does the accomplishing. If the Lord decides to not work with Israel, the objective will not be met – even if Israel strives to accomplish the task.

In other words, the action is synergistic and Israel's completion of it is wholly dependent on the Lord's will. As long as Israel works in accord with the will of the Lord, in the service of the Lord, then...

²⁴ **Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours:**

kal ha'maqom asher tidrok kaph raglekem bow lakem – “All the place which treads sole your (plural) foot therein yours.” Jewish writers of the past arrogantly said that this is an unconditional statement meaning that anywhere in the world that they walk becomes their possession. The notion is faulty on two levels.

First, it is not unconditional. The entire context of the passage clearly shows that the people must be obedient to the precepts laid before them. Secondly, the area is clearly defined in the following words, limiting them to a specific parcel of land, and no other.

If they fail to be obedient, whatever they possess will not be theirs. In other words, even if Jews live in another area of the world and own the land on which they live, it is still not the land belonging to them, meaning an Israelite land. It is the land of the nations that they simply dwell in.

The land they are given as a people is clearly defined as...

²⁴ (con't) **from the wilderness and Lebanon,**

min ha'midbar v'ha'levanon – “From the wilderness, and to the Lebanon.” It is the southern and northern borders. The wilderness refers to the wilderness of Zin, as was defined in Numbers 34:2. That extended to the west along the wadi of Egypt which drains into the Mediterranean Sea. The northern border is the border of Lebanon. And further...

^{24 (con't)} **from the river, the River Euphrates, even to the Western Sea, shall be your territory.**

To the east, the land is promised to extend all the way to the Euphrates. To the west, it extends to the Mediterranean Sea, here called *ha'yam ha'akharon*, or “the sea, the hindermost.” The meaning is that it is behind one who is looking to the east.

The land, as defined in Numbers 34, was only inclusive of Canaan and also the land settled by Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh east of the Jordan. However, that could – and should – be extended even to the Euphrates as was promised to Abraham in Genesis 15 –

“To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates—” Genesis 15:19

It would not be until the time of Solomon that this would be realized, and not long after Solomon’s death, the land would begin to diminish due to disobedience. That is recorded in 1 Kings 4 –

“Judah and Israel *were* as numerous as the sand by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing. ²¹ So Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. *They* brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.” 1 Kings 4:20, 21

Only during the reign of Solomon is this recorded. What we have in this verse is poignantly and remarkably restated to Joshua –

“Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. ⁴ From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory.” Joshua 1:3, 4

There, in Joshua, the Lord says, “as I said to Moses.” And yet, that is not recorded anywhere but here where Moses has been speaking in the first person, or referring to the Lord in the third person. One can clearly see the doctrine of divine inspiration in these words.

²⁵ No man shall be able to stand against you;

The Hebrew is more expressive: *lo yityatsev ish biphnekem* – “no shall stand man in your face” (meaning, “in your presence”). The pronoun remains second person plural, and so it is saying that each person will be victorious over the foe he faces, or if the leader of another group comes against Israel, as the representative of his people, he would not be able to stand against them. The people of Israel would defeat the enemies they faced because...

²⁵ (con’t) the LORD your God will put the dread of you and the fear of you

Moses uses two words, both nouns, to describe how the Lord will affect the people. One is *pakhad*, signifying a state of alarm. It is something felt, and thus “dread.” The second is almost a synonym of the first, *mora*. It is a terror or a fear. And this will be...

²⁵ (con’t) upon all the land where you tread,

Again, the Hebrew is more expressive: *al pene kal ha’arets asher tidreku bah* – “upon face all the land which you tread in.” Moses then says...

²⁵ (con’t) just as He has said to you.

These words were first prophesied in Exodus 15:16, using one of the same words as here. That was in anticipation of Israel’s arrival. It was then explicitly stated in Deuteronomy 2 –

“This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the nations under the whole heaven, who shall hear the report of you, and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you.” Deuteronomy 2:25

There, instead of *mora*, the word *yirah* was seen, another synonymous word. As has been seen before, the changing of words in this manner gives a clear evidence of Mosaic authorship. Anyone else would have carefully copied the first two words if they were

claiming that the Lord had said them. Moses, however, felt free to speak in synonyms to convey his intent.

*Great things I have promised to you
If you will be faithful to My word
The promises shall stand; what I say is true
If you will faithfully attend to what you have heard*

*I shall bless you with a blessing in this land
And you shall prosper in accord with My word
None who come against you shall be able to stand
If you will faithfully attend to what you have heard*

*I shall be with you always and never forsake you
This is My promise, My spoken word
And it shall stand, because what I say is true
If you will faithfully attend to what you have heard*

II. Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal (verses 26-32)

²⁶ **“Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse:**

Moses now sums up his words, calling the people to careful attention with the words *raeh anoki noten liphnekem ha’yom berakah u-qelalah* – “Look! I set to your faces this day blessing and cursing.” The words shout out for attention and careful heeding of what is said.

With this openly stated and carefully worded, Moses now continues on with the Bible’s clear revelation of the doctrine known as free will. It takes us back to the very first recorded words from the Lord to man –

“Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” Genesis 2:16, 17

In the statement set before Adam were words of blessing or cursing – blessing if he obeyed, cursing if he disobeyed. The choice was his, and the consequences were thus his. If this were not so, sin could not have been imputed. But it was. The same is true

with Israel now. The law is given, and the choice of outcome is clearly set before the faces of the people...

27 the blessing, if you obey the commandments

The translation is lacking. It says, *asher tishmeru el mitzvoth* – “when you (all) hearken unto *the* commandments.” Using the word “if” makes the entire thought sound conditional in the doing. Rather it is in the receiving after the doing. The Lord will, in fact, give the blessing when the command is hearkened unto (meaning heard and applied).

27 (con’t) of the LORD your God which I command you today;

Again, the synergistic (working together) nature of divine inspiration is seen here. These are the commands of Yehovah Elohim, and yet, it is Moses who is speaking them out as commands to Israel. It is what Peter clearly states to us –

“knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, ²¹ for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.” 1 Peter 1:20, 21

28 and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God,

Here, “if” is correct: *im lo tishmeru* – “if no you (all) do hearken.” They will receive the blessing when they hearken unto the commandments. And they will receive the cursing if they do not hearken unto them. In other words, the expectation is obedience, even if both the Lord and Moses know that it will not be coming...

28 (con’t) but turn aside from the way which I command you today,

The words, “if you do not hearken,” are now supplemented: “if you do not hearken...but turn aside from the way.” It is this which brings the cursing. There is the way which is right, and there is taking another path which must be punished. That is specifically a violation of the first commandment – “You shall have no other gods before Me.” As Moses says...

28 (con’t) to go after other gods which you have not known.

Of this, Matthew Poole says, “Which you have no acquaintance with, nor experience of their power or wisdom or goodness, as you have had of mine.” That is then supplemented with the words of Cambridge, saying they are gods, “in contradistinction to Jehovah, the revealed God, made known to them by word and deed.”

Israel may have, in fact, known other gods. But it was only as a head knowledge, not something experiential. Yehovah had revealed Himself through His deeds, and He had revealed Himself through His law. Both thoughts were expressed by Moses in Chapter 4—

“For what great nation *is there* that has God *so* near to it, as the LORD our God *is* to us, for whatever *reason* we may call upon Him? ⁸ And what great nation *is there* that has *such* statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?” Deuteronomy 4:7, 8

Yehovah was near to Israel in action, and He was near to Israel in law. To follow another path would be to reject the fountain of both of these marvelous flows of protection and life. To permanently set this in their minds, Moses next commands...

²⁹ Now it shall be, when the LORD your God has brought you into the land which you go to possess,

The words of this verse move to the singular (you Israel). It is a marvelous transition, and an assurance that the nation as a whole will be brought into Canaan and the nation shall possess it.

But more, not all of the people who go into Canaan will participate in what will be directed. And some, who are not yet of Israel, will participate in it.

For example, the noted troublemaker of Israel in Joshua 7 will be dead by the time the events to be relayed by Moses will come about. And Rahab the harlot will be brought into Israel, specifically the tribe of Judah, by then. Thus, the transition of this verse to the singular speaks not of all before Moses now, but of the nation, Israel, before him now.

What is said here is a precursor to what Moses will more fully explain in Deuteronomy 27. They are also shown to be fulfilled, exactly, in Joshua 8. The instruction to Israel is...

²⁹ (con't) **that you shall put the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal.**

The Hebrew reads “give,” not “put.” As will be seen in Chapter 27, the blessings and the curses were written on the altar on Mt. Ebal. However, they were called out (given) by the people of selected tribes from both mountains.

The name Gerizim comes from the word *garaz* – to cut, cut up, or cut off. Being a plural word, the meaning is something like, “The Cutters Down.” It may refer to those who harvest, due to the fertility of the mountain.

The name Ebal comes from an unused root meaning to be bald. Probably signifying the bald appearance of the mountain. Thus, it means something like Bare or Heap of Barrenness.

Of these two facing mountains, Gerizim is to the south and Ebal is to the north. Or, in reference to the layout of directions in the Bible, Gerizim is to the right, and Ebal is to the left. Thus, it matches the scriptural pattern of the right hand of blessing and the left hand of cursing. For example –

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. ³³ And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.” Matthew 25:31-33

In the state of the two mountains, one can see a contrast. The mount of blessing is the fertile mountain. The mountain of curse is the bald mountain. Thus, there is metaphor being conveyed. Obedience to the Lord will bring blessing to the land while disobedience will bring a curse.

It is further interesting that the altar where the law was to be inscribed on whitewashed stones, and as is stated in Deuteronomy 27:4-8, it was to be on Mt. Ebal, the mountain to the left. In other words, it anticipates Paul’s words of Galatians 3 –

“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed *is* everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.’ ¹¹ But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God *is* evident, for ‘the just shall live by faith.’ ¹² Yet the law is not of faith, but “the man who does them shall live by them.”

¹³ Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree'), ¹⁴ that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Galatians 3:10-14

The very words that will be spoken out by the people in Deuteronomy 27:26 are the same words Paul cites in Galatians 3. The law cannot justify, and only a curse results from the giving of the law.

As far as the location of Gerizim, the more favored mountain, that of blessing, it is not mentioned by name in the New Testament, but it is seen there nonetheless when it is referred to in John 4 –

The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. ²⁰ Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."

²¹ Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. ²² You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. ²³ But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴ God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

-John 4:19-24

Mount Gerizim is the mountain she is referring to. For the Samaritans, this was their place of worship. For the Jews, Jerusalem was their place of worship. But the Lord corrected her, and any Jews who would pay heed.

Salvation is of the Jews because of the coming of Messiah, but Jerusalem was only a place that anticipated Him. What was there, and what occurred there only pictured His fulfillment of those things. It is in Him, and in any location that those who are in Him may be, that true worship of God – through Him – may be found.

Of these dueling mountains, Moses next says...

³⁰ **Are they not on the other side of the Jordan,**

The Hebrew doesn't say "the other side." It states "in side the Jordan." It can refer to either side, but it is then explained by the next words...

30 (con't) **toward the setting sun,**

akhare derek mebo ha'shemesh – “after way going down the sun.” What this might be saying is that one of the main roads going north and south through Canaan was known as the Way of the West, similar to another such road that would have run in the same manner on the east side.

The mountains were to the west of that way and so it means westward, toward the setting sun. This is a new noun in Scripture, *mabo*, or an entrance. In this case, it is an entrance in the sense that it is going down, as is stated in Malachi 1:11 where the last use of the word is seen –

“For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down,
My name *shall be* great among the Gentiles;
In every place incense *shall be* offered to My name,
And a pure offering;
For My name shall be great among the nations,”
Says the LORD of hosts.” Malachi 1:11

It may be, and this is a note of speculation, that this phrase could be figuratively showing that the law is merely a transitional part of the redemptive plan. The sun rises in the east, and it sets in the west with the greatness of the name of the Lord being proclaimed by the Gentiles throughout the entire extent of that happening.

This appears to be so based on the last use of *shemesh*, or “sun,” in the Old Testament, which is referring metaphorically to Christ the Lord –

“But to you who fear My name
The Sun of Righteousness shall arise.” Malachi 4:2

As the sun actually never sets, but simply disappears from view, this verse may be an allusion to the fact that Christ is the embodiment of this law that holds both the blessing and the cursing for Israel. The name of the Lord, Jesus, is great among the nations from the rising of the sun to its going down.

30 (con't) **in the land of the Canaanites who dwell in the plain opposite Gilgal, beside the terebinth trees of Moreh?**

Here, it says, *ha'gilgal*, or “the Gilgal,” meaning, “the Wheel.” Thus, it is a known circle of stones that is referred to here. The importance of these words takes us back to Genesis 12. There, the Lord vowed to bless Abraham, and directed him to go to Canaan. After that it said –

“Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother’s son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan. ⁶ Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites *were* then in the land.

⁷ Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your descendants I will give this land.’” And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.”

-Genesis 12:5-7

The Lord, through Moses, is calling to remembrance the promise made to Abraham. Despite the Canaanites dwelling there, He had promised it to Abraham. That promise was soon to be fulfilled through his descendants now being instructed by Moses.

As the Lord is faithful to remember His promise of the land, so He will then be faithful to remember His other dealings with Abraham, including – righteousness through faith, and not deeds of the law.

Thus, the law that is now being set forth, and which will be recorded on Mt. Ebal, cannot be the realization of the promise, except as it is found being fulfilled in Christ.

³¹ **For you will cross over the Jordan**

In verse 29, the pronouns were in the singular – for just that one verse. In verse 30, there were no pronouns referring to Israel. Now, through the end of the chapter, the pronouns return to the second person plural, you all.

Here it says: *ki atem overim eth ha'yarden* – “For you (all) are the crossers over the Jordan.” As has been seen elsewhere, a pun is probably being made. The word *overim*, or “crossers over,” is identical in spelling to the word *ivrim*, or “Hebrews.” Moses is telling them that they, the Hebrews, are the crossers over the Jordan.

As the Jordan is a picture and type of Christ, it is those who cross through Him that are the true Hebrews, or “crossers over.” It is they of whom Moses says will cross over...

^{31 (con't)} **and go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and you will possess it and dwell in it.**

Abraham was noted as the first Hebrew. He was promised the land, as were his descendants after him. But that is only a part of the promise. In Genesis 22, after not withholding his son Isaac, the Lord said to him –

“By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only *son*— ¹⁷ blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which *is* on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. ¹⁸ In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.” Genesis 22:16-18

Paul then says in Galatian 3 –

Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” who is Christ. ¹⁷ And this I say, *that* the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance *is* of the law, *it is* no longer of promise; but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.” Galatians 3:16-18

Israel, a people under the law, are being told they will enter the land promised to their fathers. It is a land where the Lord will dwell among them.

Further, they are told that living in the land is conditional based on obedience to the law. But the promise of blessing cannot be because of the law if Abraham was given the promise long before the time of the law.

Therefore, the promise is not the land of Canaan, but only what the land of Canaan anticipates, a place where man will dwell with the Lord forever. That means that our final words of the passage today are to be instructive...

^{*32 (fin)} **And you shall be careful to observe all the statutes and judgments which I set before you today.**

The verses today close out a section of Deuteronomy that deals with the relation of the people who were brought out of Egypt towards Yehovah their God. The next section, that goes from 12:1 to 16:17, will deal with the land as the seat of worship of the Lord.

For now, these words tie right back to verse 26. There Moses spoke of obeying the commandments. Now He explains that, saying, “the statutes and the judgments.” If they are to obey the statutes and judgments in order to remain in the land, then the land cannot be the sum of the promise.

As Paul noted, the law cannot annul the covenant made by God in Christ to Abraham, thus making the promise of no effect. But if disobeying the law can mean there will be punishment and exile from the land, then the promise cannot merely be the land.

The land is a promise, and it is based on conditions. But it is not the ultimate Promise which comes without conditions. The promise is Christ, and He is promised before and apart from the law. This is what Israel must come to understand. Until they do, they will continue to flounder in a world without any true hope.

Only in coming to Christ can the fulfillment of all of God’s promises be fully realized. The law was given to show them this. And as the law was only given to Israel, it is meant as an instructive tool for them, and for everyone else.

The world doesn’t need more laws. One was enough to condemn all of humanity. What the world needs is the grace of God in Christ Jesus. He is the One who is sufficient to save all of humanity, if they are but willing to come to Him. The adding of the Law of Moses was to teach us this in a poignant way.

Those of Israel who were considered right before the Lord were those who loved the Lord beyond the precepts of the law, not because of the precepts of the law. The law, as noble as it is, is only a reflection of the Lord. But to seek the Lord goes beyond rote observance to the very heart of man desiring intimacy with his Creator – something man can employ toward the Lord apart from the law.

However, that can only come about when the sin of man is dealt with. There may be people who seek after God, but they do so apart from the mediation of Christ. God cannot accept this. Only in the covering of man with the righteousness of Christ can God then accept him. The problem is sin, sin comes by law, and therefore man must be given grace – the grace of God which is found in the giving of Christ for the sin debt.

This is the continued lesson of the law. May we be wise and pay heed. It is through Christ and Christ alone that we stand justified before the Holy God. May today be the day you realize this and call out to Him for cleansing.

Closing Verse: *“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” Galatians 4:4, 5*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 12:1-7 *It’s not intended for the one who refuses, meaning any-one...* (The Place Where the Lord Your God Chooses, Part I) (39th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Blessing and the Curse

“For if you carefully keep all these commandments
Which I command you to do
To love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways
And to hold fast to Him; pay heed my word is true

Then the LORD will drive out
All these nations from before you; like cleaning pantry shelves
And you will dispossess nations
Greater and mightier nations than yourselves

Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours:
From the wilderness and Lebanon in its glory
From the river, the River Euphrates
Even to the Western Sea, shall be your territory

No man shall be able to stand against you
The LORD your God will put the dread of you
And the fear of you upon all the land where you tread
Just as He has said to you, so He shall do

“Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse:

The blessing, if you obey
The commandments of the LORD your God
Which I command you today

And the curse, if you do not obey the commandments
Of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way
Which I command you today
To go after other gods which you have not known
-----if you so go astray

Now it shall be, when the LORD your God
Has brought you into the land which you go to possess
That you shall put the blessing on Mount Gerizim
And the curse on Mount Ebal, so to you I address

Are they not on the other side of the Jordan
Toward the setting sun just as I say
In the land of the Canaanites who dwell in the plain
Opposite Gilgal, beside the terebinth trees of Moreh?

For you will cross over the Jordan and go in to possess the land
Which the LORD your God is giving you
And you will possess it and dwell in it
So you shall do

And you shall be careful to observe, just as I say
All the statutes and judgments which I set before you today

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 12:1-7 **(The Place Where the Lord Your God Chooses, Part I)**

Paul says that the law was given as a tutor to lead people to Christ. Thus, in giving the law to Israel, they were being educated on what is right and what is wrong, but in a way that will eventually lead them to a fuller understanding of what God is like, and of what He expects from His people.

This is done in such a way that we are to find Christ Jesus in the giving of this law, and to then respond by coming to Him. We can discover not only what God is like (because He is the embodiment of the unseen God), but how to properly worship Him.

As this is so, then the form of worship given in the Old Testament, via the Old Covenant, cannot be the full expression of how to worship God. In fact, in coming to Christ, we can find out what was actually lacking in the mode and means of service to the Lord in the law.

This doesn't mean the law is imperfect, but it is – in fact – incomplete. Because of this, it is not considered “faultless” by the author of Hebrews. This is not because what is given in the law is faulty, but because we are. The incomplete nature of the service of the Lord under the law highlighted this.

Thus, this service of the Lord is only an anticipatory step towards a full, perfect, and final form of worship that will be sufficient to please God for all eternity. Jesus tells us of this in John 4 –

Text Verse: *“The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. ²⁰ Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.’*

²¹ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. ²² You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. ²³ But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴ God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.’” John 4:19-24

The implements of worship under the Old Covenant are explicitly said by Paul, and by the author of Hebrews, to be mere shadows of heavenly things. Those heavenly things

are found in Christ alone. Therefore, in coming to Christ we then have everything necessary to be pleasing to God in our mode and means of worship.

This is the beauty and the marvel of Jesus Christ. All of the sufficiency for us to be pleasing to God, and to continue to be pleasing to God – for all eternity – is found in Him. Let us remember this as we continue on through the magnificent body of literature, wisdom, and wonder that we call “The Law of Moses.”

As breathtaking and beautiful as it is, it is only a steppingstone to that which is more marvelous and fully complete, because it is Jesus Christ alone who can perfect us and bring us to completion in Him. This is a wonderful truth that is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Mode and the Means (verses 1-4)

¹“These *are* the statutes and judgments

elleh ha'khukim v'ha'mishpatim – “These the statutes and the judgments.” Concerning where we are now in Deuteronomy, Albert Barnes correctly notes the following –

“Moses now passes on to apply Deuteronomy 12-26 the leading principles of the Decalogue to the ecclesiastical, civil, and social life of the people. Particulars will be noticed which are unique to the Law as given in Deuteronomy; and even in laws repeated from the earlier books various new circumstances and details are introduced. This is only natural. The Sinaitic legislation was nearly 40 years old and had been given under conditions of time, place, and circumstance different and distant from those now present. Yet the Sinaitic system, far from being set aside or in any way abrogated, is on the contrary throughout presupposed and assumed. Its existence and authority are taken as the starting-point for what is here prescribed, and an accurate acquaintance with it on the part of the people is taken for granted.”

In other words, what was given at Sinai is being supplemented now by Moses' words in Deuteronomy, but it complements that law. It in no way contradicts it or sets it aside. Further, it is taken as an axiom that what was given at Sinai is perfectly understood by those now receiving Deuteronomy. Therefore, both the Law received from Sinai, and that which is now being added to it for Israel's instruction is that...

^{1 (con't)} **which you shall be careful to observe**

asher tishmerun laasot – “which you (all) shall be (certainly) careful to observe. This is the fourth and last time in Deuteronomy that this word, *shamar*, meaning to keep, is accentuated with a paragogic nun – a letter at the end of it to provide further stress.

It may seem nitpicky to talk about things like this, but considering the outcome of *not* heeding it reveals it is not. This accentuation on the word *shamar* is found these four times in Deuteronomy, and then only one more time in all of the Old Testament. In 2 Kings 17, the words we are now evaluating are cast back in the face of disobedient Israel, at a time just after the northern tribes were exiled to Assyria. Despite their punishments, those in the land continued to fail to heed Moses –

“To this day they continue practicing the former rituals; they do not fear the LORD, nor do they follow their statutes or their ordinances, or the law and commandment which the LORD had commanded the children of Jacob, whom He named Israel, ³⁵ with whom the LORD had made a covenant and charged them, saying: ‘You shall not fear other gods, nor bow down to them nor serve them nor sacrifice to them; ³⁶ but the LORD, who brought you up from the land of Egypt with great power and an outstretched arm, Him you shall fear, Him you shall worship, and to Him you shall offer sacrifice. ³⁷ And the statutes, the ordinances, the law, and the commandment which He wrote for you, **you shall be careful to observe** forever; you shall not fear other gods. ³⁸ And the covenant that I have made with you, you shall not forget, nor shall you fear other gods. ³⁹ But the LORD your God you shall fear; and He will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies.’ ⁴⁰ However they did not obey, but they followed their former rituals. ⁴¹ So these nations feared the LORD, yet served their carved images; also their children and their children’s children have continued doing as their fathers did, even to this day.” 2 Kings 17:34-41

Israel was not careful to observe, and the woes that came upon them as a people were a self-inflicted wound. One letter of accentuation, tucked onto the end of this word, reveals much more than one might normally think is of any instructive value at all.

^{1 (con’t)} **in the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you to possess,**

Moses goes from the plural to the singular in this clause. He is speaking to the nation as a whole: *ba’arets asher natan Yehovah elohe abotekha lekha l’rishta* – “in the land which giving Yehovah, God your (singular) fathers to you (singular) to possess.

Using the word *ha'arets*, or “the land,” Moses reminds Israel that Yehovah isn't just a new god that they have recently conjured up out of their own heads, but that He is the same God that appeared to their fathers, made sure promises to them, and has kept those promises by now bringing Israel into Canaan. It is a land they are given to possess...

^{1 (con't)} **all the days that you live on the earth.**

Now, he is speaking to the people of the nation: *kal ha'yamim asher atem khayim al ha'adamah* – all the days which you (all) live upon the earth.” The change in the pronoun back to the plural should alert the people that individual obedience is expected and needed for national Israel to succeed.

Here, Moses uses the word *ha'adamah*, or “the earth.” The Lord God of the fathers is giving Israel the land. Thus, the people of Israel are to observe the words of the Lord as long as they live on the earth. One can see that the land is given to the nation, but possession of the land is conditional. The changes in the pronouns, and in the description of the object, are subtle but important.

Moses will now continue with specific statutes and judgments, explaining just what is necessary for obedience...

² **You shall utterly destroy**

The words are highly emphatic, both repeating the word *abad*, or destroy, and again adding another accentuated letter to the end of the word: *abed teabedun* – “Destroying, you shall (utterly) destroy.”

It is as if Moses is saying, “Take these things, smash them, grind them to powder, and then burn them. Let nothing of them remain.” And the objects of the destruction are...

^{2 (con't)} **all the places where the nations which you shall dispossess served their gods,**

Wherever the people served their gods, there was to be a complete destruction of both the mode and the means of worship. Moses will detail those things as he continues. As he is speaking to the people in the plural (you all), I would personally translate this as “peoples” instead of “nations.”

Moses is comparing the people of Israel to the peoples who inhabit the land. “They do these things; you all are to do this thing.” The modes of worship include...

² (con’t) **on the high mountains and on the hills**

These are singled out because they are the obvious places to get nearer to God who is “up there.” It is understood from Scripture that God is in heaven. It is also understood, using the same word, that the heavens are “above.” The obvious thought then is, “If we go up higher, we can be closer to God.”

This was seen in the building of the Tower of Babel. It is seen throughout the Old Testament where the peoples of Canaan and the people of Israel all went to “the high places” to make sacrifices and offerings. As this is where people went to worship their false gods, those places were to be destroyed.

Jesus later came and gave instruction concerning such places as we saw in our text verse from John 4. Serving God on a mountain, even that mountain on which the temple once stood – and on which a temple will stand again someday – is lacking in comparison to worshipping Him in spirit and in truth.

² (con’t) **and under every green tree.**

v’takhat ka ets raanan – “And under all tree green.” Here is a new word, *raanan*. It comes from an unused root meaning to be green, and so it is by analogy “new,” or figuratively, “prosperous.” In regard to the symbolism, John Lange may be right when he says –

“It is not truly the vivid fulness of color, but the mysterious rustling of the foliage which comes into view here, as in the high places it is the all-overpowering elements of air and light.” John Lange

One can think of witches casting spells under the heavy oaks, or of the hippies hanging out and burning incense under them. Even Buddha supposedly found his illumination under the Bodhi tree. In such places, people naturally tend to feel closer to the gods or spirits that the mind conjures up. From the modes of worship, Moses next turns to the means...

³ **And you shall destroy their altars, break their *sacred* pillars, and burn their wooden images with fire; you shall cut down the carved images of their gods**

These are the ways in which the people served their false gods, building them altars, erecting pillars to them, and carving images of them. Any of these can be seen, even today, as one travels through Asia. There is no sense in the mind, but simply an effort to connect with the divine through the things the hands can fashion.

The words translated as “burn” and “cut down” both contain the same accentuation as in the previous verses. Last week, in verse 11:28, we reviewed a departure from the precept of the 1st Commandment. Now, of these words so far, can see the formal point of the law, the 2nd Commandment, being fleshed out in what we are looking at –

“You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; ⁵you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me, ⁶but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.”

-Exodus 20:4-6

There is a right way to worship and serve the Lord, and there are all other ways – each being wrong. The right way is defined in the word. The wrong ways are presented as well. Israel was given the word, they were given the admonitions and warnings in the word, and they were to pay heed to those things.

Moses is adamant concerning the necessary actions to be taken by the people. This was to ensure Moses’ next words...

^{3 (con’t)} **and destroy their names from that place.**

Here, we see an immediate transition from the 2nd Commandment to the 3rd –

“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name in vain.” Exodus 20:7

In retaining and following after the names of the false gods, the name of Yehovah will – by default – be taken in vain. The word translated as “destroy,” signifies “to perish.” Thus, this can be taken in various ways. It can mean to change in order to eliminate. For example, one can change the name of a person or a place (etc.) from the name of a pagan god to something else.

Gideon is known in the book of Judges as Jerubbaal because of his actions against Baal. Later in 2 Samuel 11:21, Joab calls him Jerubbesheth. In this, it is a literal fulfillment of this precept now being given. This is seen elsewhere as well.

It can also mean to literally destroy the thing that bears the name of something, such as a false god. The names of the gods will remain as long as the images remain. The minds of the people would be polluted with these things, and temptations would set in.

When things didn't go well for someone, the natural inclination would be to try another god and see if it could help. The Old Testament is filled with examples of this, as is our own society. There are palm readers in most towns, there are readers of Tarot cards, and there are spiritualists from every odd religion one can think of at every turn down a new road.

One must consider that if the law was able to make a person holy, there would be no need to remove all these false gods. In being holy, there would be no need to worry about seeking that which is false. But the very fact that Israel is asked to remove these things demonstrates that the inclination of the heart is, and remains, flawed under the law.

⁴You shall not worship the LORD your God *with such things*.

lo taasun ken Yehovah elohekem – “No you shall (certainly) do so Yehovah your God.” Again, Moses provides an accentuation in the word translated as “you shall do.” One can see the firm sternness in his words as he speaks out the command of the Lord.

By including the accentuation in the written commands, it is a call to strict attention and obedience. To fail in regard to this can only mean disaster for the people. And they cannot say that they were unaware of either the precept or the stress provided in the giving of it. This is because the law was meticulously kept and maintained.

Further, this law was to be read to all of the assembled people once every seven years –

“So Moses wrote this law and delivered it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel. ¹⁰And Moses commanded them, saying: “At the end of *every* seven years, at the appointed time in the year of release, at the Feast of Tabernacles, ¹¹when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. ¹²Gather the people

together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who *is* within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully observe all the words of this law, ¹³ and *that* their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land which you cross the Jordan to possess.” Deuteronomy 31:9-13

As the law was being read to the people, even as infrequently as every seven years, they would hear these emphases and accentuations provided by Moses, and they would each understand the weight of them. And more, not only were the people to be made aware of them, but the ruler of the land was to be intimately familiar with them as well. He was accountable according to law –

“Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from *the one* before the priests, the Levites. ¹⁹ And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, ²⁰ that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment *to* the right hand or *to* the left, and that he may prolong *his* days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.” Deuteronomy 17:18-20

Safeguards for both common people and the leaders were set in place. But following the commands implied that those responsible for ensuring they were known in the first place were actually transmitting that knowledge to those who needed to know them.

In other words, if Bibles were in short supply, as was the case for most of church history, and as is the case in many parts of the world today, the weight of conveying what is expected of the church is placed upon the few who have a copy of it.

Such a person may fail to convey the word at all. Or he may be either incompetent in the word or purposefully manipulative of the word. If so, the people – although still accountable for their actions – will never know what is correct.

The ideas still apply today, even though there are Bibles in pretty much every house that wants one. This is for a few reasons. One is that people have lives to live and taking time to learn sound theology is a long, difficult, and mentally laborious task. It is one that few people are actually geared for – even of those who are in the ministry of the word.

Secondly, there is a lack of caring by those who do have time to – at least minimally – train themselves in the word. In other words, the electrician or stockbroker actually does have a life beyond his job and other responsibilities. He may not have time to get a degree from a sound seminary, but he does have time to at least read his Bible.

How do we know this? It is because he has time to watch TV every day of his life. He has time to go to the movies – well, before COVID-19 closed all the movie theaters. He has time to play on the internet, watch sports, read a book, go fishing, lay on the beach and get a suntan, or whatever other thing will fill his free time.

These things are certain. If he has time to do any or all of these things throughout the week, he has time to read the Bible. And even if he doesn't really like to read, he can listen to an audio Bible. These things cannot be denied.

And so, even if not a trained minister of the word, he can at least be learned enough in it to know when something doesn't sound right, or something smells fishy in the theology that is presented.

The precept of the words of Moses now, "You shall not worship the LORD your God *with such things*," actually extends into our modern life. We cannot worship the Lord properly unless we know how to properly worship the Lord. And that cannot occur unless we are made aware of that through the knowledge of His precious and sacred word.

Is worshiping the Lord through the infinite number of images of Roman Catholicism acceptable? Is worshiping Him through modern "prophets" and "seers" acceptable? Is it acceptable for a congregation to sit under the authority of Joyce Myers or Beth Moore? How can we know? To where do we go to find out?

For Israel, under the law, it was first to Moses, and then to those sanctioned by the Lord to continue carrying forward the word to the people. The Lord even gave safeguards concerning those later speakers and writers to determine if they conveyed the truth or not.

We'll come to some of those safeguards in the next chapter of Deuteronomy. Until then, the word continues through Moses' instruction and exhortation towards the people...

Are you schooled in the word of God?

*If “Yes,” to what extent is it so?
Do you meditate on the word in this world that you trod?
Or, without considering it, is it “Off to the beach” you go?*

*What do you do when someone says to you...?
“Send in your tithes and you will be blessed!”
Do you send him your cash? Is this what you do?
Sending it to that guy who is lavishly dressed*

*Is that what God wants for you in your walk with Him?
Paying off someone else so that you too will get rich
If that’s what you think, your theology is dark and grim
You have been duped by the deceiver’s pitch*

*And it’s all because you neglected the word
Instead, you trusted in that nutty thing you heard*

II. And You Shall Rejoice (verses 5-7)

⁵“But you shall seek the place

ki im el ha’maqom – “For if unto the place.” It is a literal way of saying what we would translate with a word such as but, rather, or instead. “You are not to do this. On the other hand, this is what you are to do. You are to go...”

^{5 (con’t)} where the LORD your God chooses,

asher yivkhar Yehovah elohekem – “which chooses Yehovah your (plural) God.” In other words, this is being set in contrast to verse 2. The peoples in Canaan made up false gods in their minds.

They did this either by seeing nature (say, a high place or under a tree) and then worshiping what their minds decided upon in that location. Or they made up a god for a need, such as a fertility idol, and then they went to the place that fit that need where they could worship their god.

Either way, the people of Israel were forbidden from doing this. They could not go up on a mountain and say, “I am going to worship Yehovah here because I am closer to Him.”

Nor could they make an idol, call it Yehovah, and place it in a spot they thought reflected Him and say, “This is how I will worship Yehovah.”

They could not draw closer to Him anywhere they went, because He is Spirit, and thus He is everywhere at all times. And they could not rightly worship Him by making something they thought reflected Him, because He transcends His creation. Nothing can compare to Him.

Therefore, they could only approach Him in the manner He determined and in the place that He chose for them to do so. And, that choice was not to be in all of their tribes, but from...

^{5 (con't)} **out of all your tribes,**

mikal shivtekem – “from all of your tribes.” The word “from” here signifies “out of.” And the word *shevet*, or tribe, signifies more of a political than a genealogical arrangement. The Lord would choose a single spot that stemmed from one tribe of the political arrangement of Israel...

^{5 (con't)} **to put His name for His dwelling place;**

la'sum eth shemo sham l'shikno – “to set His name there to His residence.” Here is a word found only this once in Scripture, the noun *sheken*. It signifies a residence, coming from the common verb *shakan*, meaning to settle down, dwell, or abide. It thus speaks of the place of the tabernacle. Of these words, Charles Ellicott rightly states –

“The very form of the order proves its antiquity. No one who was acquainted with the removal of that “place” from Shiloh to Nob, from Nob to Gibeon, from Gibeon to Jerusalem, could have written with such utter unconsciousness of later history as these words imply.” Charles Ellicott

The obvious question is, “If the Lord is Spirit and thus everywhere, then why can't the people worship the Lord anywhere. And, if the tabernacle is a part of creation, and nothing in creation can fully express the Lord, then how can the words here help the situation?”

The questions are valid, and the answer is multilayered. First, the Lord is everywhere, and yet He has presented Himself in many locations, as revealed in Scripture, and as testified to by Stephen in Acts 7.

Secondly, the Lord was worshipped in those places – both with and without the tabernacle – and thus He can be worshipped anywhere, except during the dispensation of the Law, and/or as explicitly commanded or authorized by the Lord.

Thirdly, in regard to the tabernacle/temple, although those are fabricated things, they reveal – minutely and exactly – spiritual truths that point to the nature of God in Christ. That was revealed in the Exodus sermons that dealt with the construction of the tabernacle, and then in the other sermons from Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers that dealt with the appointed feasts and etc.

This was alluded to earlier when I brought up Paul and the author of Hebrews. Citing them now will help –

“For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; ⁵ who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, ‘See *that* you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.’” Hebrews 8:4, 5

“So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, ¹⁷ which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.” Colossians 2:16, 17

“For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.” Hebrews 10:1

Something had to be given for the service and worship of God in Christ during the time of tutoring so that when He came, these things could be understood. This is the mode and the means by which it was to be conducted.

This is certain because of many Old Testament verses. For example, the Lord allowed an offering to be made for him by the parents of Samson, even though it was not at the tabernacle –

“So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it upon the rock to the LORD. And He did a wondrous thing while Manoah and his wife looked on— ²⁰ it happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar—the

Angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar! When Manoah and his wife saw *this*, they fell on their faces to the ground.” Judges 13:19, 20

The Lord was present to accept what the shadow only anticipated. And more, we see a marvelous example of this truth when Solomon went to petition the Lord –

“And Solomon spoke to all Israel, to the captains of thousands and of hundreds, to the judges, and to every leader in all Israel, the heads of the fathers’ houses. ³ Then Solomon, and all the assembly with him, went to the high place that *was* at Gibeon; for the tabernacle of meeting with God was there, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness. ⁴ But David had brought up the ark of God from Kirjath Jearim to *the place* David had prepared for it, for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem. ⁵ Now the bronze altar that Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, he put before the tabernacle of the LORD; Solomon and the assembly sought Him *there*. ⁶ And Solomon went up there to the bronze altar before the LORD, which *was* at the tabernacle of meeting, and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it.” 2 Chronicles 1:2-6

Though the ark was at Jerusalem, the tabernacle was still in Gibeon. This included the altar of burnt offering that was still there. The implication is that a sacrifice was necessary to come before God. And so even though the ark was in Jerusalem, in order to come before the Lord, they had to go Gibeon.

The order of service and worship had to be followed because the typology of those things anticipated Christ. But Yehovah (God incarnate - meaning Christ) stood there before the parents of Samson. Thus, their offering was accepted.

What this is teaching us (remember that the law is our tutor), and indeed for the whole world to read and understand, is that no man may come before God without a sacrifice, and that sacrifice must be Christ the Lord. And when Christ the Lord is there before us, our sacrifices are acceptable to God.

He IS the Place where the Lord your God has chosen to place His name. Until He came, He was to be sought by Israel at the earthly shadow of Him, meaning the tabernacle. As Moses says...

⁵ (con’t) **and there you shall go.**

u-bata shama – “And you (singular) shall go there.” The pronoun in this one clause suddenly goes from the plural to the singular which hasn’t been seen since the middle clause of verse 1.

In this, it says, “you (Israel) shall seek, and you shall go.” The question then is, “Is Moses speaking to Israel as a nation, or is he going from ‘you all’ in general to ‘you’ the individual.

He could be looking at the whole, and with waving hands say, “All of you shall seek, and you – Israel – shall go.” Or, he could be waving his arm across the masses and saying, “You all shall seek,” and then, pointing at person after person, he then says, “and you shall go.”

Either way, the change is so sudden and so abrupt that no one would miss the importance of it. Probably what is true is that it signifies both. There is the national salvation of Israel that awaits them coming to Christ as a unified people, but there is also individual salvation of Israel where each must come to Christ apart from any other. Both are true for this uniquely called people.

⁶There you shall take your burnt offerings,

The *olah*, or burnt offering, was minutely detailed in the book of Leviticus, every detail of which pointed to Christ the Lord. These were shadows of truths that only anticipated Him.

^{6 (con’t)} your sacrifices,

The *zebakh*, or sacrifice, was also carefully laid out, mostly in Leviticus. Again, every detail of which pointed to Christ the Lord. They were, likewise, shadows anticipating the Substance.

^{6 (con’t)} your tithes,

The *maser*, or tithes, for Israel were introduced in Leviticus. They were further defined in Numbers, and they will be lastly and more fully explained only in Deuteronomy 14.

Unless you are well-schooled in the Bible, have had a really thorough instructor in the past, or you have attended the Superior Word for some time, the tithes probably do not

mean what you think they mean. Stayed tuned. Coming to a Deuteronomy 14 sermon near you.

The number ten in Scripture signifies the perfection of Divine order. The tenth, or tithe represents the whole of what is due from man to God, it is a mark of His claim on the whole. Thus, the tithes anticipate the Messiah who would mark His claim on the whole of His redeemed.

^{6 (con't)} **the heave offerings of your hand,**

The *terumah*, or heave offering, was evaluated in detail in Leviticus. It anticipates the coming of Messiah and all such offerings are fulfilled in Him.

^{6 (con't)} **your vowed offerings,**

v'nidrekem – “and your vows.” There are vows, and there are offerings that accompany vows. All such things rightfully belonged before the Lord, at the location where He chose to place His name. They all anticipate Christ, and He is the fulfillment of the reception of all such things as recorded elsewhere.

^{6 (con't)} **your freewill offerings,**

The *nedeveh*, or freewill offering, was discussed in detail in Leviticus. Every point and part of that detail anticipated the coming of Christ. The shadows point to the Substance found in Him.

^{6 (con't)} **and the firstborn of your herds and flocks.**

The presentation of these firstborn is discussed in Exodus, Leviticus, and in Numbers. Each presentation made in this practice was a shadowy type of the coming of Christ. Of these offerings, Moses next – maybe surprisingly if you are unaware of it – says...

⁷ **And there you shall eat before the LORD your God,**

As this was the final verse of sermon typing day, and as it made me hungry, I went and got a plate full of cheese and crackers to finish things up. I won't eat during sermon typing, but I made an exception because it was, in fact, the last verse. I found myself surrounded by little dogs as I sat down to type.

The force of these words is that they are referring to the contents of the previous verse. In other words, those things – all of them – that are presented to the Lord, at least in part – and unless forbidden due to the nature of the sacrifice – are eaten by the offeror. Keep that in mind as we continue through the next few chapters. In the eating, there was to be an accompanied state of life, attitude, and mind...

^{7 (con't)} **and you shall rejoice in all to which you have put your hand, you and your households,**

The verb *samakh*, or “rejoice,” has only been seen once so far – in Leviticus 23 – when referring to the Feast of Tabernacles. Being the book of Deuteronomy, one wouldn’t normally expect to find the state of rejoicing being brought up. And yet, this word will be found nine times before the book closes out.

Another new and somewhat rare word comes in the verse as well, *mishloakh*. It signifies “outstretching.” In other words, what the hand has reached out and grabbed. Thus, here in this verse, it is an undertaking.

With such a Christological passage as we have seen today, and in conjunction with so many offerings that clearly point to Christ Jesus, it is not at all surprising that the word “rejoice” would be planted right here for the first time in the book.

There was the putting forth of one’s hand. That resulted in taking an offering of some type, implying that the offering was available, and also that it served a purpose for the good of the one offering it.

The people went to the place where the Lord had chosen, and there they were to be thankful for what the sacrifice or offering implied. As these things anticipated the coming of Messiah, and as we have the fulness of those types and shadows in Him, then indeed! How much more should we rejoice in an even greater way than Israel did. We have the spiritual fulness of what these earthly things only looked forward to. Those are the things...

^{*7 (fin)} **in which the LORD your God has blessed you.**

Once again, and to close us out, Moses goes from the plural back to the singular. He has been speaking to the people, “you all,” but now he speaks to the nation – “which has blessed you (singular, Israel) Yehovah your (singular) God.” It is a national blessing of the people whose God is the Lord.

The rejoicing was to occur because of the blessing. The blessing came because of God's favor in Christ. For Israel, it was in anticipation of Him. For us, it is looking back on Him and what He has done.

If one can shake his head and marvel at how Israel failed in these things, then how much more should we shake our heads at our own failures in them. The words, "you shall rejoice," are to be taken as a positive command.

The people were not to be grumpy over what they did not have. They were not to be covetous of those who had something more, better, or different. Instead, they were to be grateful, and they were – actively – to rejoice in that.

As we have the spiritual fulness of what these things anticipated, then how can we be miserable about the countless things that we allow to get us down? There isn't a thing on this planet that we will take with us to our heavenly dwelling.

There isn't a single earthly thing that we possess that cannot be taken from us. But we possess what is worth more than the value of the entire world, and it can never be taken from us. In understanding that, how can we allow ourselves to be shaken, anxious, depressed, miserable, or woeful?

Yes, it does happen. But why? It is because we take our eyes off the prize. We lose sight of the heavenly calling, and in our pity party we forget that the Lord of creation stepped out of His glory and humbled Himself among us in order to bring us back to Himself.

Let us do our utmost to fix our eyes on Him – our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Place where the Lord our God has chosen to put His name for a Dwelling. So, He has done. And for this, let us praise Him. To the glory of God, the Father.

With every sunset
You give me rest.
With every sunrise
You bring new hope.
With every rain
You quench my thirst.
With every rainbow
You paint your love.
With every breath
I know, I live,

by loving wonders
of your grace.
I ask what else, Lord,
do I need,
when I see scars
upon your hands?
Izabela Bednara

Closing Verse: *“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. ⁹ Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”* Philippians 2:5-11

Next Week: Deuteronomy 12:8-19 *We don't want to hear no dismissals or refuses. Instead, you shall go where he tells to you...* (The Place Where the Lord Your God Chooses, Part II) (40th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Place Where the Lord Your God Chooses

“These are the statutes and judgments
Which you shall be careful to observe, as if the highest worth
In the land which the LORD God of your fathers
Is giving you to possess, all the days that you live on the earth

You shall utterly destroy all the places
Where the nations which you shall dispossess served their gods
On the high mountains and on the hills
And under every green tree; if not, you and the Lord
-----shall be at odds

And you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars
And burn their wooden images with fire; they are a disgrace
You shall cut down the carved images of their gods
And destroy their names from that place

You shall not worship the LORD your God with such things
“But you shall seek the place where the LORD your God chooses
-----it shall be so
Out of all your tribes, to put His name
For His dwelling place, and there you shall go

There you shall take your burnt offerings
Your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand
Your vowed offerings, your freewill offerings
And the firstborn of your herds and flocks, there in the land

And there you shall eat before the LORD your God
And you shall rejoice in all to which you have put your hand
-----so, you shall do
You and your households
In which the LORD your God has blessed you

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 12:8-19 **(The Place Where the Lord Your God Chooses, Part II)**

One of the things that tends to annoy me, and there are a few such things in life, is when someone says they are a part of a church that is going back to the way they did it at the beginning – the way churches were supposed to be set up.

Why is this annoying? It is because the Bible never (no really, go check) prescribes any such thing. Outside of the qualifications for elders and deacons, and a few important observances – meaning baptism and the Lord’s supper. There is nothing about the structure of the church that is ever noted as being “correct.”

And even how the Lord’s Supper and baptism are conducted is not defined other than a few warnings from Paul concerning conduct during the Lord’s Supper. We just know we are to do these things. We are given absolute freedom to set things up as we wish – elder-led, congregational, episcopal, presbyterian, and so on, are all types of churches. And yet, none of them are said to be either acceptable or unacceptable in Scripture.

There is no time of day that is prescribed for people to meet. There is no day of the week that is prescribed for people to meet. There is no order of events that must take place. There is no size or location of a church defined. And so on.

Yes, there are prohibitions on things, but that doesn’t mean all things must be done. For example, there is nothing to say that people must speak in various languages (tongues), but there are prohibitions on speaking in other languages – how many can, there must be a translator, and so on.

The same is true with giving. Israel was compelled to give certain things at certain times and for certain reasons. In the church, outside of a couple of basic principles on that subject from Paul, which we are to take as prescriptions, nothing specific is defined.

Unlike Israel, we have complete freedom to conduct our affairs in whatever way we wish. And there is a reason for this.

Text Verse: *“Did you offer Me sacrifices and offerings
In the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?
²⁶ You also carried Sikkuth your king
And Chiun, your idols,
The star of your gods,*

Which you made for yourselves.

*²⁷ Therefore I will send you into captivity beyond Damascus,'
Says the LORD, whose name is the God of hosts." Amos 5:25-27*

In today's passage, Moses will start out by saying that the people had done whatever each thought was right in his own eyes while they were in the wilderness. Though they had the tabernacle which was surely maintained by the priests from day to day in an orderly fashion, the people did not have the ability to do what the law prescribed for them to do.

Therefore, they conducted their lives according to the way that they thought was best. However, what Moses tells them is that the time was coming when they would need to have a unity of worship in order to live properly within the land. They needed to not do what they thought was right, but what the Lord, through the law, had prescribed as acceptable or not acceptable.

The reason for this will be explained, but it begs the question, "If this is so, then why don't we have to do such things in an orderly and prescribed manner as well?" The reason for that follows logically after the reason for the Lord prescribing these things for Israel in the first place. To help us understand some of this, we can first evaluate a chiasm I pulled out of the passage while doing this sermon.

Deuteronomy 12:12-18 (Rejoicing Before the Lord)
Allowances and Prohibitions (12/7/2020)

- a. And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God.
- b. You and your sons and your daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levite who *is* within your gates.
- c. In the place which the LORD chooses, in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings.
- d. And there you shall do all that I command you.
 - e. "However, you may slaughter and eat meat within all your gates, whatever your heart desires.
 - x. The unclean and the clean may eat of it.
 - e. Of the gazelle and the deer alike. Only you shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it on the earth like water.
- d. (Commands) You may not eat within your gates the tithe of your grain or your new wine or your oil, of the firstborn of your herd or your flock, of any of your offerings which you vow, of your freewill offerings, or of the heave offering of your hand.
- c. But you must eat them before the LORD your God in the place which the LORD your God chooses.
- b. You and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, and the Levite who *is* within your gates.
- a. And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God.

Great things, such as freedom in Christ and chiasms, which help us understand passages better, are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Unity of Worship (verses 8-14)

So far, in this Chapter, Moses has been speaking of how to properly worship the Lord once they are in Canaan. He spoke of destroying the places where the inhabitants worshipped their gods (vss. 2-4). He also spoke of having a place specifically set aside for worshipping the Lord (vs. 5).

After that, he then noted that it was to this place alone that they were to bring their burnt offerings, sacrifices, tithes, heave offerings, and so on. There, in the presence of the Lord, they were to rejoice in Him (vss. 6 & 7). Those things now form the basis of what he will next say...

⁸“You shall not at all do as we are doing here today—

lo taasun kekol asher anakhnu osim poh ha’yom – “No shall you (certainly) do at all which we are doing here today.” It is an interesting phrase for several reasons. First, the word translated as “shall you do” bears an emphatic mark in order to stress what is said – “You shall certainly not do.”

But what bears note is that Moses uses the word *anakhnu*, or “we.” The word is used only five times in Deuteronomy, but three of the uses are him simply quoting the people, not inclusive of him. Only in verse 5:3 does he elsewhere include himself in the narrative –

“The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but **with us**, those who *are* here today, all of us who *are* alive.” Deuteronomy 5:3

Now, for the only other time in the book does he include himself directly in the statement – “as we are doing here today.” Moses is contrasting what is the expected behavior of the people upon entrance, and what is happening at the present.

By saying, “You shall not do as we are doing,” it is a sad note of the surety that he will not pass over into the land. Outside of the land, the people could not – by default – do the things of the law. They could not bring offerings they did not possess, such as the

tithes of grain. They could not travel on a pilgrim feast to the place where the Lord had chosen to place His name. And so on.

Instead, there were limitations placed upon them because they were in their time of exile for having not trusted the Lord, and having not entered the inheritance after leaving Sinai. It is what the Lord spoke of through Amos in our text verse –

“Did you offer Me sacrifices and offerings
In the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?” Amos 5:25

The obvious answer is, “No, they did not.” Certainly, the daily offerings of the priests were made, but the people (the house of Israel) could not do what was required of them by law. Now, Moses is stressing that those things would be required.

The sad part of this, however, is that many of the things of the law were never obeyed or observed, even after entering and having received rest. A perfect example of this is found after the first exile of Judah in Nehemiah 8 –

“So the whole assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and sat under the booths; for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day the children of Israel had not done so. And there was very great gladness.” Nehemiah 8:17

Something similar is said about observance of the Passover in 2 Kings 23. Even after possession of the land, nothing changed. But Moses had instructed them differently. They were to observe the law of the Lord instead of...

^{8 (con't)} **every man doing whatever *is* right in his own eyes—**

In the wilderness, people may have brought offerings to the Lord. If so, it was not in accord with the law of the tithe, which obviously could not be met. Or, they may have brought nothing. Some may have observed certain things of the law, or they may not have. Nobody would have been held accountable if they didn't.

For example, the law of circumcision mandated that every male child was to be circumcised on the eighth day or they were to be cut off from their people (Genesis 17:4), and yet, none of those born in the wilderness had been circumcised (Joshua 5:2-5).

People did what they did without regard to the duly established laws of the Lord. Moses includes himself in this. Understanding the typology – those in exile for the disobedience of having rejected Christ– one can see this applies to Israel now.

The people of Israel, even today, have the law. And yet, outside of the culturally expected customs, they don't observe the law at all. Every man does what is right in his own eyes. One can see the obvious parallel here –

* Israel of Moses' time is going to enter Canaan even though they have not been observing the law. Thus, it cannot be by observance of the law that they are entering the land of inheritance.

* Israel as a nation is going to enter the kingdom age even though they will not be observing the law before that occurs (Daniel 9:27). Therefore, it cannot be by observing the law that they will enter the inheritance.

The truth of this is seen in the next words...

⁹ for as yet you have not come to the rest and the inheritance which the LORD your God is giving you.

Here, like in verses 1, 5, and 7 from last week, the words go from the plural to the singular – “you all (plural) have not come to the rest and the inheritance which Yehovah your (singular) God is giving you (singular).” Moses goes from speaking to the people individually to referring to them as a nation. The obvious reason is because not all of the people will obtain the inheritance, but the nation assuredly will.

In this, he uses the word *menukhah*, meaning either “rest” or a place of rest. Moses is saying that they have not yet obtained such a place, or state, of rest. The main point of Moses' dialogue is that the people have the law, but they have not been observing the law, and yet, they have been brought to the inheritance promised by the Lord. As this is so, it cannot be by the law that they will obtain it.

However, observance of the law is the anticipation once in the inheritance. And yet, they failed to observe the law in the land. And not only did they fail to observe, they were actively disobedient to it. In this, they were exiled.

They were returned apart from observance of the law, and yet they were exiled again. They are (today) in the land and yet they are not observing the law, nor will they – even

after the next temple is built. And yet, they will be (as a nation) entering the kingdom age. But it is not by the law that this will occur.

The law is the expectation, and yet it is not the means of obtaining the promise. Therefore, it is the fulfillment of the law, and the imputation of that act through the New Covenant, that provides what is needed to complete the process began so long ago.

It is so clear and obvious, and yet it escapes Israel to this day, and – unfortunately – it escapes countless people who were never given this law in the first place as they bring themselves under this impossible yoke of bondage.

¹⁰ But *when* you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit,

The words go back to the plural here as Moses speaks to all of the people individually (you all). Moses again takes it as an axiom that the people there before him would cross the Jordan into Canaan, but that he would not do so. Because of this, he is providing instruction for them to not only possess the land, but to be able to continue possessing it. When they cross over...

^{10 (con't)} and He gives you rest from all your enemies round about, so that you dwell in safety,

Here, the idea of rest is tied in with the elimination of the enemy, and thus dwelling in safety. The idea of having obtained it is found in Joshua 23:1 –

“Now it came to pass, a long time after the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua was old, advanced in age.”

It is again seen concerning David and his kingdom in 2 Samuel 7 –

“Now it came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies all around, ² that the king said to Nathan the prophet, ‘See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains.’” 2 Samuel 7:1, 2

Because of David’s efforts in defeating the enemies, it is used again by Solomon in 1 Kings 5 as the reason to build the house of the Lord, and Solomon then acknowledges

that the promised rest was obtained as he prayed the invocation prayer after the temple was complete –

“Blessed *be* the LORD, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised through His servant Moses.” 1 Kings 8:56

And yet, David, despite having subdued the enemies and provided this rest, clearly indicates that the rest that both Joshua, and he, had obtained was not the promised rest Moses speaks of now. He does this by using the word “Today” in the 95th Psalm –

“Today, if you will hear His voice:
⁸ “Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion,
As *in* the day of trial in the wilderness,
⁹ When your fathers tested Me;
They tried Me, though they saw My work.
¹⁰ For forty years I was grieved with *that* generation,
And said, ‘It *is* a people who go astray in their hearts,
And they do not know My ways.’
¹¹ So I swore in My wrath,
‘They shall not enter My rest.’” Psalm 95:7-11

The author of Hebrews then unmistakably shows that obtaining the inheritance is not of the law. He does it first by citing the 95th Psalm, and then by next saying this from Hebrews 3:16-19 –

¹⁶ “For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, *was it* not all who came out of Egypt, *led* by Moses? ¹⁷ Now with whom was He angry forty years? *Was it* not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸ And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? ¹⁹ So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.”

With that understood, he then notes that because David said Today hundreds of years after Joshua had received his rest, it means that the rest spoken of is not merely referring to rest from the physical enemies of Israel. As he says in Hebrews 4:8, “For if Joshua had given them rest, then He [the Spirit through David] would not afterward have spoken of another day.” He then says –

“For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God *did* from His.” Hebrews 4:10

What this is clearly telling us is that the true, final, and anticipated rest comes only when the law is fulfilled, because the law is of works. If one ceases from his works in order to enter God’s rest, it means that he is no longer under law. As the author of Hebrews says, “For we who have believed do enter that rest” (Hebrews 4:3).

Moses is speaking of earthly things, but the Spirit of inspiration working through him is pointing to spiritual things. That continues with the next words...

¹¹ then there will be the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide.

The word *ha’maqom*, or “the place,” is obviously speaking of whatever place where the tabernacle would rest. However, more especially, the words point prophetically to Jerusalem, where the temple would be built. At the location where the name of the Lord would abide...

¹¹ (con’t) There you shall bring all that I command you:

Moses now says that in the place where the Lord’s name will abide, the people shall bring “all that I command you.” The logical question is, “Does this imply works?” The answer is, “Yes.” The command is of the law. It mandates something to be done.

But the author of Hebrews says that when a person enters God’s rest, He has ceased from all his works, and that the way one enters into the rest is through belief, meaning faith in Christ.

Thus, the rest which is being referred to now by Moses, and the commands which Moses is giving to the people, are only symbolic representations of the true rest that only comes by faith in the One these things anticipate and point to, some of which are...

¹¹ (con’t) your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, and all your choice offerings which you vow to the LORD.

This verse is very similar to verse 6 that we looked at last week. The only substantial difference is in the final clause –

*and the firstborn of your herds and flocks. 12:6

*and all your choice offerings which you vow to the Lord. 12:11

In verse 6, the offerings are mandatory. In verse 11, they are voluntary until the vow is made. Once the vow is made, the offering became obligatory.

In verse 6, it was seen how these things only pointed to the coming Christ. In Him is the fulfillment of them. What the people brought forward in Israel only anticipated a spiritual fulfillment.

Despite being mandatory offerings, other than in certain exceptions, only a portion of any of them was actually given away. The rest was consumed by the offeror. Hence, the next words...

¹² And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God,

This phrase was first seen in Leviticus 23:40 where it was applied to the Feast of Tabernacles. In Deuteronomy, this is the second of several times it is noted. The first being last week in verse 7. The idea here is that the offeror would often share in the offering, and thus they would feast and rejoice in the presence of the Lord for whatever the sacrifice or offering signified.

Even if they did not share in the sacrifice, such as in a whole burnt offering or a sin offering, they would still rejoice for what it signified – be it gratitude to God for His blessings, fellowship with Him, cleansing from sin, or so on. This rejoicing was to include...

^{12 (con't)} you and your sons and your daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levite who *is* within your gates, since he has no portion nor inheritance with you.

Unlike what most scholars state, and what most teachers pass on, this is a command of Moses, not a suggestion. For example, Jamieson-Fausset-Brown incorrectly states –

“...it appears that, although males only were commanded to appear before God at the annual solemn feasts (Ex 23:17), the women were allowed to accompany them (1Sa 1:3-23).”

Rather, Moses is instructing the households to attend as well. But there is no contradiction in this and what is said about the three pilgrim feasts elsewhere, such as –

“Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed.” Deuteronomy 16:16

In this passage here in Deuteronomy 12, in the surrounding passage of Deuteronomy 16, and elsewhere, it clearly instructs all of the people to come to the pilgrim feasts.

The households were not to be excluded. And, indeed, they could not be excluded – for example – from the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because the Passover (that everyone was to observe) was affixed to that Feast.

The fact that all the males had to appear before the Lord in those three pilgrim feasts is given under the assumption that their households would be there as well. The command for the males, as representative of the household was all-inclusive. The command to attend was to then be considered by those males as not to exclude the household as is evidenced in this verse.

The center of this service and worship of the Lord was to be at the spot where the Lord placed His name. It is a note of unification of the worship of the people – all of them – in a single place. Hence...

¹³ Take heed to yourself that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every place that you see;

Here, the burnt offering is spoken of as the entirety of the offerings of the previous verse. Also, the words now return to the singular – you, Israel, are to take heed concerning your burnt offerings. It may also be that Moses is speaking to each person individually – “You, and you, and you: do not do this thing.” The singular will continue, with one exception, through the rest of the verses today.

The command here was to ensure unity of worship at the sanctuary. However, it is evident from the time of the judges and later that Israel failed in this, as is evidenced from Ezekiel 20 –

“When I brought them into the land *concerning* which I had raised My hand in an oath to give them, and they saw all the high hills and all the thick trees, there they offered their sacrifices and provoked Me with their offerings. There they also sent up their sweet aroma and poured out their drink offerings.” Ezekiel 20:28

The people did exactly what they were instructed to not do. Instead of seeking the Lord in the place where He dwelt, they searched out any place that suited their fancy and they offered to the Lord, or to other gods, according to what was right in their own eyes.

It cannot be that this is only speaking of a time after the temple was built. That would not occur for more than 400 years. It certainly was intended to mean at the place of the tabernacle, or whatever other place the Lord so chose, until a temple was erected. That is clearly evidenced in what is next said...

¹⁴ but in the place which the LORD chooses, in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you.

He again speaks of the place which the Lord chooses. It could be argued that this only speaks of burnt offerings, but that is proven false by the words *v'sham taaseh kol asher anoki metsaveka* – “and there you shall do all that I command you.” In other words, the “burnt offering” stands as representative of everything else. This was perfectly understood from later passages, such as –

“Then they said, ‘In fact, *there is* a yearly feast of the LORD in Shiloh, which *is* north of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah.’” Joshua 21:19

The yearly feast, one of the Leviticus 23 Feasts of the Lord, was observed at Shiloh, where the tabernacle was. That feast is a part of what Moses is speaking of right now when he says, “and all that I command you.”

Sanctuary worship did occur, but there was not a unity of it among the people of Israel – in direct violation of the words of Moses now. However, it is seen elsewhere that not having a permanent temple was used as a pretext to do whatever anyone wanted. In 1 Kings 3:2-4, it says –

“Meanwhile the people sacrificed at the high places, because there was no house built for the name of the LORD until those days. ³ And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David, except that he sacrificed and burned incense at the high places.

⁴ Now the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that *was* the great high place: Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.”

Gibeon was where the tabernacle was then located (see 2 Chronicles 1:3), along with the altar of burnt offering, even though the ark was in Jerusalem.

And even after the building of the temple, the record of the kings contains constant failures of the people by not worshipping only before the Lord in Jerusalem. Something more, something much greater, was needed to unite the people in worship – something internal, not external. The reason for this is rightly explained by Adam Clarke –

“To prevent idolatry and bring about a perfect uniformity in the Divine worship, which at that time was essentially necessary; because every rite and ceremony had a determinate meaning, and pointed out the good things which were to come, therefore one place must be established where those rites and ceremonies should be carefully and punctually observed. Had it not been so, every man would have formed his worship according to his own mind, and the whole beauty and importance of the grand representative system would have been destroyed, and the Messiah and the glories of his kingdom could not have been seen through the medium of the Jewish ritual. For uniformity in every part of the Divine worship the same necessity does not now exist; because that which was typified is come, and the shadows have all fled away. Yet, when it can be obtained, how desirable is it that all sincere Christians should with one mouth, as well as with one heart, glorify their common Lord and Savior!” Adam Clarke

Stated a little less wordily – everything points to Jesus. The unity of worship was necessary to reveal Him. Anything else would destroy that typology. And now that He has come and fulfilled it, these shadows that only anticipated Him are no longer needed. Having said that, those things that were not relevant to that typology had no such restrictions bound to them...

*You shall do these things as I instruct you
Or not do what has been forbidden, as well
All is laid out, so you know what to do
Just be obedient to what the word does tell*

*Doing these things has a reason
And so, you are to do them as I instruct you
This will continue on for a season
But someday, the doing of them will be through*

*They only anticipate Me and those things I will do
And in My doing, those things will be done*

*Someday I will be the focus and hope of each one of you
That is, when the course of this law has been run*

II. Maintaining the Typology (verses 15-19)

¹⁵ “However, you may slaughter and eat meat within all your gates, whatever your heart desires, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you;

Slaughtering of animals for consumption was not considered a sacrifice or offering as long as it was not presented as such. Hence, there was no typology of Christ to mar in the act. Therefore, this was considered perfectly acceptable.

In fact, having, capturing, or buying meat here is considered a blessing of the Lord, not something offensive or wrong. Thus, it was to be accepted as such. However, in Leviticus 17, it said –

“Speak to Aaron, to his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them, ‘This *is* the thing which the LORD has commanded, saying: ³ ‘Whatever man of the house of Israel who kills an ox or lamb or goat in the camp, or who kills *it* outside the camp, ⁴ and does not bring it to the door of the tabernacle of meeting to offer an offering to the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD, the guilt of bloodshed shall be imputed to that man. He has shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people, ⁵ to the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they offer in the open field, that they may bring them to the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, to the priest, and offer them *as* peace offerings to the LORD.’” Leviticus 17:2-5

That was a law for the time in the wilderness. Once the people were in the land of Canaan, it would no longer apply. They would be spread out through the land and were allowed to freely do as they wished in this regard. This included...

¹⁵ (con’t) the unclean and the clean may eat of it,

This is the middle of the chiasm found in the passage. Whoever wanted could eat of such meat. This means that even those excluded from the society, such as lepers who were unclean, could be brought it to eat.

This is unlike the laws of certain animals offered to the Lord that were forbidden to be eaten by the unclean. If they did so, the law says that such were to be cut off from their

people. They had violated the typology of Christ. However, no typology of Christ was violated in this. Therefore, it was considered perfectly acceptable and good. This included...

15 (con't) of the gazelle and the deer alike.

ka-tseviy v'ka-ayyal – “as of the gazelle and as of the deer.” Here, the *tseviy* or gazelle is introduced. It is a gazelle or a roebuck, but it also means “beauty,” even when referring to the beautiful Branch of the Lord in Isaiah 4:2, or the beautiful land of Israel in Ezekiel 20:6. Also, the *ayyal*, or deer is introduced. It is the intensive form of the word *ayil*, or ram. It thus signifies a stag, or a male deer.

The reason for including these is certainly to show that they were considered acceptable as food, but they bore no specific typology of Christ that must otherwise be considered.

In other words, these are not animals of the herd or flock that required the dedication of the firstborn to the Lord. Nor were they acceptable as sacrificial animals. But they were clean according to the law, they were considered clean animals and they could be hunted and eaten at will. However, the time-old prohibition, that even predates the Law of Moses, still stands...

16 Only you shall not eat the blood;

Suddenly, and only for this clause, the pronoun returns to the plural, “Only you (all) shall not eat the blood.” It was not that Israel was forbidden to eat the blood, but exceptions would be made. Rather, no exception was to be made for any person.

After the flood, animals that were previously forbidden to be eaten were granted to man as food. However, even then the Lord stated a prohibition that was expected to be adhered to in Genesis 9:2-4 –

“And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move *on* the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. ³ Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. ⁴ But you shall not eat flesh with its life, *that is*, its blood.”

The Lord specifically identifies the blood as the life. Thus...

16 (con') **you shall pour it on the earth like water.**

The pronouns return to the singular here. You, Israel, or you (each of you). This law was previously established in Leviticus 17 –

“Whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust; ¹⁴ for *it is* the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, ‘You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off.’”

-Leviticus 17:13, 14

The reason for this is complicated and should be supplemented by reviewing the sermon from Leviticus 17. In short, the prohibition of eating blood was given because it is the vehicle of life. For this reason, the Lord reserved all blood to Himself.

To eat the blood was to assimilate into oneself something that belonged to Him alone. It was therefore idolatrous to use it in any other way than designated by Him. If it was not used in the rites of the tabernacle, it was to be poured out and covered with earth.

In pouring out the blood like water, and then covering it with the dust, the typology points directly to Christ. From the dust, man was made. But he wasn't yet alive. Only in the breathing of the Lord into the nostrils of man did he become a *nephesh khayah*, or “soul living.” In man or animal, when the life is poured out, the dust reclaims ownership over what is left.

This is true with but one exception. It is Jesus, the Lord God who breathed life into man. And yet, He then descended from the man He breathed life into. In the shedding of His blood upon the ground from which His earthly body came, He gave up His soul, and yet the ground found no victory over Him.

The life returned, the soul reanimated, and by the power of the Lord God, He walked out of that tomb. Atonement for us was made with the pouring out of His soul. And yet, He lives. Only in Him is true and eternal life. The typology must be maintained, even when not a part of the sacrificial rites at the altar. Understanding this, Moses continues with more typological hints of Christ...

17 You may not eat within your gates the tithe of your grain or your new wine or your oil, of the firstborn of your herd or your flock, of any of your offerings which you vow, of your freewill offerings, or of the heave offering of your hand.

The verse begins with *lo tukal l'ekol* – “no eating to eat.” In other words, you are not able to eat. This is because this stands as a legal prohibition against it. From there, Moses defines what that means with the rest of the verse.

The comparable verses in this chapter (6 & 11), with the noted exceptions, were all in the plural. This verse, however, is all in the singular. Again, as has been seen at other times, it is certainly put forth this way to avoid anyone making exceptions. There was to be no equivocating on the laws laid down here, and so Moses speaks them to all individually, and also to Israel as a whole collectively.

As has been seen in one sermon or another, each of these things anticipates Christ – the tithe, the firstborn, and the offerings. Therefore, for the sake of unity of worship, the people were told that they could not eat these things in just any place.

To do so would mar the typology. There was to be a unity of worship because all people come to Christ in the same manner. There is not one way for this person or group and another for that person or group. Thus, the corporate nature of what was to be done by Israel negates any individualized attempts at coming to Christ.

The idea here is expressed in Galatians 1:6-8 where Paul clearly says that there is one gospel, and any other is not only not a gospel, but it is – in fact – anathema. What typologically anticipates Him was to be experienced through the unity of worship at the place that bore the name of the Lord God. In order to maintain this unity, Moses next says...

18 But you must eat them before the LORD your God in the place which the LORD your God chooses,

Everything that has just been described is to be eaten by the people at the spot where the Lord chooses to place His name. To prepare you for the Deuteronomy 14 sermon, we will evaluate what this means in regard to the tithes – which are eaten by the people.

Most scholars, probably because they were also preachers wanting to not lose out on their profits, say that this refers to a “second tithe,” not the mandated tithe of Israel. That is utter rubbish. The word never speaks of a second tithe.

The source of this supposed “second tithe” comes from rabbinical writings and an apocryphal book Tobit. What is recorded there doesn’t match – even closely – with what is stated here in the Law of Moses –

6

But I alone used to go often to Jerusalem for the festivals, as was prescribed for all Israel by longstanding decree.* Bringing with me the first fruits of crops, the firstlings of the flock, the tithes of livestock, and the first shearings of sheep, I used to hasten to Jerusalem

7

and present them to the priests, Aaron’s sons, at the altar. To the Levites ministering in Jerusalem I used to give the tithe of grain, wine, olive oil, pomegranates, figs, and other fruits. Six years in a row, I used to give a second tithe in money, which each year I would go to pay in Jerusalem.

8

The third-year tithe I gave to orphans, widows, and converts who had joined the Israelites. Every third year I would bring them this offering, and we ate it in keeping with the decree laid down in the Mosaic law concerning it, and according to the commands of Deborah, the mother of my father Tobiel; for my father had died and left me an orphan. (Tobit 1:6-8)

Of this precept in Deuteronomy, the scholar Keil says –

“In the laws contained in the earlier books, nothing is said about the appropriation of any portion of the tithes to sacrificial meals. Yet in Deuteronomy this is simply assumed as a customary thing, and not introduced as a new commandment, when the law is laid down.” Keil

Like other scholars, Keil then went on to speak of the passage in Tobit, to justify his stand on a “second tithe.” But the very fact that this practice was “assumed as a customary thing,” demonstrates that what Moses says here is referring not to a “second tithe.” Rather it speaks of the one and only tithe levied upon Israel. That “customary thing” will be revealed in the coming Deuteronomy 14 sermon.

This is what is known as “progressive revelation.” A precept is introduced, and then it is later explained and expanded upon. Moses now explains that expansion in Deuteronomy. If he had meant this was to be a second tithe, he would have said so, and any scholar with a modicum of sense would affirm it as such.

This is especially so when Israel had not even started tithing as described by Moses because they had never been in the land in order to begin to do so. Unfortunately, what is stated later in Deuteronomy 14 is so offensive to scholars, pastors, and preachers of the Bible, that they must insert something clearly indefensible into their theological bag of tricks to keep the money coming in.

18 (con’t) you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, and the Levite who is within your gates;

These words correspond to verse 12. There the pronouns were in the plural, as were the nouns (sons, daughters, male servants, and female servants). Here both the pronouns and the nouns are in the singular.

Again, this is a precept that is to be obeyed. It is incorrect to say that only the men were required to go on the pilgrim feasts. These verses clearly show that the men were to go, but they were to be accompanied by any household that dwelt with them. The use of both the plural and the singular is given to absolutely solidify this fact. And there is a reason for it...

18 (con’t) and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God in all to which you put your hands.

Continuing in the singular, the reason is the same as before, but with a different focus on the audience. Before, it was “you all – each of you.” Now, it is “you collectively.” Each person was to rejoice before the Lord, and Israel – the united people – were to rejoice before the Lord.

They were to acknowledge that the produce of the labor of their hands was ultimately derived from His open hand of grace. But they were also to remember another precept of law...

***19 (fin) Take heed to yourself that you do not forsake the Levite as long as you live in your land.**

Here, it should be more precisely translated and say, “on the earth,” rather than “in your land.” Despite that, this verse takes us back to verse 12. There, Moses spoke to the people in the plural (you all are to do this). However, here, it continues in the singular (you, Israel, are to do this). The people, individually and collectively, bore the responsibility of tending to the Levites.

As they were taken in place of the firstborn, they fit their own picture of Christ. In this, the Levites were to be tended to by the people for their ministry to the people. They had no inheritance of land like the other tribes, and they were dependent upon the people for the meeting of their needs.

Therefore, when the people ate their own tithes, as prescribed by Moses, they were to also remember the Levites and minister to them in an appropriate manner. The precept is not unlike Paul’s words to the Galatians –

“Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.”
-Galatians 6:16

With that, the passage is complete for the week. The main two thoughts that we can take away with us from it are that 1) there was to be a unity of worship by the people toward the Lord God because that worship anticipated the Person and work of Jesus Christ, and 2) in Christ’s fulfillment of these things, we now have the fulness of them in Him.

We no longer need to observe these – or any other – aspects of the law of Moses. We are to worship in Spirit and in truth because this is what Christ Jesus has ordained for His people.

In Him, we have the substance and not the shadow. In Him, we have the Antitype and not the type. In Him, we have unfettered access to God instead of a restrictive mode of worship that was ministered to by fallible people in an earthly location that has been swept clean several times in redemptive history.

Where Zion was plowed like a field, the Rock who is Christ has continued on without change. Let us remember this as we conduct our lives in His presence. Let us hold fast and not be swept back into legalism and bondage. This is the lesson of the law. Let us learn it and apply it to our walk with our Lord. May it be so.

Closing Verse: *“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”*
-Colossians 3:1-4

Next Week: Deuteronomy 12:20-32 *It would be a problem, I must admit; and so to this precept you must commit...* (You Shall Not Add to It nor Take Away from It) (41st Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

In the Place Which the Lord Your God Chooses

“You shall not at all do as we are doing here today—
Every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes—
For as yet you have not come to the rest and the inheritance
Which the LORD your God is giving you, that marvelous surprise

But when you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land
Which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit
And He gives you rest from all your enemies round about
So that you dwell in safety – a gift to you, and not by merit

Then there will be the place where the LORD your God
Chooses to make His name abide; in that land that you trod

There you shall bring all that I command you:
Your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the whole hoard
The heave offerings of your hand
And all your choice offerings which you vow to the LORD

And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God
You and your sons and your daughters too
Your male and female servants, and the Levite
-----who is within your gates

Since he has no portion nor inheritance with you

Take heed to yourself that you do not offer
Your burnt offerings in every place that you see
-----this you shall not do

But in the place which the LORD chooses, in one of your tribes
There you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there
-----you shall do all that I command you

“However, you may slaughter and eat meat within all your gates
Whatever your heart desires, according to
-----the Lord your God’s blessing
Which He has given you; the unclean and the clean may eat of it
Of the gazelle and the deer alike. And, have some salad
-----with dressing

Only you shall not eat the blood; this you shall not do
You shall pour it on the earth like water, as the Lord
-----has instructed you

You may not eat within your gates the tithe of your grain
Or your new wine or your oil, of the firstborn of your herd
-----so please understand
Or your flock, of any of your offerings which you vow
Of your freewill offerings, or of the heave offering of your hand

But you must eat them before the LORD your God
In the place which the LORD your God chooses
-----please be observant
You and your son and your daughter
Your male servant and your female servant

And the Levite who is within your gates
And you shall rejoice, as everyone understands
Before the LORD your God
In all to which you put your hands

Take heed to yourself that you do not forsake
-----but for him have an open hand

The Levite as long as you live in your land

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 12:20-32 **(You Shall Not Add to It nor Take Away from It)**

The passage today can – if we will allow it – provide us with some hints into a particular theology that was introduced right in the first pages of the Bible, and that will continue to be built upon throughout much of the rest of the Bible.

This is concerning the nature of the soul of man and how it comes into being. We'll see that as we go through the verses today. You might not think the verses we just read would even hint at that, but they do. And they also give us insights into a ritual we perform each week before leaving the church, that of the Lord's Supper.

To understand the importance of Jesus' words there, we need to understand the importance of His words in John 6. And to understand the reason for why He says what He says there, we need to understand precepts from all the way back here in the Law of Moses.

And so, when you think, "My mind is numbed over by all of this Old Testament stuff," you need to remember that without it, we wouldn't have an appreciation for, or a right understanding of, all of the stuff in the New Testament. It really is that simple.

Text Verse: *"And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.'*

²⁰ Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.'" Luke 22:19, 20

Moses spoke about the importance of not eating blood in last week's passage. He is going to speak about the importance of not eating blood again today, in even more detail. The precept predates the Law of Moses, and it is dealt with intimately in the law, not just here in Deuteronomy 12.

He is clear – no blood. And yet, in this passage from Luke, Jesus says that the cup we take is that of the New Covenant in His blood. Maybe He was just making an analogy to the cup itself. No, Matthew is more specific when he quotes the Lord, saying, "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28).

Matthew is speaking of the contents of the cup. We can ask ourselves if the contents are really His blood or not. The words He uses concerning the bread and the wine answer the question. He also held up the bread and said, “This is My body.

It is as plain as the nose on one’s face that He was holding bread and calling it His body. Thus, He is saying it is a metaphor for His body. Likewise, He was holding a cup of wine, demonstrating that it was a metaphor for His blood. The Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation fails, because it fails to take the word of the Lord as intended, thus twisting the meaning and purpose of the Lord’s Supper.

But why did Jesus bring this up at all? What is it about the blood that is so important for us to know? We saw some of that in Leviticus 17. We saw some of it last week, and we will see a bit more of it in the passage today. God is revealing truths to us in such things.

And so, don’t be overwhelmed with all of the laws, as if that is all the Lord is trying to convey. He is teaching us, through the law, of how we can more fully appreciate Jesus. In His coming, the law has met its purpose and it is fulfilled. In its fulfillment, it has met its end. This is the great part of being on this side of the cross. We can see what God was doing and why. And it is all about Jesus.

Such great truths as these are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. That It May Go Well with You (verses 20-27)

Moses is now going to repeat and expand upon what he said in the previous passage, especially what was said in verses 15-18. And there is good reason for this. Those verses said –

“However, you may slaughter and eat meat within all your gates, whatever your heart desires, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you; the unclean and the clean may eat of it, of the gazelle and the deer alike. ¹⁶ Only you shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it on the earth like water. ¹⁷ You may not eat within your gates the tithe of your grain or your new wine or your oil, of the firstborn of your herd or your flock, of any of your offerings which you vow, of your freewill offerings, or of the heave offering of your hand. ¹⁸ But you must eat them before the LORD your God in the place which the LORD your God chooses, you and your son and your daughter, your male

servant and your female servant, and the Levite who *is* within your gates; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God in all to which you put your hands.”
Deuteronomy 12:15-19

²⁰ **“When the LORD your God enlarges your border**

ki yakhriv Yehovah elohekha eth gebulekha – “When enlarges Yehovah your God your border.” It is in the second person singular, and this will continue until verse 32. Either Israel the nation, as a collective whole, is being addressed, or Moses is speaking to each person individually as if each person is an example of the whole.

The idea of extending the borders is probably twofold. First, it speaks of the initial conquest of Canaan, the people would move in and eventually spread out as the inhabitants were exterminated. But it also certainly speaks of even extending beyond the borders of Canaan proper.

The note of extending the borders of Canaan was first found in Exodus 34 when referring to the three annual pilgrim feasts. At that time, the Lord assured Israel that when they went to Jerusalem during those feasts, their homes and land would be secure.

It was a note requiring faith by the people. Obviously, if all of the people went to the place selected by the Lord to observe a weeklong feast, it would seem to be the most propitious time for their enemies to come in and plunder the land.

But the Lord’s words to the people ensured them that it would not be so. They simply had to be obedient to the charge, and respond in faith by coming as instructed –

“Three times in the year all your men shall appear before the Lord, the LORD God of Israel. ²⁴ For I will cast out the nations before you and enlarge your borders; neither will any man covet your land when you go up to appear before the LORD your God three times in the year. Exodus 34:23, 24

The wording even indicates that the expansion of the borders would act as its own buffer for Israel, allowing them to attend these feasts without fear. With that understood, Moses says...

²⁰ (con’t) **as He has promised you,**

Rather, it says, *kaasher dibber lakh* – “as has spoken to you.” This could be translated as “promised,” but it is to be considered a conditional promise if so. In Deuteronomy 11, it said –

“For if you carefully keep all these commandments which I command you to do—to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to hold fast to Him—²³ then the LORD will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess greater and mightier nations than yourselves.²⁴ Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the River Euphrates, even to the Western Sea, shall be your territory.

-Deuteronomy 11:22-24

The people are told that keeping the commandments would lead to driving out the nations and eventual expansion of the borders. Regardless of this, though, the point of what is being conveyed here concerns the people’s conduct while in the land, specifically in regard to the slaughter of animals for food. This is next seen...

²⁰ (con’t) **and you say, ‘Let me eat meat,’ because you long to eat meat,**

The Hebrew is more personal: *v’amarta okelah basar ki taaveh naphshekha l’ekol basar* – “and you say, ‘Let me eat meat,’ because desires your soul to eat meat.” There is the understanding that meat is something highly desired, even yearned after.

But there is also the understanding that animals were generally considered first and foremost for sacrificial use. The common word for altar (such as in verse 12:3) is *mizbeakh*, and it even conveys this thought. It signifies a slaughter place, coming from *zabakh* meaning to kill, offer, sacrifice, slay and so on. That then is derived from a primitive root signifying to slaughter an animal.

The very act of slaughtering an animal carried in the mind of the people the sense of a sacrifice. A sacrifice was something made on an altar, and the Lord wanted a single altar for the sacrifices and offerings presented to Him. This then made the situation untenable – especially if the borders have been expanded.

It would be unreasonable to make a journey of several days to simply have a meal consisting of meat. But it is understood that the soul of man craves after meat. As was seen in the previous sermon, while the people were camped around the tabernacle, they were required to bring any animal to be slaughtered before the Lord –

“Whatever man of the house of Israel who kills an ox or lamb or goat in the camp, or who kills *it* outside the camp, ⁴ and does not bring it to the door of the tabernacle of meeting to offer an offering to the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD, the guilt of bloodshed shall be imputed to that man. He has shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people, ⁵ to the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they offer in the open field, that they may bring them to the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, to the priest, and offer them *as* peace offerings to the LORD.” Leviticus 17:3-5

However, once in the land, and especially when the tribes had taken over their inheritances that were long distances from the tabernacle, there needed to be provisions that allowed them to deviate from this previous requirement, thus allowing them to eat meat unhindered by an impossible mandate.

Without Moses’ words of this chapter, there would be confusion concerning what to do, especially when some of the animals they were allowed to eat, being considered clean according to the law, were also not animals acceptable for offering to the Lord. As we noted last week, only those animals that typologically looked forward to Christ could be offered on the altar to the Lord.

So, what are the people to do in order to not sin against the Lord based on what the law already says, and based on what is already allowed to be eaten according to the Leviticus 11 dietary laws? The answer was partially stated in the previous verses, but it will be provided here with further detail. That begins with...

²⁰ (con’t) **you may eat as much meat as your heart desires.**

Moses tells the people that when they want meat, they can eat meat. The previous law was solely for the time in the wilderness. With the people dwelling in the land of Canaan, it would no longer apply. They would be spread out through the land and were allowed to freely do as they wished in this regard. As long as it conformed to the laws now to be set forth by Moses...

²¹ **If the place where the LORD your God chooses to put His name is too far from you,**

What is too far? It doesn’t say, and thus it is a free allowance to do according to what is reasonable. When we read the Bible, we may think of Israel as a small piece of land where the people could easily go to whatever spot the Lord determined to place His name.

However, there were no cars. Everything had to go on foot. Today, to travel to the next town, even 30 or 40 miles away, it would certainly seem unreasonable to start walking with your evening meal in order to first slaughter it there.

It would even be true with a ten-mile walk. By the time you walked an animal ten miles, offered it up, and then carried its meat back home, you would have to spend at least five or six hours, maybe more. In other words, what is being conveyed here is basically an allowance for any and all to conduct their affairs according to the permissible rules as they are set down.

This is the standard, and only the exceptions – which are actually the main commandments – are to be exactly carried out in accord with the law of the altar. This releases all of the people from the burdens that would otherwise be necessarily imposed on them for any and all consumption of animals.

21 (con't) then you may slaughter from your herd and from your flock

Here, it uses the root of the word for “altar,” *zabakh*, that was noted while looking at the last verse. It generally means “to slaughter for sacrifice.” However, here it speaks of simply slaughtering for food.

The accommodation and allowance are granted according to the word, and it applies to both animals of the herd and of the flock. These are animals generally associated with those acceptable for sacrifice upon the altar of the Lord.

And yet, they are authorized for general slaughter without any religious connotation assigned to them. If someone wanted T-bone steak for the evening, that is now made available to him.

21 (con't) which the LORD has given you,

asher natan Yehovah lekha – “which has given Yehovah you.” This is the same basic thought from verse 12:15 that said, “according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you.”

Moses is careful to acknowledge the Lord’s hand as being the source of the possessions of the people. It is thus to be to them a reminder that not only is this allowance now being spoken of as a grant to the people, but the very animal itself is a blessing from the Lord. Therefore, they are to treat the command with respect...

21 (con't) **just as I have commanded you,**

This refers to the words of the previous clause, “then you may slaughter from your herd and from your flock ... just as I have commanded you.” The allowance is granted by the Lord through Moses, and it thus removes any difficulty from the otherwise undiscernible notion of what to do.

If this provision were not made, it could be argued by the priests that every single such animal had to be brought to the tabernacle, regardless of the distance, and it would have had to be slaughtered according to the temple rights.

In this, there would have been obvious other difficulties, because the command from Leviticus 17 said that such animals were to be offered as peace offerings to the Lord. The laws of the peace offerings included the procedures for the sacrifice, removal of certain portions of the animal to be burnt on the altar, and so on.

However, Leviticus 7 (the peace offering of thanksgiving) included offering cakes mixed with oil, unleavened wafers anointed with oil, or cakes of blended flour mixed with oil, and leavened bread as well. Some of that was to be given to the priest.

And, along with that, the meat of the offering had to be eaten either on the same day it was offered (thanksgiving offering) or by the second day (voluntary offering).

And then, there is the command that the breast and the right thigh of the offering were to belong to the priests who offered them. Because of all of this, the priest’s job would never end.

And yet, if Moses didn’t include this provision, this is what would be expected. But once in the land, the previous command was set aside allowing for freedom concerning the matter. The animal could be slaughtered in whatever location the people lived...

21 (con't) **and you may eat within your gates as much as your heart desires.**

The Hebrew reads: *b'kol avvat naphshekha* – “in all desire your soul.” There is no limit placed upon the people, and there is no burden concerning the matter any longer.

It is a marvelous provision that, if overlooked, would have led to enormous confusion in the land. The animals of the flock and of the herd, with certain restrictions, were to be handled solely at the discretion of those who owned them. They were to be eaten...

²² Just as the gazelle and the deer are eaten, so you may eat them; the unclean and the clean alike may eat them.

The words here follow on after verse 12:15, which said, “the unclean and the clean may eat of it, of the gazelle and the deer alike.” As you can see, verse 12:15 is in the opposite order of verse 22. A more literal comparison of the two would be –

Indeed, just as are eaten the gazelle and the deer, so you may eat them; the unclean and the clean together [meaning in the same manner] may eat them. (22)

The unclean and the clean may it of it; as the gazelle and as the deer. (15)

Through the repetition, and through rearranging the wording, Moses is methodically eliminating any question of his intent. Nobody will be able to later question the law through some sort of manipulation of what he is saying.

There is complete freedom in this regard concerning these animals, but with certain exceptions. Some were noted in the previous passage last week. They are now reexplained again here. The first of those exceptions is next stated...

²³ Only be sure that you do not eat the blood,

raq khazeq l'bilti akol ha'dam – “Only! Be firm to not eat the blood.” This follows on after verse 16, expanding what was said there. However, there is a difference that conveys the meaning in a very strong manner –

Only the blood not you (all, plural) shall eat. (16)

Only be sure to not eat the blood. (23)

In verse 16 everything was in the singular except that one clause. There, it changed to the plural to highlight the importance of this. Moses highlights the matter again by skipping any pronoun. Thus, it is an all-encompassing prohibition. Further, he adamantly stresses the precept through the use of the words he has chosen. The reason for this is next explained...

²³ (con't) for the blood is the life;

ki ha'dam hu ha'nepshesh – “For the blood, it, the soul.” This is what was briefly explained in the previous chapter, and it is what needs to be highlighted again. The

blood is the vehicle of life, here called the *nephesh*, or the soul. For this reason, the Lord reserved all blood to Himself.

To eat the blood was to assimilate into oneself something which belonged to Him alone. It was therefore idolatrous to use it in any other way than designated by Him. Under certain circumstances, it could be used in the rites of the tabernacle as typologically anticipating Christ. Otherwise, it was to be poured out and covered with earth.

As the Bible says here that the blood *is* the soul, it gives us an insight into one of the doctrines of theology taught by Scripture – What is the soul, and where does it come from? There are several views on this, and this is the perfect time to learn them. Three basic views are:

The Preexistence View. Of this, there are two separate divisions. The first is the Platonic view which says the soul was never created. The second is the Christian, (created) view. This says the soul was created from eternity. Without going over all the details of it or reasons why, it is a heretical view.

The next is the Creation View. This assumes God directly creates a new individual soul for everyone born into this world. The body is generated through the parents, but the soul is created by God. It says that the soul is created at the moment of conception.

One reason for holding to this view is that all genetic information is present at conception. One reason why this view is wrong is that God completed His work of creation on Day 6. Another, obvious reason from this verse is that the blood, which carries all the genetic information, is called the soul right in this verse.

And then there is the Traducian View. This comes from the Latin word *tradux*, the branch of a vine. This says that each human being is a branch of the parents. Both soul and body are naturally generated by father and mother.

There is abundant biblical evidence for this third view. Eve was made from Adam, not separately. There is the fact noted by Paul that both males and females come from a union of males and females. Eve is called the mother of all the living. The Bible says that Adam had children in his image, thus natural generation is implied.

The Greek word for flesh, *sarx*, can mean both a physical body and a whole person with a body. Acts 17 says that all humans are derived from one man (“one blood”). Hebrews

says that Levi was in Abraham's loins, implying a physical transmission. In the Bible, the body in a womb is considered a person.

Paul says that all men sinned through one man, demonstrating that sin is transmitted by natural process – something that would not occur with a created soul. David even says that man is conceived in sin. And Jesus is said to come from the loins (or body) of David, demonstrating a genetic connection. And Paul shows that humans are a soul body unity. The soul is “naked” without the body.

All of these, and many other reasons from Scripture and from simply thinking the matter through, clearly demonstrate the importance of the precept once again being conveyed by Moses. As the blood *is* the soul, Moses, therefore, says...

²³ (con't) **you may not eat the life with the meat.**

As mentioned last week in some detail, to really understand this more fully, the sermon on Leviticus 17 should be referred to. Blood is given for atonement, it is the soul of the being, and so on. The prohibition here looks to the work of Christ, and the precept was never to be violated. Because of this, Moses again repeats words from verse 16, saying...

²⁴ **You shall not eat it;**

Again, Moses repeats the prohibition, and it is said in another way for the third time –

Only the blood not you (all, plural) shall eat. (16)

Only be sure to not eat the blood. (23)

No you (singular) shall eat it. (24)

There are no loopholes, there are no caveats, and the prohibition applies to each, to any, and to all. The blood is not to be eaten. The typology of Christ must never be marred. This is why, when He came, He was able to say the following –

“Then Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁵⁵ For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. ⁵⁶ He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.’” John 6:53-56

The life is in the blood. To attempt to gain life through any blood, except the blood of Christ, is to mar the significance of what Christ Jesus did. In participating in the Lord's supper – an obvious reference to His words in John 6 – we partake of the symbolism He speaks of. For any other blood...

²⁴ (con't) **you shall pour it on the earth like water.**

It is word for word and letter for letter identical to the corresponding clause in verse 12:16. If you missed the sermon, you'll have to go back and watch that. I was feeling really crummy on the day I typed this sermon, and I was in no mood to help you out of that responsibility. Your job this afternoon is to go back and get the details there. For now, Moses again says...

²⁵ **You shall not eat it,**

It is the exact same words that he just said to begin the previous verse.

²⁵ (con't) **that it may go well with you and your children after you,**

As with elsewhere when Moses uses this expression, its meaning is, "to the end purpose that it may go well with you." In other words, "There is the goal of things going well with you, and your children after you. The way to achieve that goal is to do those things that you are being instructed to do."

The implication is that in not doing what is instructed, things will not go well. What is anticipated will be withheld from the one who does such things. Charles Ellicott says, "Very possibly, the physical as well as the moral effect of the rule is contemplated here." I would disagree with that. The precept is moral in nature.

People all over the world drink blood and they live long lives. Those who get sick from it, do so just like with any other tainted food. The precept here, and the stress upon it, is not for physical health, but for upholding the sacred, moral, nature of the typology that anticipates the coming of Jesus Christ.

This is the importance of the precept, and this is the reason for the admonition concerning the good end purpose that comes...

²⁵ (con't) **when you do *what is* right in the sight of the LORD.**

ki taaseh ha'yashar b'ene Yehovah – “when you do the right in eyes Yehovah.” The Lord is watching, and His eyes are on the precepts He sets forth. Due to this precept having been repeatedly stated, it is an admonition that in not following through with it, the Lord will be greatly displeased. Therefore, to simply do what is instructed is worthy and commendable.

Despite the precept being thoroughly ingrained into the national psyche, Ezekiel 33:25 shows that the people willingly violated it. In this, things did not go well with them because they had done what was detestable for them to do.

For now, Moses returns to the general theme of the thought at hand, that of what to do with the animals owned by the people. He has given them allowances concerning slaughtering them within their own gates, and not at the tabernacle. However, after citing the first exception, that of eating the blood, he now mentions the second exception...

²⁶ **Only the holy things which you have,**

The word is *qodesh*, signifying apartness or sacredness. Thus, they are holy things. These include sacrifices and offerings such as are noted in Leviticus 18 –

“And the LORD spoke to Aaron: ‘Here, I Myself have also given you charge of My heave offerings, all the holy gifts of the children of Israel; I have given them as a portion to you and your sons, as an ordinance forever. ⁹ This shall be yours of the most holy things *reserved* from the fire: every offering of theirs, every grain offering and every sin offering and every trespass offering which they render to Me, *shall be* most holy for you and your sons. ⁰ In a most holy *place* you shall eat it; every male shall eat it. It shall be holy to you.

¹¹ “This also *is* yours: the heave offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel; I have given them to you, and your sons and daughters with you, as an ordinance forever. Everyone who is clean in your house may eat it.”

-Leviticus 18:8-11

In other words, those animals prescribed by law to be brought before the Lord. Among other things, these consisted of sacrifices, offerings, the firstborn and the tithes of animals. These were to be presented before the Lord and handled according to the law. They were not to be slaughtered within the gates of the people. Further...

²⁶ (con't) **and your vowed offerings,**

The *neder* is a promise or a thing promised. When an animal was vowed as an offering, it could not be slaughtered within the gates of the people. Like the holy things, they had to be presented to the Lord. As Moses next says...

26 (con't) you shall take and go to the place which the LORD chooses.

This means to where the tabernacle, and later the temple, were located. The idea, as noted last week, was to ensure oneness of the people in their religious life. In fact, between verse 5 and this verse, this phrase has been stated in one way or another six times.

In bringing all of these there, it was to keep the people from sacrificing inappropriately in any way. The responsibility for these things belonged solely with the priests and solely at the place the Lord chose.

27 And you shall offer your burnt offerings, the meat and the blood, on the altar of the LORD your God;

This is referring to the burnt offerings of Leviticus 1 –

“He shall kill the bull before the LORD; and the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall bring the blood and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar that *is by* the door of the tabernacle of meeting. ⁶ And he shall skin the burnt offering and cut it into its pieces. ⁷ The sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar, and lay the wood in order on the fire. ⁸ Then the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat in order on the wood that *is* on the fire upon the altar; ⁹ but he shall wash its entrails and its legs with water. And the priest shall burn all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.”

-Leviticus 1:5-9

27 (con't) and the blood of your sacrifices shall be poured out on the altar of the LORD your God, and you shall eat the meat.

This is referring to the sacrifices that were to be eaten by the people after being presented to the priests for their handling of the animal, and of the priests’ reception of the holy parts dedicated to the Lord.

For example, the tithed animals and the firstborn animals were sacrificed, but other than every third year, they were eaten by the people. In the third year, they were given away in their entirety. Such things were considered as law.

*The soul of the flesh is in the blood
And it is this then that makes atonement for you
Only through the precious, crimson flood
Can you be cleansed, spotless, and new*

*There at the Altar, the blood is cast
And it is this Sacrifice which will open the Door
Through it is new life; gone is the past
Through that death, comes life evermore*

*Be sure and know that there is but this One way
No other avenue can reconcile you to Me
But in coming through My Son, you start a new day
One which will continue unabated for all eternity*

II. Take Heed to Yourself (verses 28-32)

²⁸ Observe and obey all these words which I command you,

These words now take the reader back to verse 1 –

“These *are* the statutes and judgments which you shall be careful to observe in the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you to possess, all the days that you live on the earth.”

The command is to observe and to hear (meaning hearken to) everything contained in the chapter. It includes destroying the places where the inhabitants served their gods, destroying their altars, and so on. It also includes serving the Lord at the one place He would choose for His name, and everything that has been associated with that.

The entire chapter is given to ensure unity of worship by the people of Israel. In doing these things Moses notes...

^{28 (con't)} that it may go well with you and your children after you forever, when you do *what* is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God.

He again uses the same words as before, indicating that there is an end purpose that will be met in observing and hearkening to what they are told. Things will go well with them as long as they do, emphasized by the words *ad olam*, or “as far as the vanishing point.” *Olam* signifies out of time or mind, and thus it is a point that vanishes into the past or future.

As long as Israel did what was expected in the eyes of the Lord, things would continue to go well. Obviously, knowing the history of Israel, this does not mean forever. They failed to do what was right. In turn, things didn’t go well for them. Something more than the law is needed for them to come to such a state before the Lord.

For now, Moses returns to the general thought found in verses 2-4, that of the conduct of the nations they were to dispossess. There he told them to destroy the means and modes of worship they employed, and to not serve the Lord in those ways. Now, he says...

²⁹ “When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land,

Here, the synergistic (working together) relationship of the conquest is seen again. Moses says the Lord will cut off the nations, and yet he says, “which you go to dispossess, and you displace them.” The two are working as one, but Israel cannot work alone.

The idea is that Israel will dispossess them, but only because the Lord is there to cut them off from before Israel. But, because it is said that the Lord will cut them off, it means that He is the Source of their power, and their Source of power is greater than the nations they will face and the gods those nations worshipped. Therefore...

³⁰ take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them,

Moses brings a new word into Scripture, *naqash*. It is a verb meaning to entrap with a noose, or to catch by a snare. He is warning the people that, like an animal getting ensnared, so they will get ensnared if they are not diligent to pay heed. With this said, Moses goes on with the thought...

³⁰ (con’t) after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying,

Moses is relaying to them the stupidity of such a thing, and thus the just nature of any punishment meted out on them for such a thing. The Lord cut the people off, Israel went in to dispossess them and, in fact, displaced them, and yet the perverse question they may then ask concerning their gods is...

³⁰ (con't) **'How did these nations serve their gods?**

This is speaking of finding out the manner in which their worship was conducted. Verse 31 will show this is not speaking of serving other gods, but serving the Lord in the manner in which the other gods were served. In other words, it would be comparable to what Aaron did with the golden calf. He set up an idol and called it the Lord. Thus, he claimed to be worshipping the Lord in an unauthorized manner. Something similar is seen in 2 Kings 17 –

And it was so, at the beginning of their dwelling there, *that* they did not fear the LORD; therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which killed *some* of them. ²⁶ So they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, "The nations whom you have removed and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the rituals of the God of the land; therefore He has sent lions among them, and indeed, they are killing them because they do not know the rituals of the God of the land." ²⁷ Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, "Send there one of the priests whom you brought from there; let him go and dwell there, and let him teach them the rituals of the God of the land." 2 Kings 17:25-27

Moses is telling Israel that this is not to be considered, and it is a trap that will bring harm, not the other way around. Because of this, they were not to say...

³⁰ (con't) **I also will do likewise.'**

The means and mode of worship for the Lord have been established through the law. To serve Him as the nations served their gods would be an abomination to the Lord, and they were never to follow such practices. They were to stick to the rites and rituals set forth before them in the law itself.

To ensure this would be so, Moses warns them now, in advance, that no other path was to be considered...

³¹ **You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods;**

This tells us that Moses was not speaking of worshipping the other gods, but of worshipping the Lord as the previous peoples worshipped their gods.

It is the same idea as was seen at the beginning of the chapter. Moses instructed them to destroy all such items of worship. In conclusion, he said, “You shall not worship the Lord your God *with* such *things*.” The call here is for unity of worship towards the Lord.

And the reason for this is – as always – typology. The people were given unity of worship because it is unity of worship given by the Lord in anticipation of the coming of Christ. The details anticipate Him and His ministry. Only in Christ is God pleased with man’s worship, and so Israel was to reflect that – not in the law itself, but in the typology it displayed.

And so, until His coming, Israel was to worship in anticipation of His coming. Anything else is an abomination, because it is a false manner of worship invented to serve a false god, such as...

³¹ (con’t) for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.

This is how the nations served their gods at times, whether to Molech or other supposed gods. It eventually did become a practice of Israel. So vile is the practice that the Lord says that such a thing had never entered into His mind –

“And they have turned to Me the back, and not the face; though I taught them, rising up early and teaching *them*, yet they have not listened to receive instruction. ³⁴ But they set their abominations in the house which is called by My name, to defile it. ³⁵ And they built the high places of Baal which *are* in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through *the fire* to Molech, which I did not command them, nor did it come into My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.” Jeremiah 32:33-35

For such sins, and because of the attitude of the people, there was eventually no remedy left. The Lord destroyed them, and they were exiled to Babylon. They failed to heed, but Moses ends the chapter as it began on a note that Israel must be careful to observe the statutes and judgments set before them...

³² “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it;

In this clause alone in today's passage the words switch to the second person plural – "Whatever I command you (all), you (all) are to be careful to observe it." This makes it absolutely certain that Moses penned this.

Anyone else would have carefully followed in the singular, but Moses has revealed the word of the Lord, and it is conveyed to all of the people. They were to hear the word and then they were to hearken unto it. Moses felt at liberty to speak to the individual, to speak to the nation, and to speak to all of the people at any given time in order for them to hopefully pay heed. And to finish off the verse and the chapter, he says...

***32 (fin) you shall not add to it nor take away from it.**

This was conveyed to the people in verse 4:2. There, he added in the reason for it, saying, "that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." In that verse, it was in the second person plural. Here it is in the second person singular.

Moses has conveyed the thought to all of the people, and he has conveyed it to each of them. There is to be no tolerance in violating the precept at any time, and by anyone. This is because it is impossible to keep the law when the law has been altered. To add to it will violate it, and to take from it will violate it.

With that understood, we can stand back before closing and know the same is true concerning the word of God as a whole. To add to it is to add in what man has decided is right. To take away from it is to determine that what God has decided is wrong.

This cannot be tolerated. The word is a unified whole. Everything recorded in it is recorded for the people of God to know and understand the mind of God and His intentions for His people, even if all of it does not apply to whatever people at a particular time.

In other words, the Law of Moses is written for us in the church – to understand what God has done in redemptive history. Without it, there would be a void in our understanding of His workings. And yet, the Law of Moses does not apply to us today – in any way, shape, or form. It is annulled through the work of Christ.

In this, we have entered a new dispensation, that of grace. We are to live according to the word of the Lord that applies to us at this time. To further understand this, the synoptic gospels were written to record Christ's life under the law, and of His fulfillment

of that law. In those books, He speaks to Israel under the law, and – at times – in anticipation of the kingdom age promised to them.

He is not speaking to the church in the synoptic gospels. And yet, the information in the synoptic gospels is necessary for us to understand what He did, how it leads us into the current dispensation, and what will happen to Israel in the future.

As long as we keep our categorical boxes straight, our doctrine will be sound, and we will not make the major errors that so many make in their theology when they mix the boxes. We are to not add to the word, nor are we to take from it. But we are also to take it in its proper context at all times – not coopting what belongs to others at other times in redemptive history.

Today’s passage is for our instruction in theology, but it is not intended for application in our lives. And yet, it is intended for us to continually find hints of Jesus as we search it out. As long as we are doing that, we are in the sweet spot – because He is the sweetest spot of all. He is our hope and our anticipation. He is the fulfillment of everything Moses spoke of. He is the release for Israel from their bondage. And He is the Savior of both Jew and Gentile because of what He did under this impossible body of law. He is Jesus.

Closing Verse: *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 1 Timothy 3:16, 17*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 13.1-5 This is how you are to tread – if you are a faithful son... (You Shall Walk After the Lord Your God, Part I) (42nd Deuteronomy sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

You Shall Not Add to It nor Take Away from It

“When the LORD your God enlarges your border
As He has promised you, and you say, ‘Let me eat meat’
Because you long to eat meat
You may eat as much meat as your heart desires, so tasty and sweet

If the place where the LORD your God chooses
To put His name is too far from you
Then you may slaughter from your herd
And from your flock which the LORD has given you
-----so, you may do

Just as I have commanded you, as I did impart
And you may eat within your gates as much as desires your heart

Just as the gazelle and the deer are eaten, so you may eat them
The unclean and the clean alike may eat them
----- without any haw or hem

Only be sure that you do not eat the blood
For the blood is the life
You may not eat the life with the meat
Or between us there shall be strife

You shall not eat it; you shall pour it on the earth like water
You shall not eat it, that it may go well with you
And your children after you
When you what is right in the sight of the LORD do

Only the holy things which you have, and your vowed offerings
You shall take and go to the place which the LORD chooses
-----to where He gives His approval nod
And you shall offer your burnt offerings
The meat and the blood, on the altar of the LORD your God

And the blood of your sacrifices
Shall be poured out on the altar of the LORD your God
And you shall eat the meat
And enjoy life upon the land that you trod

Observe and obey all these words which I command you
That it may go well with you and your children after you forever
When you do what is good and right in the sight
Of the LORD your God, failing His precepts never

“When the LORD your God cuts off from before you
The nations which you go to dispossess, bringing on them mayhem
And you displace them and dwell in their land
Take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them

After they are destroyed from before you
And that you do not inquire after their gods, saying
“How did these nations serve their gods?
I also will do likewise. It shall not be so, as I am conveying

You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way
For every abomination to the LORD which He hates
-----raising His ire
They have done to their gods
For they burn even their sons and daughters to their gods in the fire

“Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it
-----to this you shall commit
You shall not add to it nor take away from it

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 13:1-5 (You Shall Walk After the Lord Your God, Part I)

How is it that people get so easily swayed from what is right and proper? And how can people be kept from being cunningly deceived by others? The answer is to know what is going on in the world around you in relation to whatever subject is being presented.

If a person doesn't want to be deceived concerning financial matters, he will make himself aware of whatever financial issue is being presented to him. It could be buying real estate in an area he had never visited. If such is the case, he would be wise to make a visit there before buying in order to make himself aware of what he was getting into. The smooth talker is there to cheat otherwise.

Such is true with ten thousand other things you may be presented with during your life. If you are unaware of the events surrounding you concerning a matter, you are bound to be duped.

In 1504, Christopher Columbus was able to use an eclipse to convince the natives of Jamaica that his God was angry with them because they had stopped giving him and his men help and supplies. In this, they were in real trouble and desperate need.

In order to make the natives more compliant in this regard, he consulted his astronomical tables and found that there would be a total eclipse of the moon on February 29th of the year. This was based on the time in Nuremberg, Germany, but Columbus was aware of things concerning the subject at hand, and he was able to calculate when it would occur over them.

In knowing this, he then threatened the locals by saying his God would take away the moon as a sign of His anger at their lack of help, setting the time it would occur. It did. The moon disappeared from the sky. During that time, Columbus said he would go into his cabin to pray that God would return the moon to them.

What he actually did was to watch the hourglass until the forty-eight minutes of eclipse were up. Just as the moon was supposed to emerge, he came back out and told them that he had effectively convinced God that He should forgive the locals. His ploy worked, and from that point on, they received all the supplies they needed. Eventually, they were picked up and taken back to Spain.

Text Verse: *“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. ² And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. ³ By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.” 2 Peter 2:1-3*

Based on how you take what he did, Columbus’ actions could be considered the work of a false prophet. Probably not, but it was cunningly deceptive. However you look at it, it was the effort of a man who was aware of how things worked in the natural world. False prophets also know how things work, and they exploit those things in order to deceive others in various ways.

A true false prophet (which sounds odd, doesn’t it) is a person who speaks in the name of the true God but who twists, misuses, and misrepresents what the true God has revealed. This may be (and usually is) for his own personal gain or exaltation. It may be that he is a perverse person that just wants to see others harmed.

False prophets also speak in the name of false gods to turn people away from the true God. In the end, the Bible speaks of such things, and of such people. They are out there, they have their own agenda, and they use the lack of understanding of God’s people concerning what is going on in the world around them in relation to what He has presented – meaning what is stated in His word – against them.

When one is uninformed, unschooled, or misdirected concerning the word of God, that person is open to whatever false teaching comes his way. This is a certain truth that is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Lord Your God is Testing You (verses 1-3)

In our passage today is a short chiasm that will help us better understand the expectations of the Lord –

Deuteronomy 13:2-5 – You Shall Walk After the Lord Your God
Contrasts and Confirmations (12/21/2020)

- a. he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us walk after other gods’
 - b. which you have not known (unknown)
 - c. you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams
 - d. for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul
 - x. You shall walk after the LORD your God
 - d. fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him
 - c. But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death
 - b. the LORD your God (known)
- a. to entice you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk

The very last words of Chapter 12 said, “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.” That serves as an introduction and a warning to what is now stated. It is the false prophets and false teachers who are very likely to add to, or to take from, this word as given by God. And so, they are now addressed.

The chapter before us logically divides itself into three separate sections. Each (verses 1, 6, and 12) begins with the word *ki*, translated by the NKJV as “if,” in each instance. Such an event would then be possible, but not certain. In other words, “Suppose this was to happen,” or “Should this come about.”

Young’s translation takes it as a certainty. He translates each instance as “when.” In other words, “When this comes about.” Looking back from our time, and knowing the history of Israel, using the word “when” certainly fits well.

But, the words now are based on what was stated in the previous verse. Moses has been admonishing the people to observe what he says, holding fast to the unity of worship towards the Lord within the entire community by avoiding idolatry, pagan rituals, and the customs of those they will dispossess. Therefore, one would think Moses’ intent is, “Should this happen, you are to do this.”

And yet, reading Moses’ words in the Song of Moses of Chapter 32, he already knows the people’s proclivity towards going astray, and so translating it as “when” very well may be what is on his mind even as he is speaking to the people. “When this happens, you are to do this.”

If I were to choose a word that would convey both intents of what is presented, it would be the word “though.” Thus, it is a challenge to right conduct and a rather certain fact that such conduct will be needed – “Though this happens, you are to do this.”

This may seem like over-analyzing a single word, but it is important to the overall scope of what is being conveyed. The people are shown challenges that must be faced by any or by all, and they are being warned in advance of how to face them. With this understood, we enter into the content of Chapter 13...

¹“If there arises among you a prophet

ki yaqum b’qirbekha navi – “Though arises in your (singular) midst a prophet.” As the pronoun is singular, Moses may be speaking to Israel collectively, or to each person individually. In the end, the outcome will be the same. However, the words “in your midst” favor the thought of him speaking to the nation collectively.

The *navi*, or prophet, is a word coming from the verb *nava*, meaning to prophesy. Moses is not saying this is something either unusual now, or that will be unusual in the future. Rather, being the Lord’s people, it is an expected thing. However, care must be taken in accepting the prophet’s words. This will be noted.

The *navi* has already been seen, and the position will be common in Israel. Abraham was noted as a prophet in Genesis 20. Aaron was designated as Moses’ prophet in Exodus 7. And the Lord openly said that prophets would be among Israel in Numbers 12 –

“Hear now My words:

If there is a prophet among you,
I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision;
I speak to him in a dream.

⁷ Not so with My servant Moses;
He *is* faithful in all My house.

⁸ I speak with him face to face,
Even plainly, and not in dark sayings;
And he sees the form of the LORD.

Why then were you not afraid
To speak against My servant Moses?” Numbers 12:6-8

One of the things about the prophets was that just because they uttered a word of prophecy, it did not mean that he understood all of what he was prophesying. This is seen in the words of Peter –

“Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you, ¹¹ searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. ¹² To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.” 1 Peter 1:10-12

In Scripture, prophets are seen to receive their prophecies in various ways, one of which was just seen from Numbers 12. That is again revealed by Moses with the words...

¹ (con't) **or a dreamer of dreams,**

o kholem khalom – “Or dreamer of dreams.” The verb is *khalam* and it has two separate meanings. One is to be healthy or strong. The other is to dream. Probably the verse that ties the two thoughts together the best is that of Psalm 126:1. There the psalm says –

“When the LORD brought back the captivity of Zion,
We were like those who dream.

² Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
And our tongue with singing.

Then they said among the nations,
“The LORD has done great things for them.”

³ The LORD has done great things for us,
And we are glad.” Psalm 126:1-3

If one were to substitute the word “dream” with “healthy” the two thoughts merge – “We were like those who *were made* healthy.” It is as if life were a dream state when they were brought back to their precious homeland. This state of receiving a prophecy is referred to by Elihu, a man living outside of the covenant people –

“For God may speak in one way, or in another,
Yet *man* does not perceive it.

¹⁵ In a dream, in a vision of the night,

When deep sleep falls upon men,
While slumbering on their beds,
¹⁶ Then He opens the ears of men,
And seals their instruction.
¹⁷ In order to turn man *from his* deed,
And conceal pride from man,
¹⁸ He keeps back his soul from the Pit,
And his life from perishing by the sword.” Job 33:14-18

This, however, does not make such a person a prophet, nor should it be considered as such among those in the church. The prophetic word of God is written, it is complete, and it is sealed. There is no need for more prophecies or prophets. This is explicitly stated by the author of Hebrews –

“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ² has in these last days spoken to us by *His Son*, whom He has appointed heir of all things.” Hebrews 1:1, 2

The implication of the writer’s words is that God no longer speaks in those various ways. He has spoken, the word has been given, and we should expect no further word.

This does not stop a countless stream of people from making their false prophecies on a daily basis. Nor does it stop people who are unschooled in the word, or unwilling to accept the word as God’s full and final revelation of Himself, from listening to such people.

I would hope for better for those who hear what the word says, and who accept that what it says is sufficient for their life, doctrine, and conduct. And if you feel differently about this, you’re entitled to be wrong. Nobody is stopping you, and it is your walk with the Lord that will be harmed.

The transmission of false prophecies, that Moses will now warn against, is something found in abundance in the Old Testament, but most especially in Jeremiah. In Jeremiah, he combines the two thoughts, prophecy and dreams, into one warning, such as –

“The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream;
And he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully.
What *is* the chaff to the wheat?” says the LORD.
²⁹ “*Is not My word like a fire?*” says the LORD,

“And like a hammer *that* breaks the rock in pieces?

³⁰ “Therefore behold, I *am* against the prophets,” says the LORD, “who steal My words every one from his neighbor. ³¹ Behold, I *am* against the prophets,” says the LORD, “who use their tongues and say, ‘He says.’ ³² Behold, I *am* against those who prophesy false dreams,” says the LORD, “and tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies and by their recklessness. Yet I did not send them or command them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all,” says the LORD.

-Jeremiah 23:28-32

To analyze all that encompasses prophets, prophecies, dreams, and visions would take an analysis of the entire Bible, because the entire Bible is a book of revealing the mind of God as conveyed in the prophetic utterances of God through His people. And along with that, there are other ways God reveals Himself to them. That is found in the next words...

¹ (con’t) **and he gives you a sign or a wonder,**

Here, Moses refers to things already seen – the *oth*, or sign, and the *mopheth*, or wonder. The *oth* is probably derived from *uth*, which is a verb indicating consent or agreement. The *oth* is not something in and of itself. Rather, it is something that stands representative of something else. For example, the first time the word is used is in Genesis 1 –

“Then God said, ‘Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; ¹⁵ and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth’; and it was so.” Genesis 1:14, 15

In saying this, the Lord was indicating that stars had varied purposes. The “seasons,” “days,” and “years,” is understandable. They mark out the times of life, and we can use them to determine things – like when to plant, when it will get cold, and so on.

However, they also are given by God to point to something else. That is seen in Scripture in the Star of Bethlehem. It was something given to reveal that Messiah had been born. Circumcision is also an *oth*, or sign. It stands representative of something else – meaning the cutting of the sin nature in man. It is thus a picture of the hope of Messiah.

The *mopheth*, or wonder, comes from *yaphah*, or beautiful. Thus, it is something that is conspicuous, like a miracle. It is an open demonstration of something that captures the

attention. Unlike the sign that points to something else, it is the thing itself. Should someone give a sign or produce a wonder...

² and the sign or the wonder comes to pass,

u-ba ha'oth v'ha'mopheth – “and comes the sign and the wonder.” The words here mean that the prophet or dreamer of dreams gives a sign that then is fulfilled, or he actually produces a wonder. There is no doubt of it. What does that mean? Well, it depends on the next words of that person...

² (con't) of which he spoke to you,

The idea here is that a person could make a claim such as “This is a sign to you that you will win the lottery tomorrow,” and it comes to pass. Or the person might do something like a magic trick that seems impossible to have been anything but of divine origin. In such an instance, one might be persuaded that this guy really has a connection with the divine. Such is seen in Acts 8:9-11 –

“But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, ¹⁰ to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, “This man is the great power of God.” ¹¹ And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time.”

There is a difference between how people approach such things, and the distinction should be made. Some perform what we call today “magic.” They make no claims that they are in connection with the divine. Instead, they devise skilled forms of misdirection and challenge you to figure out how they did what they did.

And then, there are those who claim – like Simon – that they have a great power or divine ability to do the things they do. In this, they elevate what they are doing above the natural world to the supernatural. It is such as this that will be the ones...

² (con't) saying, ‘Let us go after other gods’—

lemor nelekah akhare Elohim akherim – “saying, let us walk after gods other.” It is an important contrast to what will be said in verse 4 – “You shall walk after the Lord your God.”

In such a case, when the thing happens that he said would happen, he then says, “This power came from this god or that god. He is the one we should be following.” Such a person may even claim he is divine, having the ability to tap into the universal conscience, the universe’s power, or even a power that is separate and above the created order itself.

In Daniel 2 (and elsewhere) the king had a dream. He wanted to know the interpretation of the dream and so he called an entire group of people like this, defined as “the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans.”

They claimed to have the ability to perform supernatural deeds, or that they had the ability to tap into the supernatural or even the divine. The king obviously questioned this, and so instead of just asking for the meaning of his dream that he described to them, he asked them to first tell him what dream he had, and then to explain its meaning to him. In a comedy of back and forth waffling on their part, the king saw through their supposed claims –

“I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: ⁹if you do not make known the dream to me, *there is only* one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation.”

¹⁰The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, “There is not a man on earth who can tell the king’s matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has *ever* asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. ¹¹*It is* a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.” Daniel 2:8-11

As stupid as falling for this in the first-place sounds, how guilty are we (meaning society in general or any one of us) of being tempted in this way – tarot cards, hearing someone say that “Allah accomplished the victory,” or simply believing a prosperity preacher (who is – by default – preaching a false gospel).

Daniel and his three friends with him could have joined ranks with these people, and they would have been found as false as the others were. Instead, they trusted in the Lord to provide an answer to the king’s demand.

They petitioned the Lord, and the Lord provided what they needed, telling what dream the king had, and then properly explaining it to him. In this, Daniel took no credit for

what he had received, he rightly pointed out that the others were unable to receive what he had received, and that it was God who provided the answer, implying that those charlatans had no connection with God –

“The secret which the king has demanded, the wise *men*, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. ²⁸ But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days.” Daniel 2:27, 28

In this, Daniel did what was right and proper. He exalted the God of Israel, whom he knew. Of this precept for Israel, Albert Barnes rightly states –

“The Lord had said, ‘Thou shalt have none other gods but Me.’ A prophet is here supposed who invites the people ‘to go after other gods.’ To such a one no credit is under any circumstances to be given, even should he show signs and wonders to authenticate his doctrine. The standing rule of faith and practice had been laid down once for all - that the people were to hold fast. The prophet who propounded another rule could only be an impostor.”

Moses now warns against those who would do otherwise and follow after false gods...

^{2 (con't)} **which you have not known—‘and let us serve them,’**

Such things as this, or a million other possibilities, happen on any given day. They happen to believers and unbelievers alike. We see the incredible, and we respond to it based on our faith in the Lord, in our trust in who He is, or on how well versed we are in His word and in how willing we are to hold solely to that same word.

For many, the connection with the true God does not exist. For others, their grounding in the faith, or their knowledge of the word, is so minimal that they are swayed from what is right. In this, they follow what that false prophet recommends, going after his false gods to serve them. But the word is spoken...

³ **you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams,**

The Hebrews is emphatic: “that prophet or that dreamer of dreams.” It is intended to set such a person off from one who is a true prophet or who receives a true dream. A true prophet is to be listened to, but the false prophet is to be ignored.

There is a term commonly used among Christian apologists known as syncretism. In short, it refers to the amalgamation of different religions, cultures, and schools of thought into one religious expression. A simple example of it is the mixing of Roman Catholicism with Santeria. Santeria is defined by Wikipedia –

“Santería, also known as Regla de Ocha, Regla Lucumí, or Lucumí, is an African diasporic religion that developed in Cuba between the 16th and 19th centuries. It arose through a process of syncretism between the traditional Yoruba religion of West Africa and the Roman Catholic form of Christianity.”

This isn't unique within the Roman Catholic Church. Rather, their adherents are found around the world to merge with cults of all types. And even what is considered mainstream Roman Catholicism is so tainted with heresies that it is – for the most part – actually Christian in name only.

The doctrines of Christ are taught to varying degrees, but they are so completely intermingled with the unholy and profane that very few adherents truly follow Jesus Christ alone. There are some, but they are a small minority.

Whether the RCC throws in Mary, the saints, and even the pope as intermediate access points to God, or whether the charismatic movement mingles the supposed divine utterances of prophecies and angelic tongues – making those who claim such things intermediaries to the divine – or even to the evangelical movement when it claims a special access to riches for its adherents through the prosperity gospel – all such claims are false, they are damaging, and they pervert what is pure and good that stems from the Lord alone.

Though what Moses is referring to here is a precept of the Old Covenant, the truth it conveys is something that is rightly to be applied to our own walk at all times. We are not to listen to such a prophet or dreamer of dreams, and we are to hold fast to the Lord and His word alone. We are not to accept that which is false, even if it is mixed with some truth.

But one might ask, “If this person was aware of, or actually made to happen, the sign or wonder which came to pass, then how do we know it wasn't that “other god” that did it?” Moses tells them that such is not the case. Rather...

^{3 (con't)} **for the LORD your God is testing you**

Here, the words go to the second person plural “for Yehovah your (all) God is testing you (all).” This will continue until the middle of verse 5. It is not that the entire congregation will be swayed, but that the people within the congregation will be. God is testing them in order...

³ (con’t) **to know whether you love the LORD your God**

The verb is a participle and gives the sense of that which is enduring and ongoing: *ladaat hayishkem ohavim eth Yehovah elohekem* – “to the end purpose of knowing you are loving Yehovah your God.”

This is important because it says in 1 Kings 3:3 that Solomon loved the Lord and walked in the statutes of his father David. However, in 1 Kings 11, it then says –

“But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, *and* Hittites— ²from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, “You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.” Solomon clung to these in love. ³And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. ⁴For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as *was* the heart of his father David.” 1 Kings 11:1-3

Solomon loved the Lord, but it didn’t continue. He wasn’t “loving the Lord.” This type of attitude is what the test of the Lord concerning such false prophets is intended to reveal.

It is the Lord who called Israel. It is the Lord who established Israel. It is the Lord who led Israel. It is the Lord who has done all things for Israel, and it is Israel who have been called as His people. As this is so, their allegiance is to be to Him alone. The test for all is whether they were loving towards Him...

³ (con’t) **with all your heart and with all your soul.**

One can love in varying degrees. What the Lord calls for is to love Him entirely, both with the intellect and reason, and also with that which animates the person in his walk before the Lord.

To love the Lord with one's intellect (the heart), but without the soul is a person who is fickle – expressing love in mental assent, but whose actions fail to work in accord with that love. It would be the husband who loves his wife, but still chases other women.

To love the Lord with one's soul (that which animates the person in deed and action) but not with the intellect, is a person who is prideful, trusting that his actions are more important than truly seeking the essence of the Lord as its own prize.

A person who loves with the heart and the soul is a person who is both in love with the Lord, and who remains in love with the Lord – in mind, in action, and in continued pursuit. Even unto death, he is – and he will remain – faithful to Him.

The way to obtain this precious state before the Lord is next stated by Moses...

*Is this a word from the Lord? How can I know?
What if this preacher is just snuffing me?
Is his word true, or is it untoward? Even so...
To this puzzle, what is the key?*

*How can I know if the words are false or if they are true?
Please, what is the answer, where is the key?
From where comes the answer? What shall I do?
What is the resolution that is escaping me?*

*Wait! Are you telling me that really is the key?
Just read the word for myself? Is that what I am to do?
Yes! Why didn't that already dawn on me?
Take it off the shelf and read it through and through!*

*Yes, I shall take it off the shelf, reading it through and through
If that is what it takes, that is what I shall do!*

II. From the House of Bondage (verses 4 & 5)

⁴You shall walk after the LORD your God

This is set in contrast to verse 2 where the false prophet said, "Let us walk after other gods." Here Moses says that they are to rather "walk after the Lord your God." As always, in the Bible, to "walk" signifies the conduct of one's life and actions.

The path the Lord leads on, they are to follow. The precepts that He gives, they are to apply to their lives. And so on. Also...

⁴ (con't) **and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.**

The Hebrew is more personal and emphatic, and the last verb bears a strong emphasis – “and Him you all fear, and His commandments you all keep, and His voice you all obey; and Him you all shall serve, and to Him you all (*shall surely*) hold fast.”

The same word used here, translated as “hold fast,” *dabaq*, is used of Solomon when he “clung” to his foreign wives in love. In this, he was seduced away from the Lord to their false gods in the same manner that a false prophet will seduce away a person to following his false gods.

The admonition is to devote everything that comprises the person into a heartfelt, intellectual, and physical pursuit of the Lord, clinging to Him with every fiber of one’s being. A review of the New Testament epistles reveals that the exact same expectations are given to us toward the Lord Jesus as are laid down by Moses now.

We are to walk in Christ (Colossian 2:6), we are to fear God (Colossians 3:22), we are to keep His commandments (1 Corinthians 7:19), we are to obey His gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:8), we are to serve Him (1 Corinthians 7:35), and we are to hold fast to Him (Hebrews 10:23).

It is through these things that we will be kept from being turned aside from Him by false prophets, or from any other distractions that will lead us down the wrong path.

Unlike the false prophets of today, however, Israel had another obligation levied upon them that was intended to keep such people from constantly arising and leading the people astray...

⁵ **But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death,**

Like verse 3, there is an emphasis in these words, “But that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams.” The true prophet is contrasted to the false. The true prophet was to live while the false was to be put to death. The contrast was important for Jeremiah –

“So the princes and all the people said to the priests and the prophets, ‘This man does not deserve to die. For he has spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God.’

“Then certain of the elders of the land rose up and spoke to all the assembly of the people, saying: ¹⁸ ‘Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spoke to all the people of Judah, saying, “Thus says the LORD of hosts:

‘Zion shall be plowed *like* a field,
Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins,
And the mountain of the temple
Like the bare hills of the forest.’

¹⁹ Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah ever put him to death? Did he not fear the LORD and seek the LORD’s favor? And the LORD relented concerning the doom which He had pronounced against them. But we are doing great evil against ourselves.”” Jeremiah 26:17-19

On the other hand, Elijah did according to the word of the Lord after he had proven the prophets of Baal false –

“And Elijah said to them, ‘Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!’ So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there.” 1 Kings 18:40

Score a big one for the winners! Such a false prophet was to be put to death...

^{5 (con’t)} **because he has spoken in order to turn *you* away from the LORD your God,**

Here is a new word in Scripture, *sarah*. It means turning aside, rebellion, defection, apostasy and so on. It comes from the verb *sur*, meaning to turn aside.

For Israel, in turning to a false god, the people had – by default – apostatized from following the true God. In this, any such attempt to do so was to be deemed a capital offense.

^{5 (con’t)} **who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of bondage,**

As with every passage relevant to the relationship of the people to the Lord, Moses reminds them of why they were so obligated to Him, stating that it is He who brought them out of Egypt, redeeming them from the house of bondage.

With this in mind, it cannot go unstated that this is an exact parallel to what Christ spiritually did for us. Egypt pictures bondage to sin. Christ Jesus brought us out from that, having redeemed us from that house of bondage.

Because of this, we have our own obligation to respond in the same manner to Him as Israel did to Yehovah. He is the same God in both instances, and whether physical or spiritual bondage, we have been brought out.

The major difference is that the Lord will judge the false prophets. Individually, we need to worry about our own relationship and let Him deal with the others. As a church, we are to weed out the false teachers and expel them from our gatherings.

Either way, Israel or the church, the false prophets have a set goal which is...

^{5 (con't)} **to entice you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk.**

With the words of this clause, it returns to the second person singular. The intent of the false prophet is to turn Israel, the people, away from the Lord.

What is said here reflects the same sentiment that Paul expressed towards the Galatians. False teachers had come into the church and were attempting to get them to go back under the law of Moses, thus rejecting the finished work of Christ. In this, Paul said, "They zealously court you, *but* for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them" (Galatians 4:17).

The goal of the false prophet, false apostle, or false teacher is *l'hadikhakha min ha'derek* – "to entice you from the way." It is always to a perverse path, and it always leads to a new form of bondage. The people can walk in the freedom of the Lord, or they can walk in the bondage offered by the false prophet.

Nothing has changed from the time of the law until now in this regard. The false teachers of the church want control over the flock. It is a control of power, of money, of sex, or of the very souls of the people they mislead, but it is not the freedom offered by the Lord.

If the teachers of the church want the best for the church, they will properly teach the core doctrines of the faith – freedom from the law, salvation by grace through faith with nothing else added, liberty in personal conduct and yet living in a proper and circumspect manner, eternal salvation, and so on.

Anything else is a false teaching intended to bind the saints once again into a life that lacks the true joy and eternal hope found in Jesus Christ. For those who teach otherwise, Moses says (and certainly what applies to the true church today as well)...

***5 (fin) So you shall put away the evil from your midst.**

For Israel, it was a large pile of stones to be hurled at the offender until he was dead. For the church, it is to reject false ideology, expel false teachers, and to have nothing to do with the darkness they teach. We must hold fast to our values in Christ, and we are to pursue Him and His word with all of our hearts and souls. To the glory of God.

Of this passage today, Adam Clarke says the following which must be corrected –

“God permits such impostors to arise to try the faith of his followers, and to put their religious experience to the test; for he who experimentally knows God cannot be drawn away after idols. He who has no experimental knowledge of God, may believe any thing. Experience of the truths contained in the word of God can alone preserve any man from Deism, or a false religion. They who have not this are a prey to the pretended prophet, and to the dreamer of dreams.” Adam Clarke

Clarke says, “he who experimentally knows God cannot be drawn away after idols.” I disagree. Solomon experimentally knew God. That is evident from his meeting with the Lord in 1 Kings 3 and again in 1 Kings 6. It is again evident from another meeting with Him in 1 Kings 9. Despite these occurrences, Solomon fell away to the point where this is recorded –

“For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. ⁶ Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as *did* his father David. ⁷ Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that *is* east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. ⁸ And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.” 1 Kings 11:5-8

Clarke says that “Experience of the truths contained in the word of God can alone preserve any man from” such things. This is true, but only to a point. What is correct is that complete, continued, and constant experience of the truths of God will do so. And even that must be mingled with a purposeful pursuit of the Lord as revealed there, in a wholehearted devotion to that word.

Without these things being applied to our walk, it is not a maybe, but a certainty, that we too will fall away from what is expected of us as we live out our lives in His presence.

When I say a complete experience of the truths contained in the word, I mean reading it – from cover to cover. I mean knowing it in all it says. I mean keeping it in the context of what is being said. Without this foundation, any person can say anything and claim it is the word of God, and you have absolutely no reason to not believe him.

Unless you are versed in the word, you are at the whims and leadings of any false teacher that comes along. If you learn nothing else from the teachings of this church, I would hope you would learn that. You must pursue this wonderful treasure, God’s Superior Word, with all of your heart and all of your soul.

The Lord would ask you, and in fact, He would plead with you, to do nothing less. And, in fact, He has done just that through the words of Moses, and Jeremiah, and Paul, and through the words of all of the other authors of Scripture – “Listen to Me. Pay heed to My word. Be built up in My word so that you are not torn apart by savage wolves!”

This is the lesson of the false prophet. A word of the Lord is only the Lord’s word if it comes from His word. And so, know His word well. It is your safeguard until the day He comes for His people.

Closing Verse: *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. ¹⁷ And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” Colossians 3:16, 17*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 13:6-18 *This is how you are to trod – yes, it is what you are to do...* (You Shall Walk After the Lord Your God, Part II) (43rd Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of

Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

You Shall Walk After the Lord Your God, Part I

“If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams
And he to you a sign or a wonder is conveying
And the sign or the wonder comes to pass
Of which he spoke to you, saying

‘Let us go after other gods’—which you have not known—
‘And let us serve them.’ Yes, serve them and not the Lord alone

You shall not listen to the words of that prophet
-----or that dreamer of dreams
For the LORD your God is testing you to know
Whether you love the LORD your God
With all your heart and with all your soul; thus, it is so

You shall walk after the LORD your God
And fear Him, and keep His commandments too
And obey His voice
You shall serve Him and hold fast to Him; so you shall do

But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death
Because he has spoken in order to from the LORD your God
-----turn you away
Who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you
From the house of bondage, to entice you from the way

In which the LORD your God commanded you to walk
So you shall put away the evil from your midst and
-----you shall end that false prophet’s talk

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 13:6-18 **(You Shall Walk After the Lord Your God, Part II)**

At Christmastime this past year, my friend Tina asked me to do a sermon on the question, “Why it takes so long to understand grace.” She even repeated the question, amending it as she wrote – “Why is it so hard to understand grace?” In asking twice, she was letting me know it was truly important to her.

I’m not sure an entire sermon is needed to answer that. And yet, at the same time, I’m not sure that a thousand sermons could answer it as well. The reason why is because every person ever born is an individual, and so every person is going to come to a different level of understanding concerning things like it. And, we cannot go further than what our limited, finite comprehension then allows.

The simple definition of grace is “Getting what you do not deserve.” The very fact that it is undeserved makes it beyond our ability to fully grasp. We may generally understand it, but we cannot fully apprehend the impetus behind the act.

The first question is, “Why does it take so long to understand grace?” Surely, she is referring to the grace of God. As this is so, it is because the grace of God is infinite. How can we ever explore an infinite? As long as the ages have been, and as long as they will continue to be, we cannot – nor will we ever be able to – fully peer into what is infinite. We can only see it from what we know, which is finite and limited.

The second question, though seemingly easier to answer, is actually more difficult, “Why is it so hard to understand grace.” Again, she is certainly referring to the grace of God. The answer to the first question is simply a punt. God is infinite, we are not, and so we cannot attain to what God has done.

But from our perspective, it seems the second question doesn’t bear that limitation. We are finite and grace has been bestowed upon us. The Source of that may be infinite, but the results of it aren’t. The act has happened and yet we find ourselves not understanding how it can be.

Text Verse: *“You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? ⁸ This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you. ⁹ A little leaven leavens the whole lump. ¹⁰ I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.” Galatians 5:7-10*

The contents of the sermon today are more directed to mercy than to grace. In the context of the passage, God has already redeemed Israel. He has already given them the inheritance. It is the people who are faced with disobeying the word of the Lord who are addressed.

What they need is obedience to the word, and the Lord will have compassion on them for acting rightly. But this is the same as those who Paul is addressing in Galatians. They had received the grace of God. They had been saved and sealed. There is no question about that. And yet, they had trampled on that grace, returning to the law that Christ had already fulfilled for them.

In other words, they had failed to understand grace. Why? The answer is different for those in Rome, for those in Corinth, for those in Galatia, and so on. The Corinthians were given grace, and they had immediately turned it into an idol fest of division. They also had some who turned it into an excuse for license.

The Galatians had turned away from it and to an idol fest of “self.” Why can’t we understand grace? It is because it is opposed to our very nature. We know how to be gracious, but it always stems back to something we can receive from it – even if it is to simply obtain a state of personal satisfaction. “That made me feel good.”

We turn from grace because we find it hard to accept that there are no strings attached, or that God has somehow failed to benefit from His bestowal of grace. That is completely contrary to why we are gracious.

And so, we think, if God isn’t benefitting from this, then it can’t be real. If it isn’t real, then I need to do something to merit His favor. As a result of this thinking, what do we do? We go back to personal merit before the Lord, forgetting that personal merit is actually opposed to grace – which we suppose can’t be grace because there was no benefit from the Giver of the grace.

Not understanding grace is a condition of placing our own finite, failing, and fallible limitations on God who is none of those things. That means that we need to have the mind of God. Not in the sense that we are God and have infinite knowledge, but that we accept that what God says is exactly what God means.

And the way that we do that is to read and accept His word, in context, and at face value. How can we understand grace? I would say that to do so, we must completely ignore our own self and what it means to be the person each of us is – one hundred

percent. If we allow ourselves to be the judge of what God's grace means, we will never – never ever – understand what it means.

In setting aside the notions of self, we can then accept the gift of God. "He has done this, I accept it, and I will not attempt to think any further in relation to my own self in order to understand it."

If we can do that, then we will have all of eternity to no longer claim we understand God's grace, but to simply accept it and then go on in learning what it means, as He reveals it to us.

Tina, that's the best I can do. It is an answer that demands that we accept God's word, wholly and completely, as it is given to us. And I am certain that this is true because God's eternal, unchanging, and ageless word ends on exactly that note – "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen" Revelation 22:21.

If God wanted us to understand it from our limited perspective, He would not have ended His word with that. And if He expected us to understand it, He would not have promised us eternity to find out – in its fullness – what that ending sentence meant.

Grace is given, mercy is received, and the fulfillment of the law through Christ our Lord is how those things come to be. This is a truth that is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Lord Above All Others (verses 6-11)

In the previous passage, Moses spoke of the prophet or dreamer of dreams leading the people away from the way in which the Lord God commanded. In such an instance, he said "that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death." In doing this, he said they would "put away the evil from your midst."

This is correct, but it is not the end of such an example, even by a longshot. That is a specific example of anyone in general. The world is full of heretics, and such heretics are to be eliminated. However, Moses now goes from the general to the personal...

⁶ "If your brother,

The conjunction is a common one, *ki*. It is what opened the chapter in verse 1, and it will be used again to begin the next thought in verse 12. It is widely used and translated, but the word “if” – though not being incorrect – may not be the best way of stating the force of the intent.

One might say, “Though your brother.” In other words, it seems Moses is assuming the thing has occurred. In this, he will state the law for such an occurrence. He begins with the personal affiliation that is considered one of the closest in Scripture, that of the brother. To further define the closeness, he then adds in...

^{6 (con't)} **the son of your mother,**

In the Bible, like in our own general speaking, the word “brother” can extend to someone who is actually not related at all. There is a closeness that we feel towards others that brings our affections and allegiances to that of a brother in almost all ways.

However, we also use the term “blood is thicker than water” to demonstrate that there are times when we will tolerate or forgive something from a blood brother that we would not accept in a friend, usually no matter how close of a friend he is. Hence, Moses further defines the relationship for this reason. From there...

^{6 (con't)} **your son or your daughter,**

The NKJV leaves off a preposition. It says: *o binkha o bitekha* – “or your son or your daughter.” It is two different classes as Moses elevates the importance of the command. One might reject even his own brother, but would he reject his son? It must be so.

And, even more, his daughter is the weaker sex. The inclination would be to have mercy on her, or to say, “I am the parent, and I am the stronger. I can impose my will on this person to effect a proper change in her.” But Moses will show that such a thought is to be excluded. And from there, he elevates the matter higher...

^{6 (con't)} **the wife of your bosom,**

o eshet kheqekha – “or wife of your bosom.” Moses could have just said, “or your wife.” If so, she may have been at the beginning of the list, not towards the end, because not all men love their wives. But in adding the word *kheq*, or “bosom,” he is defining a relationship that is so intimate and loving that it is as if the wife is enclosed in the man.

The implication of unfailing love is communicated with this thought. But even that is again elevated...

⁶ (con't) **or your friend who is as your own soul,**

The word “friend” is *rea*. It signifies “another.” It can be a brother, a friend, a companion, a lover, and so on. Such a person is defined by Moses as *asher kenaphshekha* – “which as your own soul.” This is the one referred to in the proverbs –

“A man *who has* friends must himself be friendly,
But there is a friend *who* sticks closer than a brother.” Proverbs 18:24

It is the truly undying love for another without regard to physical intimacy or gender. Such a relationship as this transcends such things and is revealed in the strongest bond of all. It is how the relationship between David and Jonathan is described –

“Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.” 1 Samuel 18:3

So great was David’s love, that when he was killed David said –

“I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan;
You have been very pleasant to me;
Your love to me was wonderful,
Surpassing the love of women.” 2 Samuel 1:26

Moses, having brought in the closest of all human relationships, now says that even under such a relationship as that, if that person...

⁶ (con't) **secretly entices you,**

ba'sether – “in the secret.” It is a new word in Scripture, *sether*. It is a noun signifying a cover, literal or figurative. And it can be in a positive or negative sense. It comes from the verb *sathar* (to hide or conceal). In this act, any such person, no matter how close comes forward...

⁶ (con't) **saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods,’**

lemor nelekha w'naabdah Elohim akherim – “saying ‘Let us walk and serve gods other.’” In other words, any god, or any gods – other than Yehovah – that are brought forward for the purpose of worship. The words here follow in accord with the words of verse 2, “Let us go after other gods...and serve them.” Such gods are...

^{6 (con't)} **which you have not known, neither you nor your fathers,**

Again, the words are in accord with verse 2, “which you have not known.” The people are sitting before Moses, the representative of the law of the Lord. They have personally experienced the Lord, and they are being instructed in the law of the Lord.

Thus, the reference is from this point in their history, and it extends out from there for all time. Only Yehovah is known to them, and only Yehovah is to be known to them. Such a prohibition is to extend in all directions as well. As Moses says...

⁷ **of the gods of the people which *are* all around you, near to you or far off from you,**

Here, the words go from the singular to the plural for just one word, and then back to the singular – “from gods of the people which around you (all) near to you (singular) or the farthest from you (singular). Moses is ensuring that both the individuals and the collective nation pay heed to what is said.

Despite the plural being confirmed by the Greek translation of this passage, and in a marvelously stupid comment, Cambridge says that the words “ought to be deleted.” In this, they have elevated themselves to being the arbiters of God’s word, claiming that what is presented is subject to their own whims of grammar and of what is to be considered useful or unhelpful concerning instruction. They will be punished.

^{7 (con't)} **from *one* end of the earth to the *other* end of the earth,**

miqtseh ha'arets v'ad qetseh ha'arets – “from end the earth and unto end the earth.” The meaning is obvious, and it is to be understood from both a geographical and a chronological sense. In no place, and at no time, shall this be tolerated. Rather...

⁸ **you shall not consent to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him or conceal him;**

It is an emphatic and pregnant verse made up of five different clauses. And more, Moses uses several words that are rather rare. Hence, what he says is grave and striking – “No

you shall consent to him; and no you shall listen to him; and no shall pity your eye him; and no you shall spare; and no you shall cover him over.”

And more, the first two clauses deal with the individual’s response *to* the offender – “You shall not consent, and you shall not listen to.” However, the final three clauses deal with the individual’s responsibility *toward* the offender – “Your eye shall not pity, nor shall you spare, and you shall not conceal.”

The offender is not to be heeded, and the offender is to be dealt with even as an enemy. As Moses next says...

⁹ but you shall surely kill him;

Moses places a stress upon the requirement: *ki harog tahargenu* – “For killing you shall kill him.” It is to be considered a judicial act because the offender has committed a capital offense.

But more, the person who was enticed is – by his actions – placing his allegiance to the Lord above his own human instincts, which would otherwise be to defend someone he loved so much. But Moses brings in an implied protection for such an action, saying...

^{9 (con’t)} your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people.

If a person were to be enticed by another person, and he was to kill him right then and there, it could be argued that he had committed murder and that he had only claimed that he was so enticed in order to kill another person. This is why the law says –

“Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness. ⁷ The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So you shall put away the evil from among you.” Deuteronomy 17:6, 7

In such a law, there is protection for the offender, and there is also protection for the one who took the Lord’s side in the matter. Otherwise, anyone could claim anything and get away with murder. Or the truly righteous man who took action into his own hands could be accused of murder.

This is substantiated by the fact that it notes that not only would the one who heard be required to kill the person, but then it says that “all the people” were to follow suit. The implication is that the matter was brought before the congregation.

However, once the matter was settled, the one who made the initial accusation would be required to back up his words with action. Thus, the punishment would be both a grave responsibility and an implied honor. Of this law, Charles Ellicott rightly states –

“The law may seem harsh, but its *principle* is reproduced in the Gospel: ... ‘If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple’ (Luke 14:26). It is impossible to deny or escape the identity of the Lord Jesus with the Jehovah of the Old Testament. He does not always put the execution of His judgments into human hands, but He is the same for ever.” Charles Ellicott

¹⁰ And you shall stone him with stones until he dies,

Verse 5 said the prophet or dreamer of dreams who committed such an action was to be put to death. This verse now explains the means of execution: *u-seqalto ba’abanim va’met* – “And you shall stone him in the stones and he dies.”

This is the first of several explicit references to stoning a person in Deuteronomy, but it was already implied in verse 5. The land of Israel is the rockiest place one can imagine. There is hardly a spot that isn’t fit to accomplish this, and it is a means of execution that everyone at hand could – and indeed was expected to – participate in. In this case, the stoning was mandated...

^{10 (con’t)} because he sought to entice you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

Though they vary in several ways in both order and words used, what is said here bears great similarity to verse 5. The focus is on one’s allegiance to Yehovah, and the explanation for that is – again – that it is He who brought Israel out of Egypt.

Again, and again, Moses returns to this same theme. As such, we need to remember the parallel. This is what Christ spiritually did for us. As always, Egypt pictures bondage to sin. Christ Jesus brought us out from that, having redeemed us from that house of bondage.

Despite the bloody history of the Roman Catholic Church, the church of the saints of Christ has no authority to execute the false prophets or those around us who attempt to draw us away from faith in Christ, but we have the same personal responsibility to love the Lord more than any other person.

He alone is to be our greatest desire of the heart and soul. That loving allegiance to Him is to be what will hopefully draw others into the same relationship. For Israel, however, execution of offenders was to be its own warning...

¹¹ So all Israel shall hear and fear,

The spelling of the word “fear” bears a strong emphasis: *v’kal Yisrael yishmeru v’yiratun* – “And all Israel shall hear, and shall (certainly) fear.” In other words, just as any society hears of executions and realizes how serious certain matters are taken, so Israel would take it to heart and be absolutely certain to not do as that offender had done.

Such a punishment has a double impact. It removes the wicked from the land, and it causes the people to walk circumspectly. But even that leads to a third benefit. In walking properly, people will revere the Lord who set the standard in the first place. The problem for Israel is never with the law itself, but with the people’s inability to uphold it. As long as the law is upheld others will see...

¹¹ (con’t) and not again do such wickedness as this among you.

v’lo yosiphu laasot kadavar ha’ra hazeh b’kirbekha – “and no shall add to do according to the thing the evil the this in your midst.” In other words, in executing the offender, it will end any other such attempts by those who are so easily led astray.

The precept is no different than countries that execute homosexuals. When that is the case, those who may think in that manner would never openly acknowledge it. The standard is set, the law is given, and those who fear the law will exercise restraint. And so, it is with any other activity – adultery, drugs, and so on. In executing offenders, the masses will cease the offenses.

*Blessed is the one who walks after the Lord his God
And happy is the man who shall see His face
It is on the straight path that he does trod
And it is he who finds the Lord’s mercy and His grace*

*So is it for that man who walks after the Lord his God
And it shall be so, even when life appears dark and grim
His feet are faithful and with righteousness he is shod
He will see good days. Joy and blessing lie ahead for him*

*Do what is right and pleasing before the Lord
And He will honor you with life and length of days
Be carefully attentive to His sacred word
And live out your life to His honor and His praise*

*This is the path to follow for the discerning and the wise
He who understands is ever pleasing in the Lord's attentive eyes*

II. What is Right in the Eyes of the Lord (verses 12-18)

In verses 1-5 Moses dealt with apostacy in a general matter. In verses 6-11, he dealt with it in a personal matter. Now, in verses 12-18, he will refer to apostacy in an organized matter, saying...

¹² "If you hear someone in one of your cities,

Again, as in verse 1 and verse 6, the translation is probably more rightly, "Though you hear..." It is more assuredly assuming that the thing has occurred, and so action must be taken. In this case, it is an offense that has happened in a city.

Further, the word "someone" doesn't belong here. It reads: *ki tishma b'akhat arekha* – "Though you hear in one of your cities." The words are referring to Israel (the whole) hearing about something that has occurred in one of the cities. And to be more specific, Moses says...

^{12 (con't)} which the LORD your God gives you to dwell in, saying,

This is the same idea as saying, "the Lord who brought you out of Egypt." In other words, the offense is aggravated by the notion that the city was provided by the Lord. He brought them in. He subdued the nations. He gave them cities. And yet, in one of those cities...

¹³ 'Corrupt men have gone out from among you

The Hebrew is more expressive: *yaseu anashim bene beliyaal miqirbekha* – “Have gone out men, sons of worthlessness, from your midst.” The word *beliyaal* is introduced here. It comes from *beli* (failure) and *yaal* (profit). Thus, “no profit” or “worthless.”

Many scholars and translators render this as a proper name, Belial. And, indeed, that is how Paul renders it in 2 Corinthians when dealing with a similar matter –

‘Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said:
‘I will dwell in them
And walk among *them*.
I will be their God,
And they shall be My people.’” 2 Corinthians 6:14-16

And yet, throughout the Bible, people describe an object by its predominant characteristic as a “son” of that quality. For example, the term “son of death” is used in this way at times, such as when David said in 2 Samuel 12:5, “As the Lord lives, surely the man who has done this is a son of death.”

The meaning is that the person deserved to die. Unfortunately for David, he didn’t realize that the person he was referring to was himself. For now, whether as a noun or a pronoun, the intent is ultimately the same.

In this verse in Deuteronomy, the worthless people are said by Moses to have gone out “from among you.” This doesn’t mean within the city, but from among Israel. In other words, the entire city is being contrasted to all the rest of Israel. This is evident from the next words...

¹³ (con’t) **and enticed the inhabitants of their city,**

va’yadikhu eth yosheve iram – “and impelled inhabitants their city.” This word, *nadakh*, or “impel,” has been used in all three instances of this chapter – the prophet of verses 1-5, the personal close one of verses 5-12, and now the worthless men of this section. One might think of beguiling or seducing, even through intimidation. And their words are...

¹³ (con’t) **saying, “Let us go and serve other gods”**

The words follow closely after both verse 2 and verse 6 – “Let us walk after and serve gods other which not you have known.” The offenders are worthless, and they are luring the people away to that which is worthless. This is because they are gods...

13 (con't) —which you have not known—

It is the same expression said twice in this chapter already. There is the Lord, the God of Israel, and then, there are those gods which the people, or the person, have not known. The temptation is especially strong for those who may be going through a bad spell, who are struggling with the realities of life, and so on.

The thought may be, “The Lord is our God, and He isn’t taking proper care of us. But these guys are promising great things, contentment, abundance, wealth, and so on if we follow their gods. This is exactly what churches do all the time.

And so, we can see the progression of thought. The first is the false prophet or dreamer of dreams. Whether in Israel, or the guy on the street, he has something to offer other than the truth of God in Christ. And then there is the close relative or friend. They see your faith in Christ, and they – for whatever reason – want to misdirect you from it.

And then there is the city now being addressed. It would equate to an entire church that offers something tantalizing – be it wealth, prosperity, or contentment. Moses is warning the people in basic categories, and we need to be attentive in basically the same categories – from the general, to the personal, to the organized.

Israel knew the Lord, and yet they are being beguiled to walk after another they did not know. We know the Lord, and yet no sooner do we know Him, than we are tempted to walk after the Lord in a way we did not know, nor in a way that He has presented Himself.

For now, and concerning the city which has done what Moses warns against...

14 then you shall inquire, search out, and ask diligently.

Again, the Hebrew is very specific: *v'darashta v'khaqarta v'shaalta hetev* – “and you shall seek, and you shall search out, and you shall ask diligently. In this, a new word is introduced, *khaqar*. It signifies to penetrate, and thus to examine intimately.

The onus is on Israel to do their due diligence and to determine the truth of the matter. Nothing less would be acceptable...

14 (con't) And if it is indeed true and certain that such an abomination was committed among you,

And again, the English fails to convey the force of Moses' words. It more rightly reads, "And behold! Truth! The thing is established! This abomination was committed in your midst!" His words are so poignant that what follows must absolutely come to pass...

15 you shall surely strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword,

The Hebrew reads forcefully – "striking, you shall strike the inhabitants of that city with the mouth of the sword." Here, as elsewhere, the sword is spoken of as a devouring instrument. The souls of the people are eaten away as the sword is wielded. The fate of the people who have acted in this way is death. But more...

15 (con't) utterly destroying it,

hakharem otah – "devoting it." In other words, the city is to be placed under the ban. It is to be completely destroyed as an act of devotion to the Lord. Nothing living in it was to be taken out...

15 (con't) all that is in it and its livestock—with the edge of the sword.

Every living thing – man, woman, child, and livestock. Of this, Matthew Poole says –

"...to wit, all that are guilty, not the innocent part, such as disowned this apostacy, who doubtless by choice and interest, at least upon warning, would come out of so wicked and cursed a place." Matthew Poole

This is incorrect. All were held guilty regardless of their innocence. Once the matter was discovered, it was all to be utterly destroyed with the mouth of the sword. The place was accursed, and so all that lived within it was under the ban. Further...

16 And you shall gather all its plunder into the middle of the street, and completely burn with fire the city and all its plunder, for the LORD your God.

The act of devotion to the Lord is to extend to everything within the city. It was to be taken to the *rekhov*, or broad open place such as a plaza. It was to then be piled up, and the entire city was to be burned. The word “completely” is *kalil*. It signifies “all” as in a holocaust, or whole burnt offering. Thus, the act of devotion to the Lord would be complete in its scope. But it was also to be forever in its duration...

¹⁶ (con't) **It shall be a heap forever; it shall not be built again.**

Here, the word *tel*, or mound is introduced. It is a contraction of the word *talal* that is found in Ezekiel 17:22 where it speaks of a prominent mountain. Thus, this is a mound or heap. Today, many cities or sites are known by the word, such as Tel Aviv. It is a place where a mound exists upon which more has been built over the years.

In the case of such a city, however, it was not to be built upon. The mound itself was to be a testament to the apostasy of the city, and of the devotion of that city to the Lord by the people. The mound was to serve as its own witness for all time. And there is an important reason for this mandate, as Moses next relays...

¹⁷ **So none of the accursed things shall remain in your hand,**

The word translated here as “remain,” signifies to cling to. The idea is that if any accursed thing were kept, it wouldn't just be in the person's hand, but it would cling to it. The stain of it could no more be taken away than could the shame of an adulterous woman. The Lord would see the thing and it would then withhold any favor from Him.

This will be seen in Joshua when Achan will take an accursed thing during the battle of Ai. It clung to him, it found him out, and he and all he possessed – in turn – became subject to the ban. Thus, the people were to completely rid themselves of the banned city. This was so...

¹⁷ (con't) **that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of His anger**

I'maan yashuv Yehovah mekharon apo – “To end purpose, will turn Yehovah from burning His nose.” The Lord is truly angry at the actions of such people. It is as if fire shoots from His nostrils as He fumes over their actions. And this isn't a state that may arise. It is the state that exists over their sins.

In destroying the city, devoting it to complete destruction, His anger over the infraction ends, symbolized by the thought of turning. Where there was confrontation and enmity,

there is again peace and solicitude. This verse is exactly what we see in the account of Achan in Joshua –

“Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger.” Joshua 7:26

Achan’s grave of stones became its own tel. And in destroying him as was just and proper, the Lord turned from the fierceness of His anger, exactly as this verse in Deuteronomy proclaims. Though the cause of the anger was different, the expected punishment – that of devotion to the Lord – was the same. When the devotion is made the enmity ceases. In this restored state the Lord will turn...

17 (con’t) **and show you mercy,**

v’nathan lekha rakhamim – “and give you mercies.” The plural, mercies, is intended to show that upon those who are abundantly faithful, there will be a return of a multitude of mercies. The unceasing stream of the favor of the Lord is opened when faithfulness to Him is demonstrated. In this, He will...

17 (con’t) **have compassion on you and multiply you, just as He swore to your fathers,**

The idea is that in the destruction of an entire city, a number that could go into the high thousands, there will be a diminishing of the tribe and of the nation. And yet, because of the faithfulness of the people to the Lord, He will turn and bless them through multiplication so that there will be no gap in the tribe or the nation.

And the reason for this is because of the oath to the fathers. The Lord spoke, and He would carefully remember His promise when the people lived in obedience to His word. He would multiply their seed as a sign of His divine favor. Of this act of *kharem*, or devotion being restored to the people, John Lange states –

“Holiness, as it makes its demand through righteousness, must receive satisfaction, and therewith mercy can follow. The enlargement should counterbalance the loss occasioned by the punishment.”

With this happier tone restored to the nation through their faithful obedience, Moses affirms why restoration could be expected...

***18 (fin) because you have listened to the voice of the LORD your God, to keep all His commandments which I command you today, to do *what is* right in the eyes of the LORD your God.**

Again, as has been seen throughout Deuteronomy, Moses states that what he commands equates to listening to the voice of the Lord. In other words, he is claiming, and the Bible is affirming, the doctrine of divine inspiration.

In obeying Moses, the people are listening to – meaning hearkening to – the voice of the Lord. What Moses says is right in His eyes. What this means is that everything he says is right. Obedience to the law is not deserving of a pat on the back for Israel over some issues, but then not something to worry about for others. It is a unified whole and it must be taken as such.

Apart from the matter of Achan in the book of Joshua, the closest Israel ever came to the matter described here is at the end of the book of Judges where a city of the tribe of Benjamin was found to be filled with sons of Belial, or sons of worthlessness.

In order to purge the evil from Israel, the entire nation came against them, but the tribe of Benjamin sided with their own people. Thus, the tribe of Benjamin was reduced to only six hundred men. However, they eventually regained their numbers, and noted biblical figures came from them including Saul, Israel's first king, and the apostle Paul.

Throughout the Bible, there is seen grace and mercy mingled with judgment and punishment. But every infraction of the law demanded punishment before the mercy could be bestowed. This truth extends to all people. Judgment for sin against the holy God cannot be overlooked, but it can be meted out in a substitute.

Israel as a whole deserved judgment for the apostacy of one city, but the destruction of the city could appease the Lord. The sins of the people required judgment, but the penalty could be taken out on an innocent substitute – such as in the temple sacrifices, especially on the Day of Atonement.

And those things only look forward to the greater work of Christ, who is the fulfillment of those mere types and pictures. Each of us has a choice, and each of us must decide how we will come before this holy God. Will we attempt to stand before Him on our own merits? The thought is impossible to even consider.

Let us act in prudence and let us choose the wise option. Let us come to God through Jesus. It is He who has already paid the penalty for the sins of the world. The full cup of God's wrath was brought to bear upon Him on the tree of Calvary. And, indeed, He bore it all. In this, God's wrath was satisfied. The payment was made, and peace is now offered through His deed.

Let us remember what Christ has done, let us receive it as our own, and let us stand before God forgiven and free of the sins we have committed in His presence. And let us thank God for Jesus Christ – now and forever. Let us hail our Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Closing Verse: *"Blessed is every one who fears the Lord, Who walks in His ways."*
-Psalm 128:1

Next Week: Deuteronomy 14:1, 2 *How do we become a part of this squad?...* (Sons of the Lord God) (44th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

You Shall Walk After the Lord Your God, Part II

"If your brother, the son of your mother, your son or your daughter
The wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as your own soul
Secretly entices you, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods' Which you have not known,
neither you nor your fathers
-----such a person is out of control

Of the gods of the people which are all around you
Near to you or far off from you
From one end of the earth to the other end of the earth
You shall not consent to him or listen to him; such you shall not do

Nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him
-----or conceal him
But you shall surely kill him for trying to mislead the sheeple
Your hand shall be first against him to put him to death

And afterward the hand of all the people

And you shall stone him with stones until he dies
Because he sought to entice you away from the LORD your God
Who brought you out of the land of Egypt
From the house of bondage where once you trod

So all Israel shall hear and fear, so they shall do
And not again do such wickedness as this among you

“If you hear someone in one of your cities
Which the LORD your God gives you to dwell in, saying
‘Corrupt men have gone out from among you
And enticed the inhabitants of their city, thus relaying...

“Let us go and serve other gods”
Which you have not known
Then you shall inquire, search out, and ask diligently
On such a deed light must be shone

And if it is indeed true and certain
That such an abomination was committed among you
You shall surely strike the inhabitants of that city
-----with the edge of the sword
Utterly destroying it, all that is in it and its livestock—
-----with the edge of the sword; so you shall do

And you shall gather all its plunder into the middle of the street
And completely burn with fire the city and all its plunder
-----for the LORD your God
It shall be a heap forever
It shall not be built again, but it shall lay beneath the sod

So none of the accursed things shall remain in your hand
That the LORD may turn from the fierceness of His anger
And show you mercy, have compassion on you and multiply you
Just as He swore to your fathers, as a deep sweet clangor

Because you have listened to the voice of the LORD your God
To keep all His commandments which I command you today
To do what is right in the eyes of the LORD your God
To do according to all the words I say

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 14:1, 2 (Sons of the Lord God)

Chapter 14 of Deuteronomy is divided into three separate sections, improper mourning, proper adherence to dietary laws, and what to do with – meaning how to properly handle – the blessings bestowed upon the people.

However, each of these three main points is based upon the first words of the passage – “You are the children of the Lord your God.” Everything else stems from that first clause, and it is then further defined in verse 2.

What does it mean when the Bible speaks of the sons of God? The first instance of the term is found in Genesis 6:2. There, it is a highly contested phrase among scholars, as if the countless other uses of the term in Scripture have nothing to do with the phrase as it is used there.

This is so much the case that the most fanciful interpretations have arisen to explain it. And, fanciful is both exciting and profitable. So, most people normally hold fast to the most fanciful interpretation, and those who can profit off of them present that most fanciful interpretation, renewing it from time to time, in order to make a bit more off a new book or a new video.

This is not responsible theology, and it edifies no one. The real key to understanding the phrase there in Genesis 6 is actually found in Job 1 & 2. Almost everyone agrees on that, but not everyone has a correct understanding of those verses in Job. I admit, I didn't.

There was a disconnect between my understanding of the term there and my understanding of the term elsewhere in Scripture that was, thankfully, resolved when some marvelous people – Benzer and Sandra – traveled to the US from the UK in order to visit the church, which – ironically – happened exactly one year ago this week.

The first time we were together at the house, Benzer brought up the Nephilim in Genesis 6 and I immediately thought, “Here we go. Another loose cannon.” That lasted about two seconds until he explained why my thought on Job 1 & 2 was incorrect.

The light came on, and I said, “It sounds correct, but there is a lot of work to do before I agree to this.” And so, instead of doing whatever thing we had planned to do, we sat down at the computer and went through every single instance of the phrase *ha'elohim*,

or “**the** God,” found in Scripture. We don’t form sound doctrine and proper theology any other way.

Text Verse: *“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”*

-James 4:7

Being a son of God is, first and foremost, a mark of humanity. This will be explained as we continue on today. There is, within the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but the Son in that capacity is a term used to indicate a position within the Godhead – God the Father; God the Son; God the Holy Spirit.

When the term “Son of God” is used in the gospels, it is referring to the human Jesus who is God’s Son. He is the Son of God who is a Man. Curiously, the term Son of Man that is used so often concerning Jesus is more closely associated in thought with His deity, not His humanity. He is a Man, but He is a Man who is God.

If you doubt this, go read every instance of Son of God and Son of Man in the gospels and see if it is so or not. It is. As this is so, the term “son of God” is one that refers to humanity. How does one become a son of God?

James 4:7, our text verse, gave us an insight into it. In submitting to God and resisting the devil, the devil will flee from us. The implication is that the devil is the problem.

John makes it explicit in 1 John 3:8, where he says, “He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”

Where does sin come from? It comes from a violation of law. Where does the law come from? It comes from God. In violating God’s law, sin enters the picture. With sin comes death and separation from God. How is that restored? Not through law! The devil uses law to separate us from God. What is the answer?

It is available, and it is to be found in God’s superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Translation Matters; Context Matters (½ Verse 1)

The contents of the previous passage were almost entirely in the singular with just one exception. Moses was speaking to Israel as a collective whole. Now, to open chapter 14, he immediately switches to the plural to address them...

¹ **“You are the children of the LORD your God;**

banim atem Yehovah elohekem – “Sons you (all) are of Yehovah your (all) God.” Of these words, Charles Ellicott rightly and poignantly states –

“This fact is made the foundation of all the laws of ceremonial and moral holiness in the Pentateuch, more especially in the Book of Leviticus, where these laws are chiefly to be found.” Charles Ellicott

When he says, “the Pentateuch,” it means the five books of Moses. Although Israel was only introduced later in Genesis, and then the nation of Israel only truly received its calling in Exodus, the entirety of these five books must be considered in this truth.

And from that foundation, all of the rest of the Old Testament finds its basis – both among the people of Israel, but also among the sons of God who are not of Israel, such as Job.

And then from there, the work of the Redeemer is introduced, fulfilling what is stated in this law – and which concerns these “sons of Yehovah” – and how they are brought fully to a right state of sonship to the Lord God.

One cannot look at these words of Moses to Israel now without understanding what it means to be a son of Yehovah, meaning a Son of God, without taking a much more intimate look at the concept – even from the earliest time of man on earth. The idea first goes back to the opening words of Genesis 6 –

“Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, ² that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they *were* beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.” Genesis 6:1, 2

There it used the term *bene ha’elohim*, or “sons of **the** God.” The definite article was, and continues to be, expressive. It is used when referring to the one true God in relation to man. But more especially, it is in relation to those who are in a right relationship with Him, or it is used to contrast those who are not in a right relationship with Him.

In the Bible, the term “son(s) of God,” more expressly focuses on one’s humanity. When Jesus is called the Son of God, it is true that He is the divine Son of God, but the term more appropriately is referring to His humanity. He is the true Son of God – the perfect ideal of Man *in relation to God*.

This idea extends to all people who stand in a proper relationship to God. The “sons of **the God**” of Genesis 6:1 refers to this relationship between men and **the God**.

Before that term was introduced, a set division of humanity was carefully laid out so that when the term was given, there should not be a mistake as to what it was conveying. But mistakes do come.

Genesis 4 immediately introduced Cain and Abel. Abel was shown to be right with God through his actions of faith. Cain was not. Cain killed Abel – demonstrating the enmity between the two thoughts.

From there, Chapter 4 carefully details Cain and his line, a line separate from – and at enmity with – God. At the end of the chapter, however, another line was introduced with the words –

“And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, “For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed.” ²⁶ And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him Enosh. Then *men* began to call on the name of the LORD.” Genesis 4:25, 26

Chapter 5 then lists this second line, a line that is right with God. It is the line of sonship, meaning a line of faith in the promises of God. This is why these two divergent lines are highlighted immediately after the fall.

The word of God introduces a subject, it gives details based on that subject, and then the word goes back and fills in more details to more fully flesh out what is being conveyed. The simple example of giving the book of Judges and only later giving the book of Ruth, a book that rightly belongs in the chronology of the book of Judges, shows how this occurs.

This happens time and again in Scripture. The account of Joseph being sold into a life of servitude in Egypt is introduced. Immediately after that, the story of the line of Judah through his relationship with his own daughter-in-law is then given, and only then does the narrative return to Joseph in Egypt.

And so, to understand this idea of being sons of Yehovah – and thus sons of **the** God – from its proper context, the first two uses of the term, *ha'elohim*, or “**the** God,” were provided in Genesis 5 when speaking of Enoch –

“After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with [**the**] God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters. ²³ So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. ²⁴ And Enoch walked with [**the**] God; and he *was* not, for God took him.” Genesis 5:22-24

Enoch was a man who was clearly in a right relationship with “**the** God,” and the article was given to solidify that fact. The next use of the article was twice in Genesis 6 when referring to this line of people who stood in this proper relationship with God. They are *bene ha'elohim*, or “sons of **the** God.”

That this is the correct interpretation of this is first seen when the next use of the article before “God” was found in Genesis 6:9 when speaking of Noah who was in a right relationship with Him –

“But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

⁹ This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with [**the**] God.” Genesis 6:8, 9

Using the same words spoken of concerning Enoch, but in an emphatic form, Noah is likewise said to be of this godly line: *eth ha'elohim hithalek Noakh* – “with **the** God walked Noah.” In other words, Enoch was a son of **the** God, being in a right standing with Him. Noah was likewise.

However, immediately after that, the article is again used to define the state of Nephilim, or “fallen ones,” already referred to in the chapter. The word Nephilim is not referring to a hybrid product of humans sleeping with angels – something the Bible never refers to nor hints at. Rather, it is speaking of those who are not in a right standing with “**the** God.” Rather, they are fallen –

“The earth also was corrupt before [**the**] God, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹² So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.” Genesis 6:11, 12

In other words, the use of the article is expressing the contrast between the two lines that exist in the presence of **the** God. Noah is of one line; the others are not. This is why

the definite article is so meticulously and precisely used in these accounts. In following this term, we follow the thought of Scripture as it presents to us man's status before God.

The next time the article is used is not until Genesis 17. It is at a time when it is necessary to define those who are, or who are not, in this right "son" relationship –

"Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, 'Shall *a child* be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear *a child*?' ¹⁸ And Abraham said to [the] God, 'Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!'" Genesis 17:17, 18

The implication is that Abraham was petitioning for Ishmael to define the line of right standing with God. But that was rejected. Another son would come who would be in that position.

When a possible interruption of that promise came about in Genesis 20, the article is used twice to confirm the right standing of Abraham before God to Abimelech who had Abraham's wife, Sarah.

Following that, in Genesis 22, in the great test of faith of this man of faith, the definite article is used three times, confirming Abraham's right standing before "the God."

Carefully following the use of the article before *elohim*, or "God," in the Bible consistently reveals the relationship between man and the true God. This means either a right relationship or the lack of it. This is true in the more than 370 uses of the article.

When it is necessary to define the true God, the article is used. An example of this, and which defines this relationship, is found in 2 Chronicles 35. In that chapter, the word *elohim*, or "god," is found five times. The first use in verse 3 defines God as the true God by identifying Him as "Yehovah," saying to the people of Israel, "Now serve the Lord [Yehovah] your God."

The second use, in verse 8, refers to *beth ha'elohim*, or "house of the God." Thus, it clearly defines the house – meaning the temple – as that pertaining to the true God. However, the final three uses of *elohim* in the chapter are when Pharaoh Neco is referred to –

“But he sent messengers to him, saying, ‘What have I to do with you, king of Judah? *I have not come* against you this day, but against the house with which I have war; for God commanded me to make haste. Refrain *from meddling with God, who is with me*, lest He destroy you.’”²² Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself so that he might fight with him, and did not heed the words of Necho from the mouth of God. So he came to fight in the Valley of Megiddo.” 2 Chronicles 35:21, 22

In all three instances there, the article is lacking, thus signifying that it is not the true God that Pharaoh communicated with, but rather his own false god or gods.

One must carefully evaluate each instance of the use of the article, and also maintain the proper context of the passage, or errors in theology, such as the misrepresentation of who the Nephilim of Genesis 6 are, will inevitably result.

This is especially true when considering the only other uses of the full term, *bene ha’elohim*, or “sons of the God,” found in Scripture. The uses are in Job 1 and Job 2 –

“Now there was a day when the sons of [**the**] God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. ⁷ And the LORD said to Satan, ‘From where do you come?’

So Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.’” Job 1:6, 7

“Again there was a day when the sons of [**the**] God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD. ² And the LORD said to Satan, ‘From where do you come?’

Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.’” Job 2:1, 2

The error of analysis made in these verses by many is that the “sons of **the** God” are angels, and that they are presenting themselves before the Lord. This is incorrect.

This is not speaking of angels but of men presenting themselves before the true God, just as Enoch did, just as Abraham did, and just as all other uses of the article demonstrate – a right relationship of man before the true God or the lack thereof.

This becomes perfectly evident from the reference made in Job 38:7 which all scholars who incorrectly identify the Nephilim as angels use to justify their position on this matter –

“Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?

Tell *Me*, if you have understanding.

⁵Who determined its measurements?

Surely you know!

Or who stretched the line upon it?

⁶To what were its foundations fastened?

Or who laid its cornerstone,

⁷When the morning stars sang together,

And all **the sons of God** shouted for joy?” Job 38:4-7

In this passage, the term used is *bene elohim*, “sons of God,” not *bene ha’elohim*, or “sons of **the** God.” The article is left off because it is not speaking of men in relation to the true God. If this is even speaking of angels, which is probably not the case, there is no need to include the article because both angels and demons know who the true God is.

However, these words in Job 38 are probably not speaking of angels. Instead, it is more probably referring to the early formation of stars as detailed in the Genesis account harmonically resonating as the word of God was spoken forth in the act of creation.

In other words, the Lord is speaking in parallelism in Job 38. Parallelism is a literary device where something is stated, and then it is repeated in another way to make the point more poignant –

Job 38:4-7 in parallelism

Where were you (JOB) when I laid the foundations of the earth?

Tell *Me*, if you (JOB) have understanding.

Who determined its measurements? – The size of the earth

Or who stretched the line upon it? – The size of the earth

To what were its foundations fastened? – the underpinnings

Or who laid its cornerstone – the underpinnings

When the morning stars sang together, – the early star formation
And all the sons of God shouted for joy? – the early star formation

The questions of the Lord continue in parallelism throughout the passage, and so there is no reason to assume that the morning stars are being poetically equated to angels, but rather to actual stars. The lack of the article in this verse demonstrates this because the article is specifically used to express the nature of the true God in relation to man.

Man was not yet created in that section of Job, and so the article is left off. However, the article is used in Job 1 and 2 to expressly set those verses apart from the notion that God is speaking of angelic beings.

This, then, obviously invites the question, “Then what is Satan doing there, walking among the sons of **the** God?” The answer is clearly expressed elsewhere in Scripture. Satan is explicitly said to be the accuser of the brethren in Revelation 12 –

“Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.’” Revelation 12:10

In both Job 1 and 2, it is not referring to angels at all. Rather, it is referring to humans who anticipate the coming Messiah – thus they are sons of **the** God – who have presented themselves before the Lord. Satan, then, has come among them in an attempt to sift them, exactly as he sifted Christ’s followers as is recorded in Luke 22 –

“And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. ³² But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren.’” Luke 22:31, 32

Peter later says exactly this concerning believers in 1 Peter 5 –

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. ⁹ Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. ¹⁰ But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you*. ¹¹ To Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.” 1 Peter 5:8-11

The idea presented in Job 1 and 2 is not that Satan has come before the Lord with other angels. Rather, it is that the sons of **the** God, meaning those – like Job – who are those who “fear God and shun evil,” have come before the true God (see Job 1:1, 1:8, etc.).

Though not being in the line of Messiah, they are faithful believers in the promise of the coming Messiah. They have presented themselves before **the** God, and Satan has come among them to sift them. This is exactly the premise of Satan’s testing of Job with the approval of the Lord that is conveyed in the surrounding passage.

To further confirm this, the word used in Job that says they came to “present” themselves before “**the** God” is *yatsav*. It is used in exactly the same way concerning men presenting themselves before the Lord in Numbers 11 –

“So the LORD said to Moses: ‘Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tabernacle of meeting, that they may **stand** there with you.’”

-Numbers 11:16

But, more importantly, this is seen again in Joshua 24:1 –

“Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and called for the elders of Israel, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers; and they **presented** themselves before God.” Joshua 24:1

There, it says they presented themselves *liphne ha’elohim*, “before **the** God,” just as those in Job do. Such instances clearly define what is later referred to in Job. The same word, *yatsav*, translated as “present” is again used in this same context in 1 Samuel 10 –

“Then Samuel called the people together to the LORD at Mizpah, ¹⁸ and said to the children of Israel, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel: “I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians *and* from the hand of all kingdoms and from those who oppressed you.” ¹⁹ But you have today rejected your God, who Himself saved you from all your adversities and your tribulations; and you have said to Him, ‘No, set a king over us!’ Now therefore, **present** yourselves before the LORD [Yehovah] by your tribes and by your clans.”

-1 Samuel 10:17-19

In this passage, the article before “God” is unnecessary because He is defined by the name of the true God, Yehovah.

To fully appreciate this connection of the use of the article before *elohim*, or “God,” to the relationship of human beings toward the true God, one must go through all 370+ instances of the term *ha’elohim* expressed in Scripture.

Only in doing this will one see that every use follows the same contextual pattern. In this, one can then appreciate the error in thinking that has resulted from accepting the view that angelic beings are sleeping with humans and producing aberrant hybrids of mutants.

Such fanciful analyses are dramatic, sensational, and they sell well, but they improperly analyze Scripture, they introduce contradictions into Scripture, they fail to consider the use of the definite article preceding *elohim* as it is intended, they neglect the context of the surrounding passages, and they fail to take into account the whole body of Scripture that is necessary to properly and rightly divide the word concerning what is being said.

Satan did not sleep with Eve in order to cause man to fall. Rather, he deceived the woman through a manipulation of Scripture and Adam accepted his presentation over the word of the Lord. This is how he attempted to lead Christ astray as well.

The devil misuses the word of God, meaning law, in order to introduce sin. Through the introduction of sin, the devil gains his foothold over man. It is through deceit, temptation, affliction, opposition, and accusation that he works out his plans.

This is how he operates, not by having his fallen angels, which are spirit beings, sleep with human beings – something not possible for spirits, by the way.

To understand more on the misanalyses of who the Nephilim are in Genesis 6, you can go back and watch that sermon. The Bible is written for man about man’s right or wrong relationship with God. That is clearly expressed in Scripture. When one is in a right standing with Him, he is termed a son of God through faith.

This is the case in both testaments, and it is the case with the first clause of this first, most important, verse in Deuteronomy 14 – *banim atem Yehovah elohkem*, “Sons you are of Yehovah your God.”

Sons of God through faith in His promise

This is how the deal is sealed

One cannot be a doubting Thomas

And expected the title “Son of God” to him be dealed

*But if we just trust in what God has done
If we hold fast to the promise
Believing in the word concerning God's Son
And not continuing as a doubting Thomas*

*Then all good things will come to us
God will be pleased with the faith we possess
Yes, if we place our trust in the Lord Jesus
And Him as Lord we do confess*

*This is what God would ask of you
This is what God expects you to do*

II. A Holy People; a Special Treasure (verses 1 con't & 2)

The sons of God are those who live life in relation to Messiah. In the Old Testament, it is those who anticipated the coming of Messiah. Enoch did, Noah did, and Abraham did – among others in that select line. But Job also did, and he lived his life according to that promise.

How do we know this? It is because the hope of Messiah is the hope of restoration and life. Job's words clearly indicate that he possessed this hope –

*“For I know *that* my Redeemer lives,
And He shall stand at last on the earth;
²⁶ And after my skin is destroyed, this *I know*,
That in my flesh I shall see God,
²⁷ Whom I shall see for myself,
And my eyes shall behold, and not another.
How my heart yearns within me!” Job 19:25-27*

It is this that made him a son of **the** God – faith. For Israel, that term, son of **the** God, is more fully defined using the divine name, Yehovah. This more precise relationship was established in Exodus 6 –

*“And God spoke to Moses and said to him: ‘I *am* the LORD. ³ I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but *by* My name LORD I was not known to them.’” Exodus 6:2, 3*

The name translated both there in Exodus and here in Deuteronomy as “Lord” is Yehovah. The people of Israel are called sons of Yehovah because this is how God had revealed Himself to them. With this in mind, Cambridge notes –

“But when all the O.T. references to God as the Father whether of Israel or Israelites and to them as His children have been reckoned up, how few are they in comparison to the number of times that sons, and children, of God occur in the N.T. God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying Abba Father (Galatians 4:6); joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17).”

Their somewhat dismissive note doesn’t change the fact that Moses now calls them the sons of Yehovah. It is a truth and a calling that is set forth by him, and thus it is to be accepted as such.

It is for this reason that they were to apply the moral and holy laws of the Lord carefully to their walk before Him. Understanding this, Moses continues addressing the people in the plural with...

^{1 (con’t)} **you shall not cut yourselves**

lo titgogedu – “no shall you (all) gash yourselves.” It is a new word in Scripture, *gadad* signifying to penetrate or cut. It comes from *gud*, meaning to invade or attack. Thus, it signifies to crowd, or to gash. The idea is that of pressing into oneself like a crowd presses in to form a break in a line.

The words here are similar to that stated in Leviticus 19 –

“You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you: I *am* the Lord.” Leviticus 19:28

Gashing oneself had varying purposes. One of them was to petition one’s god in an almost mournful way. Such is found of the worshippers of Baal in 1 Kings 18 –

“And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, “Cry aloud, for he *is* a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, *or* perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened.” ²⁸ So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. ²⁹ And when midday was past, they prophesied until the *time* of the

offering of the *evening* sacrifice. But *there was* no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention.” 1 Kings 18:27-29

The worshippers of Baal were in great distress because there had been no answer to their petition and Elijah was have fun poking at them over that fact. Likewise, the implication here in Deuteronomy is that this is intended as a sign of mourning as is further seen in the next words...

^{1 (con't)} **nor shave the front of your head for the dead.**

v'lo tasimu qarekhah ben enekem lamet – “and no shall you (all) place baldness between your eyes to *the* dead.” In other words, they were not to shave the forehead. Our friend Rhoda noted that this may be a pun based on the previous verse.

In verse 13:18 it said the people were to do what is right in the eyes of the Lord. Now, it says not to place baldness between their eyes, implying it is an act that is not right in the eyes of the Lord. Both acts were a defilement of the body as a sign of mourning.

These were pagan practices that defiled the body created in the image of God. They were for superstitious reasons in relation to the gods of the people, and as a sign of exceptional mourning that the person was forever lost due to the end of his life.

To gash oneself would release blood. But the Lord has said that the life is in the blood. To shed one's own blood would be a way of demonstrating, through mourning for the dead, that the life was lost and there was no hope.

To shave one's forehead was equally objectionable because the forehead is the place of conscience and identification. To shave the hair from the forehead was an acknowledgement that the conscience and identification of the dead was forever lost.

These were forbidden firstly because there is one God, and it is not the false god of one of these nations. The second reason was for exactly the reason that was talked about earlier – the hope of Messiah. Israel was not to mourn in such ways because they were the people of God through whom this hope was promised.

It would be inconsistent to grieve in such a manner, as if all hope was lost, when considering that Yehovah had called them as a people for exactly the opposite reason. They were the people of God, and it is through them that Messiah would come. Because

of this, the hope was assured. This is the reason why this thought now is expressly tied to the first thought, meaning that they were the sons of Yehovah.

Through Him is the promise of life, meaning Messiah, and there was to therefore be no such mourning as if all hope had perished. This is exactly what was so beautifully expressed by Martha at the grave of Lazarus –

“Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. ²¹ Now Martha said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.’

²³ Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’

²⁴ Martha said to Him, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.’” John 11:20-24

Martha mourned for her brother, but it was a mourning of separation, not hopeless loss. Jesus commended her for her faith and then received acknowledgment from her of how great that faith actually was –

“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶ And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?’

²⁷ She said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.’” John 11:25-27

We read such verses as this one in Deuteronomy in the Old Testament, and we think they are completely disconnected from faith in Christ. In fact, exactly the opposite is true. They are intimately tied into the idea of Messiah. Martha’s words clearly demonstrate this. “No hope? On the contrary! Great is my confidence in the promises of the Lord!” This is in accord with Paul’s words which say –

“But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.”

-1 Thessalonians 4:13, 14

With this understanding, Moses continues...

² For you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God,

The words of this clause are identical, word for word and letter for letter, to Deuteronomy 7:6. They are similar to the words of a portion of Exodus 19:6, but the meaning between them is vastly different. To grasp that difference and how important it is, one should go back and review the comments of that Deuteronomy 7 sermon.

If Israel was to demonstrate whether they were truly sons of the Lord or not, they were to conduct themselves as a people holy to the Lord. Thus, the statement that opened the passage must be taken as a conditional one.

It is certain that the Pharisees of Jesus' time minutely abided by the tenets of this chapter. And yet, Jesus – when speaking to them – said that they were of their father the devil. Therefore, there is for Israel a positional sonship that all of the people enjoyed, and an actual sonship that only those of faith participated in.

Again, we will not dwell on the meaning of this clause because it was minutely analyzed in Chapter 7.

***2^(fin) and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who *are* on the face of the earth.**

Note: the Hebrew says, *mikol*, “out of (or from) all,” not “above all.” Here the words are very similar to the final two clauses of Deuteronomy 7:6. Taken side by side, this can be seen –

and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who *are* on the face of the earth.

the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.

Despite some translational differences that don't exist in the Hebrew, the only substantial differences between the two are that this verse includes the word “and,” and it leaves off the word “your God.” Other than that, they are almost identical.

For this reason, I am not going to reevaluate the words for you today. Rather, when you go home, please be sure to re-watch or reread what is outlined there. The main point is that Israel is set apart as holy, even if they do not act as such. In other words, they are holy to the Lord as a people, even if the people are unholy before the Lord.

In this state, they are a special treasure to the Lord who are “out of all,” not “above all,” the peoples on the face of the earth. This is an important distinction in translation that must be made. Israel is not “above all” the nations but has been taken “out of” all the nations.

This was for the Lord’s own purposes and it sets them apart as distinct, but it also bears a very heavy burden. It is a burden that they have failed to bear up under, and it has – because of their own lack of faith – brought them much grief and sorrow.

For now, we will close with the thought that it is through Jesus that one becomes a true and forever son of God. And that only comes about by faith. It cannot come apart from it. The law has been given to show us this, and Israel has been the means by which that demonstration has been made.

This is true both in the lives of the individual people who come from that body, and it is true in God’s giving of us His Son, the promised Messiah, through them. Where they failed, He prevailed. Where they sinned, He remained sinless.

Even if some were people of faith, like David or Martha, the people of Israel were expected to live out their lives under law. The sad fact of the matter, however, is that not one of them was able to do this perfectly. The testimony to this is that all of them (minus Elijah who was taken alive to heaven) are dead.

This does not mean that they are forever lost. If they were people of faith in the promise of Messiah, they shall rise again – just as Job knew that he too would rise, and just as Martha knew that Lazarus would rise. However, they – meaning the people of Israel – were given as examples to us that the law could never save anyone. Every one of them is just as dead as Job is.

They did not prevail over the law that was given to them... well, not until God did the miraculous and accomplished all things Himself through the giving of Christ Jesus. It is through faith in Him – whether looking forward to Him or looking back on Him – by which the people of faith have that promise realized.

The righteous requirements of the law are now fulfilled in us through Jesus Christ, if we will simply accept that it is so. In this, God reckons us as justified. Paul says that Abraham stood justified before God, but Abraham came before the law. He also says that by deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in God’s sight, but rather that a man is justified apart from the deeds of the law. If that is so, then it is solely by faith.

God in His bountiful grace gave us the Gift of life when He gave us the Gift of His Son. And it is through faith in that, and faith in that alone, that we become full and complete sons of God. Enoch walked with **the** God, Noah walked with **the** God, and you too can have a close and personal walk with **the** God when you walk in faith with Jesus Christ. And so today I would ask you to do so.

Reach out to Him, believe that He died for your sins, have faith that He was buried, but that He rose again according to Scripture to bring you back to full and complete restoration with God.

Closing Verse: *“We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.*

²⁰ And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.” 1 John 5:19, 20

Next Week: Deuteronomy 14:3-21 *It is a responsibility not to be ignored...* (A Holy People to the Lord) (45th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Sons of the Lord God

“You are the children of the LORD your God
Just as the Lord to you has said
You shall not cut yourselves
Nor shave the front of your head for the dead

For you are a holy people to the LORD your God
And the LORD has chosen you to be a people for Himself
-----such is your positional worth
A special treasure above all the peoples
Who are on the face of the earth

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You

May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 14:3-21 **(A Holy People to the Lord)**

How often do we hear that there are contradictions in the word of God? It is true that many things are difficult, and some things are exceptionally hard to pin down as to why they seem to, in fact, contradict.

However, the more we study the word, the more we learn the context of what is being said, and the more we evaluate these supposed contradictions in that context, we find that they do not only not contradict, instead, they make complete sense.

Many people within the faith dismiss the idea of dispensations, but it is the dispensational model that eliminates many of these supposed contradictions. In Genesis 9, it says –

“And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move *on* the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. ³ Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs.” Genesis 9:2, 3

The implication is that until that point in human history, man didn’t eat animals. So, something different was happening that did not happen before that time.

Next, in our verses from Deuteronomy today, it says that the people cannot eat a perfectly porky pig. This stands completely at odds with what was said to Noah, unless there is a reason for it.

Further, the implication at this time, as will even be seen in our verses today, is that these things did not apply to non-Israelites. What was said to Noah still applied to all but Israel. And then in the New Testament, Paul says the following...

Text Verse: *“I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.”*

-Romans 14:14

But wait. Paul was an Israelite. His people had been told that there are things that are unclean for them. Here we are piling up contradictions... unless. Unless God is working out the redemptive narrative in --- anyone? Yes, in dispensations.

He is doing different things at different times, and for different reasons. And yet, none of these things contradict in any way, shape, or form. Rather, they complement the narrative – if one understands the narrative.

One could say that each of those eras was initiated with a covenant, and thus covenantalism is what is being described here. But if that is so, then how can it be that the dispensation of grace that Paul speaks of in Ephesians 3, which applies to both Gentiles and Jews (remember, Paul is a Jew and the Ephesians were Gentiles), doesn't apply to all Jews?

And, further, it is obvious that the Mosaic Covenant still surely applies to Israel today, and yet it doesn't apply to all Jews today. How is that possible if the Covenantal model of theology is the complete and final answer to the question. Indeed, it is not.

There are clearly covenants in Scripture, but there are also set dispensations plainly presented in Scripture as well. Understanding this is one avenue to eliminating supposed contradictions in the word. Without properly applying set dispensations you will – not maybe, but will – have contradictions in your theology.

Keep the boxes straight, don't mix dispensations, and spend as much time in the word as you can. The more you are in it, the more it will make sense to you. This is actually a precept typologically implied in our verses today. Yes, it's all to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Clean and Unclean Quadrupeds (verses 3-8)

³ **“You shall not eat any detestable thing.**

lo tokal kal toevah – “No you shall eat all abomination.” The word is *toevah*, an abomination. It is derived from *ta'av*, a verb signifying “to abhor.” The precepts in these verses follow largely from Leviticus 11 where the word *sheqets* or, detestable thing, was predominantly used.

That chapter contains eight of its eleven uses, but all eleven refer to detestable animals. Rather than that word, Moses uses a more common word, one which was heavily stressed in Leviticus 18, a chapter dealing predominately with sexual immorality.

In this, one can see that for Israel the animal was to be considered as a detestable thing because it is considered an abomination. However, the reason for it being an abomination must be drawn out from the purpose of the law. These cannot be abominable in and of themselves. This is seen first from Genesis 9 –

“Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. ⁴ But you shall not eat flesh with its life, *that is*, its blood.” Genesis 9:3, 4

God gave all living creatures into man’s hand for food. This would have been the case with Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all other people within this line until the giving of the law. Job, and those outside of this line who are considered upright before God, were also free from these precepts. Further, Jesus says in Mark 7 –

“Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, ¹⁹ because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, *thus* purifying all foods?” ²⁰ And He said, “What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. ²¹ For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, ²² thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. ²³ All these evil things come from within and defile a man.” Mark 7:18-23

Paul further, and very clearly, reveals that all foods are acceptable to eat. He does this several times and, in several ways, plainly presenting this as axiom. Therefore, it is the *law itself* that makes these things both detestable and an abomination. It is not that they are so in and of themselves.

As this is absolutely established, and as the law is only given to Israel – and no other person or group of people in all of redemptive history – then the reason for the precepts in Leviticus, which are substantially repeated here, is found in the purpose of the law. That purpose is to then be drawn out with such a consideration in mind. With that understood, Moses defines what is acceptable for Israel to eat first...

⁴ **These *are* the animals which you may eat:**

Moses states it in the singular to define each type: *zot ha’behemah asher tokelu* – “This the animal which you may eat.” In Leviticus 11, the clean animals were not defined, only

what defined them as clean. On the other hand, the unclean animals were defined, giving some (but not all) examples of what was forbidden.

Moses takes a different approach here, showing examples of what can be eaten, and only later of what cannot. Many of these animals are implicitly (or explicitly) noted as clean elsewhere, but Moses is being precise in first telling which are clean, without yet explaining the reason for it being so.

⁴ (con') **the ox, the sheep, the goat,**

Moses continues the precise wording, leaving off any articles: *shor, seh kesavim, w'seh izzim* – “ox, lamb (of) sheep, and kid (of) goats.” In this, he first names the animals acceptable for sacrifice and then he mentions all others. Here, he starts with the *shor*, or ox. That comes from a root signifying “to wander about.” It is a traveling animal.

The *seh*, or “lamb,” probably comes from a root, *sha'ah*, signifying to crash, or make a din. Thus, it would be an animal that pushes out to graze. That is then defined by the word *kesavim*, identifying it as a flocking animal.

Moses then says *v'seh izzim* – “and kid (of) goats.” It is the same word, *seh*, that was just used for “lamb,” but it is then identified with the word *izzim*, or goats. It is the plural of *ez*, or goat which comes from a word signifying “to be strong.”

Being sacrificial animals, it has already been explained in Leviticus how they point to Christ and His work. To understand that, check out those earlier sermons. These are all animals of the flock and herd. Next, Moses says...

⁵ **the deer, the gazelle, the roe deer, the wild goat, the mountain goat, the antelope, and the mountain sheep.**

Moses continues by stating the wild, non-sacrificial animals. He does so without using any articles, simply stating each animal in the singular – *ayal, u-tsviy, v'yakhmur, v'aqgo, v'dishon, u-teo, va'zamer* – “deer, and gazelle, and roe deer, and wild goat, and mountain goat, and antelope, and mountain sheep.”

It should be noted that due to the rarity of the names, the identification of some of these is highly debated. The first two are rather common in Scripture. The *ayal*, or deer, comes from *ayil*, or ram, which then comes from *ul*, signifying mighty, or strength.

This anticipates believers in Christ where Paul says, “be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” (Ephesians 6:10).

Next is the *tsviy*, or gazelle, which signifies beauty or honor. The word is used when speaking of the coming Messiah in Isaiah 4:2. It comes from *tsavah*, to swell up. Thus, the description of the animal is that of prominence or splendor.

This speaks of believers in Christ who are each to “be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work” (2 Timothy 2:21).

The third, the *yakhmur*, or roe deer, is found here and in 1 Kings 4:23. That comes from *khamar*, meaning to ferment or boil up. Its color is what then defines it, appearing as if its coat is vivid and alive.

This animal anticipates the position of believers who are to be “not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord” (Romans 12:11).

The fourth, *aqqa*, the ibex or wild goat, is found only here. It is derived from *anaq*, to cry or groan, and so it is a slender animal. This anticipates all believers. Of us, Paul says in Romans 8:23 that “we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body” (Romans 8:23).

The fifth, *dishon*, or mountain goat, is found only here. It is from *dush*, meaning to tread or thresh. It is the leaper. If you’ve ever seen one, you would understand the description. This looks to Paul’s words of 1 Corinthians 9:10, where he says, “that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope.”

The next, *teo*, or antelope, is found only here and in Isaiah 51:20. It comes from *taah*, to draw out or mark a line. Thus, it is named probably for its white strip, or maybe for its long horns that form a line. This anticipates believers who are to “walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise” (Ephesians 5:15).

Lastly, the *zemer*, or mountain sheep, is found only here. That probably comes from *zamar*, to make music in praise of God. Just as a person playing an instrument will lightly touch the string or windpipe, so this animal would lightly touch the ground.

This anticipates the state of those in Christ who are to be “speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:19).

As noted, these were not specified in Leviticus 11. But Moses specifically names these to the people here and only next explains why they may be eaten...

⁶ And you may eat every animal with cloven hooves, having the hoof split into two parts,

As a point of correct translation, the word hoof is singular here and in verse 7. Moses repeats the substance of Leviticus 11:3, stating the requirements in reverse order –

“Among the animals, whatever divides the hoof, having cloven hooves...”

The words to focus on are *maphreset paresah*, or “cloven hooves,” and the fact that they are *v’shosaat shesa shete pherasoth*, or, “and having split the hoof into two parts.” Every word here gives the sense of division, or of dividing completely.

The repetition of the words is purposeful. It isn’t enough to simply say, “splits the hooves,” because some animals do this, but they don’t have fully split hooves. They are to split the hooves so that the hooves are completely split.

⁶ (con’t) **and that chews the cud, among the animals.**

maalat gerah babehemah otah tokelu – “ascends cud in the beasts you may eat.” The word *gerah*, or cud, comes from *garar*, “to drag away.” Thus, this speaks of the cud, as in scraping the throat. To make it ascend, then, means to bring the food back up.

In animals, it is the process of up-chucking food from the first of several stomachs where it is chewed a second time before passing into the second stomach. The idea behind this is that the maximum amount of nutrition is obtained from the food. It is also necessary because the foods these animals eat are difficult to digest, and so the extra process makes it much easier for them.

The requirements given in Leviticus and here do not assign reasons as to why such animals are acceptable for food. They are merely distinguishing marks of what is considered acceptable. And so, this verse gives the specifics of what is authorized.

It is claimed that the meat of these animals is better for people for a variety of reasons, but that is untrue. It also doesn't explain why God specifies this now. One can say, "Oh, of course, it is because the Lord wants His people to be healthy, and this is how it will come about." But that is an insufficient explanation.

In fact, it would simply muddy the theological waters. If that were true, then it would imply that He didn't really care about this in anyone from the time after the flood until the giving of the law. It would also then imply that He doesn't care as much about us now. We have no such dietary restrictions.

It is unreasonable to claim that the Lord didn't care about the health of those both before, outside, and after the time of the law. And so there must be another reason for specifying this. And there is. It anticipates what believers are to do now.

The purpose of both of these is that they anticipate the believer's responsibility concerning God's word. First, it concerns the proper handling of the word as outlined by Paul in 2 Timothy where he speaks of "rightly dividing the word of truth." Both commands – concerning the division of the hooves, and to rightly divide the word – are positive in nature.

The fully divided hooves give us this picture. Likewise, the chewing of the cud gives us another picture. We are not to simply eat, swallow, and forget. The word, like the food for these animals, is difficult to digest. It must be contemplated and meditated upon.

Like the animal that chews the cud, we are to call the word back to mind and chew on it, contemplate it, and get every ounce of nourishment that we can out of it. It must be chewed and re-chewed. This is why Paul said to the Philippians and then again to Timothy to "meditate on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

A cow spends about eight hours of every day chewing the cud. This, plus their normal chewing of food totals approximately 40,000 jaw movements a day. If God's people would carefully and rightly divide the word, and then spend such a great amount of time contemplating it and then applying it to their lives, nothing could hinder them in their daily walk.

With this understanding, Moses next refers to what is forbidden...

⁷ Nevertheless, of those that chew the cud or have cloven hooves, you shall not eat, *such as* these: the camel, the hare, and the rock hyrax; for they chew the cud but do not have cloven hooves; they *are* unclean for you.

In Leviticus 11:4-6, the Lord named these animals and gave similar explanations as to why it was to be –

‘Nevertheless these you shall not eat among those that chew the cud or those that have cloven hooves: the camel, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you; ⁵ the rock hyrax, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, *is* unclean to you; ⁶ the hare, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, *is* unclean to you.’”

To understand why each of these specific animals was singled out, and how they then are typological of New Testament truths, please be sure to rush home and watch the Leviticus 11 sermon...

⁸ Also the swine is unclean for you, because it has cloven hooves, yet *does not chew* the cud;

This delightful and delicious animal that has more flavor and variety of taste running through it than a candy factory is noted in Leviticus 11:7. To understand why it is mentioned here, and what type of a person it is referring to, please be sure to watch that sermon. Of all of these animals, Moses tells Israel...

^{8 (con't)} you shall not eat their flesh or touch their dead carcasses.

The utterly ridiculous nature of reinserting these precepts from the law into New Testament theology is revealed in these words. Those who are overly pious and yet underly educated in theology make a show of how they are so much better than others because of their rejecting the eating of such meat.

But this list is not all-inclusive. Any animal that does not meet the requirements laid out by Moses is included in this list, such as the cat and the dog (and etc).

However, Jews around the world, and these uniformed, or willfully ignorant supposed followers of Christ, will openly mourn over their dead Fifi or Fido, pick him up, and carry him to his little grave – thus violating the second and equally important precept given

here. To further understand this precept, it is more fully explained in the Leviticus 11 sermons.

*What's for dinner ma? I'm hungry and my tummy is achin'
What's for dinner ma? I can't wait till we eat
Will we have some burgers topped with cheese and bacon?
I can't wait to taste the nummy-delicious treat*

*No sonny boy, you can't have that as you know
I don't care if that is for what your tummy is achin'
We're legalists in this house. It is true and that is so
Here we don't eat anything topped with bacon*

*We are working our way to heaven despite the work of Jesus
We're on our way; this is the path we've taken
I'm sure God will look with super favor on us
When we eat our burgers without any bacon...*

II. Clean and Unclean Water Life (verses 9 & 10)

⁹“These you may eat of all that *are* in the waters: you may eat all that have fins and scales.

This is more fully explained in Leviticus 11:9 –

“These you may eat of all that *are* in the water: whatever in the water has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the rivers—that you may eat.” Leviticus 11:9

The *senappir* and *qasqeseth*, or fins and scales are rare words. The fins are only found in the Torah, and only in regard to fish. The word scale is found elsewhere when speaking of scale-armor, as was worn by Goliath.

As a reminder of the symbolism, fins are used to keep a fish swimming properly in moving forward, turning, staying upright, and stopping. They guide the fish smoothly and efficiently through the water. Scales are predominantly used for protection, among other things.

The symbolism is perfectly obvious. Like fins, the word of God is intended to keep us moving properly and in an upright manner – ever towards Christ, not racing ahead of

ourselves and not going beyond what is written. It is to be the rule and guide of our walk. And like scales, it is intended to protect us from harm.

As there are many scales, and as they vary in size, they are indicative of satisfactory good works which the Bible exhorts us to apply to our lives in order to be well-rounded and fully protected from that which would otherwise bring us harm. For this reason...

¹⁰ And whatever does not have fins and scales you shall not eat;

This is more fully defined in Leviticus 11:10 –

“But all in the seas or in the rivers that do not have fins and scales, all that move in the water or any living thing which *is* in the water.”

To eat something without these attributes typologically anticipates believers who run ahead without them, heading into their own self-made disaster. Hence, for Israel...

^{10 (con't)} it *is* unclean for you.

Leviticus 11:10 says, “they *are* an abomination to you.” The reason for including these words (“for you” or “to you”) is to show that they are not unclean in and of themselves, but only to Israel under the law. When the law was annulled in Christ, the wall of partition was taken away. These dietary restrictions went away with the law. The purpose they were given was to lead us to understanding what these things only typified for the believer.

*Honey, I went down to the beach and caught us some fish
And while I was down there, I got some lobster too
There's plenty here, more than I could wish
Where should I put them, and what else can I do?*

*Ack! Lobster! What are you nuts my dear?
That isn't clean according to the Law of Moses
We're working our way to heaven, but we won't make it I fear
If you bring home stuff like lobster. We'll get an F minus*

*If we go eating the wrong stuff, things just won't go well
It would be no different than if we were a couple of mobsters*

*The last thing we need is to be cast into hell
Because we sat down to a nummy meal of buttered-up lobsters*

III. Clean and Unclean Flying Things (verses 11-20)

¹¹ **“All clean birds you may eat.**

kal tsippor tehorah tokelu – “All bird clean you may eat.” This is not stated in Leviticus 11. Rather, the Lord begins with, “And these you shall regard as an abomination among the birds.” It is then anticipated that anything not forbidden in the word is, by default, clean.

As there are countless birds in the world not mentioned here as unclean, but which would fall into the unclean category, it is obvious that typology is the main consideration here. It would be naïve to think otherwise.

And to say, “All clean birds,” without further defining what that means, only solidifies this notion. There are a couple changes between the list here and of that in Leviticus. These changes will be noted, and the typology will be explained for them.

For all the others, you will just have to continue watching the Leviticus 11 sermons as there is no need to reexplain all of those details...

¹² **But these you shall not eat: the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard,**

These are recorded in Leviticus 11:12 and are explained there.

¹³ **the red kite, the falcon, and the kite after their kinds;**

Of this verse, it should be noted that the words are so similar to Leviticus 11:14 that someone might mistake them as the same names, but there are differences. The similarity between them is noticeable and confusing if not carefully analyzed.

The *raah* (called the “red kite” here) is not mentioned in Leviticus 11, but the *daah* is. It is possible that both are the same bird. The D and the R in Hebrew are almost identical. Thus, it may be that the Hebrew contains a scribal error as the NAS concordance states.

If not a scribal error, then the *raah* comes from a word signifying to see, or to look. Thus, it is a bird of exceptionally keen sight, as birds of prey are known to be.

Also, if it is not a scribal error, then what is equally probable is that the *daah* of Leviticus 11 is represented by the third bird, the *dayyah*, or kite, and only having a variant spelling. If not, then it is only mentioned here and in Isaiah 34:15. It is a completely different bird than the *ayyah*, or falcon seen in Leviticus 11:14.

As you can see the names are so closely spelled that it is very hard to know what is actually being conveyed. I broke my brain on trying to give you a reasonable analysis of these things.

¹⁴ every raven after its kind;

v'et kal orev l'mino – “And all raven to its kind.” The only difference between this verse and Leviticus 11:15 is the addition of the word “and.”

¹⁵ the ostrich, the short-eared owl, the sea gull, and the hawk after their kinds;

The words are identical, word for word and letter for letter, to Leviticus 11:16.

¹⁶ the little owl, the screech owl, the white owl,

Here the first two birds are mentioned in Leviticus 11:17. However, the third bird, the *tinshemeth*, or “white owl” is mentioned in Leviticus 11:18 and is also translated in Leviticus 11:30 as a “chameleon.”

¹⁷ the jackdaw, the carrion vulture, the fisher owl,

The first two are mentioned in Leviticus 11:18. The only difference there in them is that the carrion vulture is pronounced *ha'rakham* in Leviticus and *ha'rakhamah* in Deuteronomy. The third was mentioned in Leviticus 11:17, coming out of order now.

¹⁸ the stork, the heron after its kind, and the hoopoe and the bat.

The same birds are mentioned here as in Leviticus 11:19, but the structure of the sentence is a bit different. In all, they both convey the same thoughts.

¹⁹ “Also every creeping thing that flies is unclean for you; they shall not be eaten.

The words are similar to Leviticus 11:20 –

“All flying insects that creep on all fours shall be an abomination to you.”

The major difference here from Leviticus 11 is that there it goes on to describe those creeping things in much more detail, including the exemptions to this law – meaning the various locusts, crickets, and grasshoppers.

Because of the lack of exceptions here, the Pulpit Commentary seems to suggest a contradiction in the text, saying, “Winged insects are forbidden without exception in Deuteronomy; in Leviticus, the locust and certain other insects of the same kind are excepted.”

This is not correct. The words of this verse say: *v'kol sherets ha'oph tame hu lakem* – “And every swarming thing the flyer unclean it for you.” However, the next verse says...

²⁰ **“You may eat all clean birds.**

Kal oph tahor tokelu – “All flyer clean you may eat.” In other words, the clean exemptions from Leviticus 11 are considered under these words here. This was perfectly understood by the Hebrew society. We know this because of what it says about John the Baptist, it says he “ate locusts and wild honey.”

*Unclean until evening, what will I do?
Nobody saw me touch that thing, and yet this is right
To myself and to my God, I must be true
And it's only 10 more hours until comes the night*

*It's kind of hard for me to understand this
If I had touched it at 5pm, I would only be unclean an hour
What am I not getting, or from the law what did I miss?
That being unclean would carry such a varying power*

*What is it about the ending of the day?
What is it about the turning of that one hour?
That will my debt of uncleanness pay
What is it about that certain time, that carries cleansing power?*

*I know that in Messiah, all of this will be made known
And the revealing of every mystery will be shown*

IV. A Holy People to the Lord Your God

²¹ **“You shall not eat anything that dies *of itself*; you may give it to the alien who *is* within your gates, that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner; for you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God.**

The words here are a lot of clauses that would normally be taken one by one. But the precepts overlap with quite a few other passages. Three of them are –

“And you shall be holy men to Me: you shall not eat meat torn *by beasts* in the field; you shall throw it to the dogs. Exodus 22:31

“And every person who eats what died *naturally* or what was torn *by beasts*, whether he is a native of your own country or a stranger, he shall both wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. Then he shall be clean. ¹⁶ But if he does not wash *them* or bathe his body, then he shall bear his guilt.” Leviticus 17:15, 16

Whatever dies *naturally* or is torn *by beasts* he shall not eat, to defile himself with it: I *am* the LORD. Leviticus 22:8

First is the immediate verse which pertains to eating something that died of itself. The people were not to eat that. Of the three references, the first from Exodus 22 referred to meat torn by beasts.

That was forbidden for two reasons. The first is that it had not been properly bled, making it unclean. Secondly, the beast which tore the animal would have been an unclean animal and thus passed on ceremonial defilement. Hence, there was defilement in both ways.

The second reference speaks in the same verse of that which died naturally and that which was torn, showing that this was not allowed, but if it did happen, there was a remedy for the sin. This clearly shows that the prohibitions are spiritual in nature, and this for several reasons.

An animal that died by itself, or one which was killed by other beasts, did not have the blood drained out of it. The animal is dead because its lifeblood has stopped flowing. To eat this animal cannot be compared to eating blood itself, because the soul had departed.

And yet, it is still true that the blood remained in the animal. Such meat was forbidden to be eaten, but if it were, the person was merely considered unclean. Because he ate something forbidden, it shows the spiritual nature of the mandate.

And then, secondly, comes the means of purification from defilement. The first is washing the clothes, and the second is bathing. Both of these are external acts. They have absolutely nothing to do with what went into the man. And yet, they are required in order to be considered purified.

And finally, the last part of the purification was to wait until sundown, at which time he would be clean again. If he ate his meal at 6:55 pm, and the day started at 6pm, then he would be defiled for 23 hours and 5 minutes.

If he ate and then washed at 5:45pm, then he would only be defiled for 15 minutes. This shows us that the defilement is spiritual. Further, it pertained to an Israelite and stranger alike. In order to be considered clean, the command stands for both.

As was seen in Leviticus, the washing of the garments pointed to trampling out sin in one's life. The bathing points to the purification of one's life by Christ. And the evening time points to the time that Christ died and was placed in the tomb. With His death and burial, all defilement of man is truly washed away. This ceremonial period of defilement simply looked forward to the cleansing from all defilement provided by the Lord.

The third reference from Leviticus 22 was a prohibition for the priests. They were never to eat such an animal because they, in their work, anticipated the coming mediatorial role of Christ. Thus, they were specifically prohibited from this.

For the rest of this verse in Deuteronomy, it speaks of the alien or the foreigner. That is clearly showing a distinction between those in Christ, and that who are not in Christ.

The key thought is always Christ. It is either looking forward to Him in typology by Israel, or looking back on what He did for us, and which now includes us in Him. As it says, "for you are a holy people to the LORD your God." The church is, like Israel was intended to be (and will be someday), a holy people to the Lord.

***21 (fin) "You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.**

This is the third and final time this is stated. The first was in Exodus 23:19 –

“The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the LORD your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk.”

-Exodus 23:19

The second time was in Exodus 34:26 in a verbatim repeat of Exodus 23:19. Now, it is repeated, but without the note concerning the Firstfruits.

Both of the first two mentions of this were in relation to the three annual pilgrim feasts. This particular prohibition is logically tied to the third such feast, the Feast of Ingathering. The boiling of a young goat in its mother’s milk was a pagan practice.

After it was boiled, and along with magic rites, the milk was used to sprinkle plantations, fields, and gardens in hopes of them being more productive the next year. This then reflects those who refuse to give up magic practices right through the entire dispensation of grace, and even through the tribulation period. Thus, it speaks of what is stated in Revelation 9 –

“The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood—idols that cannot see or hear or walk.²¹ Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.” Revelation 9:20, 21 (NIV)

This is a prohibition that speaks of what the people of God are not to do, just as was the case with the first two verses of this chapter that were looked at last week. The positive and negative precepts laid down here are all given in anticipation of Christ and in our relationship to Him. As it says in both verse 2 and then again here in verse 21, “For you are a holy people to the Lord your God.”

The marvel of these dietary laws given first in Leviticus 11, and then repeated here in our passage today, is that they convey this truth to Israel in typology. They were really to do these things, but the reason for doing them wasn’t because it brought them any closer to God. Instead, it is because what they picture does.

An observant Jew can stick to every single dietary precept given here today, and indeed many do, and yet he can be as far from God as the greatest pagan. However, for those who live out what these laws typologically anticipate, they will come closer to the Lord.

God is not looking for our externals, but He is carefully evaluating our internals. What is our heart condition before the Lord? And above all, that heart condition must first be set and fixed through trusting in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Without that, nothing else matters.

One is either apart from Christ and tainted with sin that blocks his fellowship with God, or he is in Christ and has fellowship with God. From that point on the fellowship that we experience is based on how we respond to what we have been instructed under the New Covenant which is outlined in the New Testament epistles.

Let us not fail in our wholehearted devotion to applying this wonderful word to our every step. In this, God will certainly be pleased with our actions. As a reminder, if you have forgotten the details of what each of these animals signifies from the Leviticus sermons, go back and brush up on them.

Finally, please make sure that you truly are in Christ. Without that, all of the head knowledge on the planet won't do you a bit of good. In case you forgot it, the typology of the swine will reveal that to you. Make your head knowledge a heart knowledge today. Call on Christ and be reconciled to God through Him.

Closing Verse: *"For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; ⁵ for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer."*

-1 Timothy 4:4, 5

Next Week: Deuteronomy 14:22-29 *Are you supposed to give 10%? Is that what the Bible does tell...?* (The Tithes of Israel) (46th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

A Holy People to the Lord

"You shall not eat any detestable thing

These are the animals which you may eat:

The ox, the sheep, the goat, the deer, the gazelle, the roe deer

The wild goat, the mountain goat, the antelope, and the mountain

-----sheep; such are to be your meat

And you may eat every animal with cloven hooves
Having the hoof split into two parts
And that chews the cud as well
Among the animals, that's where your clean animal list starts

Nevertheless, of those that chew the cud or have cloven hooves
You shall not eat, such as these, such you shall not do:
The camel, the hare, and the rock hyrax
For they chew the cud but do not have cloven hooves
-----they are unclean for you

Also the swine is unclean for you
Because it has cloven hooves, yet does not chew the cud
You shall not eat their flesh or touch their dead carcasses
Not even in a soup containing the spud

"These you may eat of all that are in the waters:
You may eat all that have fins and scales
And whatever does not have fins and scales you shall not eat
It is unclean for you, both for your ladies and your males

"All clean birds you may eat
But these you shall not eat: the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard too
The red kite, the falcon, and the kite after their kinds
Every raven after its kind shall be unclean for you

The ostrich, the short-eared owl, the sea gull, and the hawk
-----after their kinds
The little owl, the screech owl, the white owl
----- (you shall not eat that)
The jackdaw, the carrion vulture, the fisher owl
The stork, the heron after its kind, and the hoopoe and the bat

"Also every creeping thing that flies is unclean for you
They shall not be eaten; such you shall not do

"You may eat all clean birds
"You shall not eat anything that dies of itself
You may give it to the alien who is within your gates

That he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner
-----but keep it off your pantry shelf

For you are a holy people to the LORD your God
-----so be ye pure like silk
“You shall not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 14:22-29 (The Tithes of Israel)

In the past, in Genesis 28, Leviticus 27, and Numbers 18, I have done sermons on tithing in relation to the precepts laid down in those passages. The fullest one to refer to, and which I will exhort you to refer to again, is from Numbers 18.

However, to understand the concept of tithing properly, it is necessary to follow the narrative from each of those passages. In the end, tithing is an Old Testament concept and a Mosaic Covenant standard. It is not a New Covenant precept.

The only time it is mentioned in the New Testament is by Jesus while speaking about issues related to the law, or by the author of Hebrews while making a point about genealogies. Nowhere else is tithing prescribed or even alluded to apart from that. And, in fact, to preach tithing would then set up a direct contradiction to Paul's words of 2 Corinthians 9:6, 7.

Text Verse: *"Will a man rob God?*

Yet you have robbed Me!

But you say,

'In what way have we robbed You?'

In tithes and offerings.

⁹ *You are cursed with a curse,*

For you have robbed Me,

Even this whole nation.

¹⁰ *Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,*

That there may be food in My house,

And try Me now in this,"

Says the LORD of hosts,

"If I will not open for you the windows of heaven

And pour out for you such blessing

That there will not be room enough to receive it." Malachi 3:8-10

Q's: Where is Malachi recorded? Who was Malachi speaking to? Under what dispensation was he prophesying? A's: Old Testament. Israel. The law.

A few points: 1) We are not under law, but even if we were, 2) though tithing was prescribed for every year under the law, it was only given away by the one tithing every third year. So, when your preacher tells you to tithe, tell him you are not under law. And

if he comes up with another reason to tithe, tell him, “Then I will give as they did in the Law of Moses, every third year.”

See how he shifts in his shoes at that. For those preachers that say the tithe predates the law because Abraham gave a tithe to Melchizedek, and it therefore falls under what they call “the law of first mention,” remind them that there is no such law.

If he insists on this, then ask him if he makes sure that all believing women whose husbands die before they have children marry the dead husband’s brother. That predates the law too. So does the Sabbath and circumcision. Does he insist on them?

Lots of things mentioned in the Bible predate the law that you can be sure he doesn’t do or tell others to do. It is a hypocritical and devious way of handle one’s theology. In fact, it is shameful. The tithes of Israel had several main purposes that we will review.

The reason Genesis mentions Abraham tithing to Melchizedek wasn’t because it was being prescribed for believers. Rather, it was setting up a theological point that the author of Hebrews would later explain to us concerning the greatness of Christ. The passage in Genesis was descriptive. It prescribes nothing.

In the end, the main purpose of the tithe was the same as countless other precepts found in the law. It was to anticipate and typologically prefigure the work of Christ. As this is so, and as Christ has come and fulfilled the law, tithing – like circumcision, Sabbath observance, and numerous other precepts – are done away with. They were mere shadow, but we have the Substance.

Such truths as these are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Whatever Your Soul Lusteth After (verses 22-26)

²² **“You shall truly tithe**

aser t’aser – “tithing, you shall tithe.” The whole section, from verse 22 until the end of the chapter, is in the second person singular. The collective body of people are to accomplish this mandate. They are Israel.

At times, however, Moses will certainly use the singular here as if speaking of any single person. Rather than, “you all,” he will speak as if directly to an individual – “You, Sir, shall do this.”

Moses is now reaffirming something that had been vowed hundreds of years earlier. He is using the same phrase their forefather Jacob used before he departed Canaan to go to Padan Aram in Genesis 28 –

“Then Jacob made a vow, saying, ‘If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, ²¹so that I come back to my father’s house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God. ²²And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God’s house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.’” Genesis 28:20-22

There he said *aser aaserenu*, “tithing, I will tithe.” Understanding that, Israel is being reminded of the obligation first laid upon them there, and then as it was later defined in Leviticus 27 –

“And all the tithe of the land, *whether* of the seed of the land *or* of the fruit of the tree, *is* the LORD’s. It *is* holy to the LORD. ³¹If a man wants at all to redeem *any* of his tithes, he shall add one-fifth to it. ³²And concerning the tithe of the herd or the flock, of whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the LORD.” Leviticus 27:30-32

Those words there conveyed that a tithe was required, but they did not tell what to do with the tithe. After that, what to do with it is more fully – but not completely – defined in Numbers 18:21-32. To understand that section, one must watch the sermon on those verses. It is vital to know concerning what will be presented now. The key part of the passage is first found in verse 24 –

“For the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer up *as* a heave offering to the LORD, I have given to the Levites as an inheritance; therefore I have said to them, ‘Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.’”

-Numbers 18:24

The translation is incorrect and misleading. There is no article before “tithes. Rather, it says, “For tithes children of Israel, which they offer up as a heave offering to Yehovah.” In other words, it is not speaking of the entire tithe, but a portion of the tithes. That particular portion is offered as a heave offering to the Lord. It is that portion that is then

given to the Levites. This is confirmed in what is then done with the tithes of the Levites. Of this, it says –

“When you take from the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them as your inheritance, then you shall offer up a heave offering of it to the LORD, a tenth of the tithe.” Numbers 18:26

Again, the translation is incorrect and misleading. It first rightly says, “**the** tithes which I have given you,” speaking of everything they had received. However, it then says while leaving off the article, *terumat Yehovah maaser min ha’maaser* – “heave offering Yehovah, tithe from **the** tithe.”

The part they offer is Yehovah’s heave offering. Unlike in verse 18:24 that was just cited, it is not “to the Lord,” but the Hebrew says, “heave offering Yehovah.”

It is a tithe of the heave offering tithe. That this is again called a heave offering, in and of itself, shows that only that which is presented to the Lord is considered in these verses. Any other uses for the annual tithes, not presented as heave offerings, are dealt with separately.

It is that part of the tithes which are not offered as a heave offering that are now to be detailed in Deuteronomy. Again, to fully understand what is conveyed in Numbers 18, and the almost universally faulty translations of those verses, please be sure to watch that sermon.

Thus far, Moses has confirmed the previous words concerning tithing. Israel is to, in fact, tithe. They are to take one tenth of..

²² (con’t) **all the increase of your grain that the field produces**

The translation is incorrect. Rather than “grain,” it should read “seed.” It says: *kal tevuat zarekha ha’yotse ha’sadeh* – “all increase your seed the coming the field.” This isn’t just speaking of grain, but of everything that the field produces, including olives, grapes, and even animals. Everything that springs up from the field is to be tithed.

The Lord has already given instruction for the Lord’s offering of that, meaning “tithe sons Israel which they offer up to Yehovah” from Numbers 18:24. That no longer needs to be addressed in such a specific manner. However, not all of the tithe is offered up as

a heave offering and then given to the Levites. That which is *not* is what is detailed in these verses.

Before going on, and as will be explained later in more detail, nowhere in Scripture is a “second tithe” referred to. It has not been mentioned up until this point, and what is stated here has nothing to do with the fabled “second tithe” that scholars, preachers, and teachers alike speak about. Here is what Charles Ellicott states –

“The Talmud and Jewish interpreters in general are agreed in the view that the tithe mentioned in this passage, both here and in Deuteronomy 14:28, and also the tithe described in Deuteronomy 26:12-15, are all one thing—“the second tithe;” and entirely distinct from the ordinary tithe assigned to the Levites for their subsistence in Numbers 18:21, and by them tithed again for the priests (Numbers 18:26).” Charles Ellicott

He then goes on to say, “The tithe described in Numbers was called ‘the first tithe,’ and was not considered sacred. The second tithe, on the contrary, was always regarded as a holy thing.”

That is absolute poppycock. Moses is referring to the tithes of Israel that were introduced into the law in Leviticus 27, but which were obligated by Jacob’s promise all the way back in Genesis 28.

It is to be noted that what Jacob promised to the Lord there was never mentioned again in any manner at all, right up until Leviticus 27. But the very fact that Jacob promised to tithe to the Lord, and that Israel had continued to do so, indicates that this tithe – this one and only tithe – is, in fact, “a holy thing” and sacred to the Lord.

Based on Moses’ words here, which are taken as an axiom that this was the customary habit of the people even since the time of Jacob (as will be seen), he is placing into law how to properly fulfill that obligation that their forefather promised. With that in mind, Moses now codifies what was once only custom.

This is no different than circumcision and the Sabbath. Both predate the Law of Moses, and yet both are then incorporated into the law in order to ensure the people observed the rites, observed them in a unified manner, and observed them to the Lord. This is why Moses is further defining the one and only tithe levied upon Israel which is explicitly stated to be...

22 (con’t) **year by year.**

shanah shanah – “year year.” This defines the regular interval by which the Israelites were to tithe. As theirs was a largely agrarian society, the natural interval to tithe any particular product was annually.

What this probably involved was to bring the tithes as they were ready. At the end of the barley harvest, a tithe would be brought. At the end of the wheat harvest, a tithe would be brought. This would continue on as the things were ready to be brought to where they were then dispensed with. Of this directive, Moses says...

²³ And you shall eat before the LORD your God,

Here, Moses states this as a customary thing. Before verse 12:7, nothing had ever been said about it before, either as something the people did, or as a command from the Lord, and yet, he says it as if the people would already understand what is being presented.

In other words, what did Jacob do in order to give the Lord a tenth of what he had been given? He ate it in a meal of gratitude. This is then what his progeny continued to do, and this is what is now being codified into law. Apart from that which was to be set aside for the Levites as a *terumah*, or heave offering to the Lord, this is what is being detailed here.

How do you materially give to the Lord that which He already possesses? He has no need of anything, but we can give of ourselves in gratitude and praise. This is obviously what Jacob did with the tenth of what he had been given. However, to ensure uniformity of worship, Moses now adds on a stipulation to the ancient custom, making it a law. They are to eat it...

²³ (con't) in the place where He chooses to make His name abide,

ba'maqom asher yivkhar l'shaken shemo sham – “in the place which He chooses to make dwell His name there.” In other words, at the place of the tabernacle and later the temple.

This was originally at Shiloh, but eventually the location found its way to Jerusalem, at which time, the pilgrim feasts were conducted there. Likewise, the tithes were to be brought there as stipulated in these various tithing passages.

²³ (con't) the tithe

The Hebrew reads: *maesar* – “tithe.” There is no article before the word – “You shall eat before the Lord your God...tithe.” Like in Numbers 18, this is defining a portion of what the entire tithe signifies. There, it was limiting to that which was for the priests. Here, it is limiting to that which is for the people. And this tithe is further defined by Moses, saying...

²³ (con’t) **of your grain and your new wine and your oil,**

These things are representative of all of the produce of the ground. It would include both wheat and barley as well as olive oil or whatever other products they raised. For example, in Matthew 23, Jesus includes herbs as well –

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier *matters* of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.” Matthew 23:23

Such was to be understood. The three categories – grain, new wine, and oil – stand representative of all other products of the ground. Also, they were to eat the tithe...

²³ (con’t) **of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks,**

These words explain the use of the term *zera*, or seed, mentioned in verse 22. The word signifies both seed, as in grain, but also offspring, as in animals and even humans. Israel was to eat these animals before the Lord at the place where He chose for His name to dwell. And the reason given is *exactly* the same reason why Jacob made the promise...

²³ (con’t) **that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always.**

l’maan tilmad l’yirah eth Yehovah elohekha kal ha’yamim – “to end purpose you may learn to fear Yehovah your God all the days.” Here, Moses says that they are to do this in order to learn to fear the Lord.

The word is *lamad* that was introduced in verse 4:1. It signifies “to goad.” The people are to be taught as if being prodded with a rod, year by year, to fear the Lord. It is the lesson Jacob learned at the beginning –

“Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, ‘Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know *it*.’ ¹⁷ And he was afraid and said, ‘How awesome *is* this place! This *is* none other than the house of God, and this *is* the gate of heaven!’”

-Genesis 28:16, 17

Moses uses the same word that described Jacob’s reaction, *yirah*, or fear. His words are more literally translated, “And he feared, and he said, ‘What fearful place this.’” He then went on to say it was the house of God.

Moses is directing the people to go to the place where the Lord chose for His name to dwell, meaning the house of God, to eat the tithes with the end purpose of them being goaded into fearing the Lord – just as their forefather, of whose name they bore – feared before the Lord at the *beth Elohim*, or house of God – and at which place he vowed to give the tithe back to Him.

When Jacob made his vow, it was a vow that was to continue on into the subsequent generations as a mark of their acknowledgement of the care of the Lord for them.

Jacob’s promise of the tenth was an anticipatory picture of the coming Messiah. The number ten in Scripture signifies the perfection of Divine order. The tenth, or tithe represents the whole of what is due from man to God, it is a mark of His claim on the whole. In this, the tithes anticipate the Messiah who would mark His claim on the whole of His redeemed.

This is one of several reasons why the church is not required to tithe. It is because the type, tithing, is fulfilled in the Antitype, Messiah. Tithing was a shadow of the Substance to be found in Him. The fact that tithing was a part of the law is, in itself, a second reason why we no longer tithe. We are not under law, but under grace. The law is annulled in Christ.

If we can keep our theological boxes straight, we will be much sounder in our doctrine, and much less susceptible to being duped and deceived, and even demanded into doing something that was never intended for the New Testament church.

For now, and with that understood, Moses gives a provision of relief from what could otherwise be a very burdensome trip to the place where the name of the Lord dwelt...

²⁴ **But if the journey is too long for you,**

This is one main reason for having the provision of relief – distance. There is the fact that there was not a church on every corner. Rather, there was only one place of the dwelling of the name of the Lord in the entire land.

Israel is a bit larger in size, and quite a bit longer, than the state of New Jersey. And there were no planes, trains, or automobiles back then. Taking one's tithes such a long distance would be problematic at times. As Moses says...

²⁴ (con't) **so that you are not able to carry *the tithe*,**

This is the second main reason for the relief – abundance. The implication is that not only is the journey too long, but the amount of the tithe is simply too great, and it cannot be easily carried. If such is the case, Moses will provide relief. But before he does, he restates the two main precepts again...

²⁴ (con't) **or if the place where the LORD your God chooses to put His name is too far from you,**

The translation here is lacking. This second half of the verse is a form of parallelism provided by Moses. Young's translation gives the proper sense –

[a]'And when the way is too much for thee, [b]that thou art not able to carry it –
[a]when the place is too far off from thee which Jehovah thy God doth choose to
put His name there, [b]when Jehovah thy God doth bless thee; -- YLT

In other words, the words, “But if the journey is too long for you,” are then reworded and repeated with the words, “if the place where the LORD your God chooses to put His name is too far from you.” After that, the words, “so that you are not able to carry *the tithe*,” are reworded and restated by saying...

²⁴ (con't) **when the LORD your God has blessed you,**

As you can see, the words, “the Lord your God,” are added into both of the repeated clauses. The trek which is too far is to the place of the Lord your God, and it is the Lord your God who has blessed you. The aim is to be with the Lord God, but the blessing of the Lord God could actually inhibit going to be with the Lord God! Such a conundrum is quite possible, and something must be done about it. And so, Moses provides the form of relief...

²⁵ **then you shall exchange *it* for money,**

v'natathah ba'keseph – “and you shall give in the silver.” In other words, and simply stated, sell the tithe or replace the tithe with silver money of equal value that you have personally stored up. The idea is to take what is overly burdensome and turn it into something that would not be.

And more, there is the problem that even if the tithe could be carried, it may be that it is simply too much to eat as previously instructed. The tithe is holy, and it is to be consumed, but it would just not be possible to do so in the form it is in. Then it is to be converted into money, and they were to...

²⁵ **take the money in your hand,**

v'tsarta ha'keseph b'yadekha – “And bind up the silver in your hand.” It shows intentional care and purpose. “This is holy money to be used for a sacred purpose. Bind it up in your hand.”

The words here are so close to those of Proverbs 7, and yet distinct enough from them, that the parallel and the divergence should probably be noted. In that passage, Solomon speaks of the adulterous woman who is looking for someone to snare. In her words, she says –

“Come, let’s drink our fill of love until morning;

Let’s delight ourselves with caresses.

¹⁹ For my husband is not at home;

He has gone on a long journey.

²⁰ He has taken a bag of money with him.

At the full moon he will come home.” Proverbs 7:18-20 (NASB)

The husband had a bag of money and was going on a long journey. The Hebrew wording is close enough in both passages to give us the impression that he may be going to do exactly what is prescribed here in Deuteronomy. If this is what he is doing, the divergence of the passage will follow in a moment. For now...

²⁵ (con’t) **and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses.**

Whether tithe of the seed of the field, or tithe of silver which was exchanged for the seed of the field, it was to be taken to where the tabernacle was located. If silver, then it was to be used for a very specific purpose...

²⁶ And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires:

v'nathatah ha'keseph b'kol asher taaveh naphshekha – “And you shall give the silver in all which desires your soul.” The word in this clause is *avah*. It means to incline towards or desire. The KJV quaintly translates this as “whatever thy soul lusteth after.”

The meaning is that the silver is to be used to buy anything that will make the person happy. As Adam Clarke says, “This one verse sufficiently shows that the Mosaic law made ample provision for the comfort and happiness of the people.”

It is a clear and obvious indication that the abuse of the doctrine of the mandating of tithing by New Testament churches is wholly inappropriate. Not only is tithing not a New Testament precept, the way it is handled by such churches completely destroys the intent and spirit of what was given to Israel.

Moses not only says that Israel can buy whatever they want with the tithe money, but he even gives some hearty recommendations for the people. He becomes the seller in a store full of good things for a moment, recommending some of the delights it offers...

²⁶ (con't) for oxen or sheep,

ba'baqar u-ba'tson – “In the oxen and in the sheep.” The idea is “from the herd or from the flock.” The oxen and sheep are given to represent either category. Whatever meat they wanted, they were to pull out the bag of silver and they were to enjoy themselves. But what good is a meal without something to wash it down with? And so, Moses says...

²⁶ (con't) for wine or similar drink,

u-ba'yayin u-ba-shekar – “and in the wine and in the blinko drink.” The word *yayin* signifies fermented (meaning alcohol) wine. The word *shekar* goes beyond wine, and it is inclusive of any strong intoxicating drink. You might think of bourbon or whiskey.

The odd thing about many preachers is that they love to reinsert precepts of the law when it is convenient, such as tithing. But then, in the very next sermon, they both deny and forbid precepts of the law, found in the exact same context – such as drinking.

It is a very inept way of handling Scripture and it results in poorly educated believers who are filled with all kinds of legalistic ideas that only harm the faith of others while fomenting arrogant and judgmental attitudes. Let us take the word of God in context, and let us accept what it says without inserting our own presuppositions into it.

Moses, now having recommended several tasty delights in two distinct categories, says...

²⁶ (con't) **for whatever your heart desires;**

u-b'kol asher tishalekha napshekha – “and in whatever inquires after your soul.” It is a completely different word than the first clause, *shaal*. It means to inquire or ask for. In essence, one might paraphrase this as, “Whatever your soul is curious about,” or maybe, “Whatever your soul asks for.” And when the desires are met with the exchange of the silver...

²⁶ (con't) **you shall eat there before the LORD your God,**

v'akalta sham liphne Yehovah elohekha – “and you shall eat there to face Yehovah your God.” In other words, this is how one remembers to fear the Lord. The God who gave the abundance is the same God who can withhold it. In eating before the Lord, there is to be the sense of gratitude and humility, not arrogant boasting. In such a state, Moses says...

²⁶ (con't) **and you shall rejoice,**

The word is *samakh*. It signifies “to brighten up,” and thus to be happy, even gleesome. The tithe was first and foremost to be a joyful thing. This is exactly what Jacob anticipated, and it is thus what Moses determined for the people to carry on with. And it wasn't just for the worker. As Moses says...

²⁶ (con't) **you and your household.**

It is supposition, but if the passage in Proverbs 7 is referring to a man going to enjoy his tithes, it would explain why he had the kind of wife presented there. A man who loved his wife would have complied with these words and would have brought her along too.

But in his lack of care for her, it demonstrates that he didn't care about the precept of the law, he didn't care about her, and he didn't care about who he had married in the

first place because he didn't bother to determine her character – that she would be the kind of woman who would do exactly what she was doing while he was neglecting her.

Rather than such an attitude, the one bringing his tithes before the Lord was to not only rejoice, but he was to do it with all who were under his authority – allowing them to also be blessed in the Lord while they were blessing the Lord.

*Give that tithe and the Lord will bless you
Give that tithe and He will open up the windows of heaven
Send me your money and this He will do
I promise you abundance... times seven*

*Don't you realize that a tithe you must give?
That's what the word says, trust me on this
If you want abundantly to live
You will send it in, and not a percent shall you miss*

*How can you receive God's grace if you don't give?
You must not understand what grace means at all
My goodness! Is it by grace that you think you live?
If that's what you think, you're headed for a fall*

*Give until it hurts and then give a little more
This is what you must do, even if you are poor*

II. That the Lord Your God May Bless You (verses 27-29)

In one of the sermons from Deuteronomy 12, I cited the scholar Keil and talked about the supposed “second tithe” of Israel. We will go over that again now that we are in Chapter 14, repeating a significant portion of what I said there. The scholar Keil says –

“In the laws contained in the earlier books, nothing is said about the appropriation of any portion of the tithes to sacrificial meals. Yet in Deuteronomy this is simply assumed as a customary thing, and not introduced as a new commandment, when the law is laid down..., that they were not to eat the tithe of corn, new wine, and oil within their gates (in the towns of the land), any more than the first-born of oxen and sheep, but only at the place of the sanctuary chosen by the Lord; and that if the distance was too great for the whole to be transported thither, they were to sell the tithes and firstlings at home, and then purchase at the sanctuary whatever might be required for the sacrificial meals.

From these instructions it is very apparent that sacrificial meals were associated with the delivery of the tithes and firstlings to the Lord, to which a tenth part of the corn, must, and oil was applied, as well as the flesh of the first-born of edible cattle.” Keil 12:7

The Bible does not agree with this. It says, quite clearly, that the people were to eat their tithes. Everything that he is referring to, along with countless other scholars, preachers, and teachers, is a complete twisting or manipulation of what the text clearly says.

After his words there, Keil then went on to speak of what he just inserted into Scripture as referring to the “second tithe,” of which the Law says nothing. And then, instead of citing Scripture to justify his “second tithe,” he punted, referring rather to an apocryphal book, Tobit, in order to justify a “second tithe.”

As we saw, and as we will again review, what is recorded in Tobit doesn’t match – even closely – with what is stated in the Law of Moses. As Tobit 1:6-8 says –

6

But I alone used to go often to Jerusalem for the festivals, as was prescribed for all Israel by longstanding decree.* Bringing with me the first fruits of crops, the firstlings of the flock, the tithes of livestock, and the first shearings of sheep, I used to hasten to Jerusalem

7

and present them to the priests, Aaron’s sons, at the altar. To the Levites ministering in Jerusalem I used to give the tithe of grain, wine, olive oil, pomegranates, figs, and other fruits. Six years in a row, I used to give a second tithe in money, which each year I would go to pay in Jerusalem.

8

The third-year tithe I gave to orphans, widows, and converts who had joined the Israelites. Every third year I would bring them this offering, and we ate it in keeping with the decree laid down in the Mosaic law concerning it, and according to the commands of Deborah, the mother of my father Tobiel; for my father had died and left me an orphan.

First, the very fact that Keil said that the practice of eating the tithes was “assumed as a customary thing,” demonstrates that what Moses says in Deuteronomy is referring not to a “second tithe,” but to the one and only tithe that was levied upon Israel.

This is what is known as “progressive revelation.” A precept is introduced, and then it is later explained and expanded upon. Moses now anticipates that expansion.

Secondly, Tobit's practice of tithing a second tithe is clearly *his own voluntary act* because the law says nothing about a six-year period. He then refers to the third-year tithe, which will be evaluated in just a minute from our verses today.

In his comments concerning how he handles the third-year tithe, he clearly diverts from what the Law of Moses says, demonstrating that the book of Tobit is both not in accord with Scripture (it is not Canon), and it is not to be used as either doctrine or for instruction of what the law says.

This is also true with the rabbinical writings found in the Talmud. To defer to them to justify a second tithe is as appropriate as it is to defer to them to demonstrate that Jesus is not the Messiah. It is very poor biblical scholarship. Scripture alone defines the tithes, and Scripture defines one tithe for Israel.

Thirdly, the eating of the tithes was stated in Deuteronomy 12:7 without any qualifiers at all, meaning that it was speaking of the one and only tithe that Israel made from year to year. The next words fully substantiate this...

²⁷ You shall not forsake the Levite who is within your gates, for he has no part nor inheritance with you.

If Israel had two tithes, Moses would not have said this. There are already provisions for the Levites recorded in Numbers 18, as we have already seen today. If a second tithe was speaking of what the people eat, then the first tithe would have already taken care of the Levites. Rather, Moses says this for an exacting and specific reason which is found in the next verse...

²⁸ "At the end of every third year

miqseh shalosh shanim – end three years. This does not mean "after three years," but "the third of three years." It is a rotating three-year period as is explained in Deuteronomy 26.

The tithe is one-tenth each year. Moses has just told Israel what to do with that one-tenth. The people were to eat it. However, they were also instructed to take some of that tithe and give it to the Levites. No amount is stated. In fact, it is intentionally left out.

The implicit reason for leaving it out was provided in verse 23. It was because they were to fear the Lord their God. They sat there eating the abundance given them by the Lord, and He told them that in this time of rejoicing, they were to remember the Levite.

It is as much for the sake of caring for the Levite as it is a word of warning for the Israelite – “These people tend to you in your spiritual needs; you are to tend to them in your abundance.” It is the exact same precept that Paul refers to in Galatians 6 –

“Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.”
-Galatians 6:6

Paul doesn’t give an amount, he simply says “in all good things.” The precept is true with Israel toward the Levites. The law has already provided for them, now Moses is directing Israel to go beyond the law, but without stating any particular amount. And why is he doing this? It is because something different happens every third year with the annual tithe...

²⁸ (con’t) **you shall bring out the tithe of your produce of that year and store *it* up within your gates.**

It says *kal maesar* – “all tithe.” There is, again, no definite article. It is a portion of the tithe, being one-third of it. The tithe is ten percent per year. Of that, one-third of it – that of the third year – is to be handled differently. That part was defined in Numbers 18 using the *exact same words* as are used now, *kal maesar*, all tithe.

If “all tithe” meant what scholars claim, then the second tithe would belong to the Levites as well. Or what Moses is defining in this chapter would be a violation of the previous ordinance. Either way, by inserting a “second tithe” into Scripture a contradiction is the result.

Rather, this third-year tithe *is* the heave offering to the Lord that is then presented to the Levites. This is exactly why Moses just said in the previous verse to not forsake the Levite in the first two years of the tithe.

Israel was having one party after another as their crops, flocks, and herds were coming to seed. On the other hand, the Levites were toiling away as normal. The obvious thing to do is to invite them to participate in the first two years of blessing as well. Then, on the third year, the heave offering to the Levites was to be stored up in the gates. Moses then reminds them of why it was to be so...

²⁹ And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who *are* within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied,

What is implied here is that the heave offering to the Lord, through the Levites, was to then be disbursed by the Levites not only among them, but among the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. It is the very thing that would be expected of the ministry.

Just as the people were to tend to the ministers during the first two years, the ministers were to tend to the disadvantaged of the people with the abundance that they were provided during the third year.

How do we know this is correct? We simply go forward in Scripture to see more of the progressively revealed word of the Lord. First, to Deuteronomy 26 –

“When you have finished laying aside all the tithe of your increase in the third year—the year of tithing—and have given *it* to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, so that they may eat within your gates and be filled, ¹³ then you shall say before the LORD your God: ‘I have removed the holy *tithe* from *my* house, and also have given them to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed Your commandments, nor have I forgotten *them*. ¹⁴ I have not eaten any of it when in mourning, nor have I removed *any* of it for an unclean *use*, nor given *any* of it for the dead. I have obeyed the voice of the LORD my God, and have done according to all that You have commanded me. ¹⁵ Look down from Your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel and the land which You have given us, just as You swore to our fathers, “a land flowing with milk and honey.”’” Deuteronomy 26:12-15

Moses calls all of the tithe, *ha’qodesh*, or “the holy.” This includes the third year, but it also speaks of the first two years as verses 13 and 14 clearly indicate and just as Leviticus 27 states, where it says the tithe of the land and of the herd and flock is “holy to the Lord.”

With that understood, the tithe is mentioned in this particular context one more time, in a negative sense, in Amos 4:4 (LSV) –

“Enter Beth-El, and transgress,” “At Gilgal multiply transgression,” “And bring in your sacrifices every morning,” “Your tithes every third year.”

Depending on your translation, it may say “third day” instead of “third year,” but the context is “every third year.” The Lord was rebuking the people for doing the things of the law as a pretense of holiness while multiplying transgressions at the same time.

They were bringing their tithes every third year according to the law, but just a few verses earlier it noted that they oppressed the poor and crushed the needy. But the point is made quite clear, the third year is the year of tithing in the sense of giving away the tithe. The other two years, the tithe was also holy, but it was to be a reminder to the people to fear Him. It is with that attitude in mind that Moses completes the thought for the day...

***29 (fin) that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.**

The implication is that in doing what they were instructed to do, they would have within them the fear of the Lord. In this state, they would be blessed in the work of their hands. This was the hope and the anticipation for the people of Israel. But like all things that involve law, it just doesn't work that way.

The same is true now. When a preacher stands in the pulpit and preaches adherence to the law, he will certainly have a number of people who will line up in order to cross every t and dot every i. They are doing their best to work their way to heaven, and the preacher is there to spur them along.

But most of the people will lose heart in what is presented and either tithe while multiplying transgressions like those mentioned in Amos, or they will not tithe and be under the assumption that they are in violation of the law.

This is the sad and futile state of those who have simply failed to understand the context of what is being given, and who have also failed to see the fulfilled typology in Jesus Christ. If we are in Christ, then we are to live as those who are in Christ.

And the place to get that instruction is not from the Law of Moses. Rather, it is to come from the body of instruction that tells us we are in Christ in the first place – the New Testament epistles. I would hope that you would be sound in your theology and reject anyone who tries to put you back under the yoke of bondage.

Instead, you are to understand your freedom in Christ while not using that freedom to fulfill the lust of the flesh. Live for Christ, live in Christ, and walk in the Spirit granted to you through the finished work of Jesus Christ – to the glory of God.

Closing Verse: *“So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.” 2 Corinthians 9:7, 8*

After giving the sermon, I received some insightful thoughts from a friend, Chris Smith. Please enjoy his thoughts -

The sermon mentions, “The stranger the fatherless and the widow.” Christ was offered in the third year of his ministry, so I see a parallel to the 3rd year tithe. The stranger reflects the state of the gentiles (Ephesians 2:12). The orphan, those cut off from the Father. And the widow, those that need a kinsman-redeemer. I find the term “a third” referenced as interesting in that Jesus is a third of the Godhead offered for the poor. The first two years they (Israel) consumed their portion or tithe for themselves, as Christ stated that He came for the lost children of Israel, but after that, the blessing was to go to everyone else who needed it. In essence, Jesus is our tithe! The abundance God gave us. Also, for those that were far away, they can change their blessing which had become a burden for money. In Hebrew, “silver.” Silver represents redemption and blood. Jesus said, “come to me you who are heavy laden and I will give you rest for my burden is light.” Judas was paid the price of a Female slave....you could Also say Christ paid for us with 30 pieces of silver and his blood to make our burden light taking on our sin debt so that we can be in the presence of God and rejoice in the Lord.

Next Week: Deuteronomy 15:1-11 *Big relief for those who can't pay, you can bet...* (The Remission of Debt) (47th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Tithes of Israel

“You shall truly tithe – these words carefully hear
All the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year

And you shall eat before the LORD your God
In the place where He chooses to make His name abide
The tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil

Of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks
----- your bounty on every side

That you may learn to fear the LORD your God always
Yes, fear Him for length of days

But if the journey is too long for you
So that you are not able to carry the tithe, such you cannot do
Or if the place where the LORD your God chooses to put His name
-----is too far from you
When the LORD your God has blessed you

Then you shall exchange it for money
Take the money in your hand
And go to the place which the LORD your God chooses
That fair and pleasant land

And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires:
For oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink
For whatever your heart desires
You shall eat there before the LORD your God and in your mind
-----thus, shall you think...

And you shall rejoice, you and your household
You shall rejoice, just as you have now been told

You shall not forsake the Levite who is within your gates
-----such you shall not do
For he has no part nor inheritance with you

“At the end of every third year
You shall bring out, as this law states
The tithe of your produce of that year
And store it up within your gates

And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you
And the stranger and the fatherless and the widow too
Who are within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied
That the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your

-----hand which you do

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 15:1-11 **(Ha'Shemitah - The Remission)**

The passage today deals with a precept known as the *shemitah*. It is a precept that is a part of the Law of Moses. Before we get too far along, there are a few questions for me to see how theologically sound you are:

- 1) Who was the Law of Moses given to?
- 2) Does the Law of Moses pertain to anyone else?
- 3) Through Christ's work, what is the state of the Law of Moses?

Because the *shemitah* is a part of the law of Moses, because the law of Moses only applied to Israel under the law, and because the law of Moses is annulled in Christ – for any who come to Christ, the *shemitah* has nothing to do with anything in our world today – nothing. That is, except as it is typologically fulfilled for us when we come to Christ.

In other words, and as an example: The Day of Atonement was for Israel alone, for Israel under the law, and it is fulfilled in Christ. The only thing about the Day of Atonement relevant to us now is how it is fulfilled for us in Christ. He is our propitiation. He is our Atoning Sacrifice.

The *shemitah* is no different. I bring this up, because there is a gigantically popular teaching, by a Jewish guy, that says that those nations who fail to follow the precepts of the *shemitah* will be judged by God for not doing so.

In particular, he focuses heavily on America, claiming that our national calamities are based on a rotating cycle of the *shemitah*. This is not just extremely unsound theology, it is heresy. The problem with him is that he has no idea what he is talking about, on this, or on a host of other issues that he claims spiritual insights into.

And the next problem is that because he is Jewish, people immediately associate him with being a specialist on all things Bible-related. That is a logical fallacy known as a genetic fallacy.

A genetic fallacy occurs when a claim is accepted as true or false based on the origin of the claim. "My parents told me that God exists; therefore, God exists." In this case "Jonathan Cahn is a Jew; therefore, his biblical insights are valid."

It is a scary place to be for those who hold to this, it is unprofitable (except for the one who makes stuff up in this capacity), and it results in misinformed people who have no idea about what something – such as the *shemita* – is in the Bible for. I will give you a hint: Think Jesus.

Text Verse: *“And Moses commanded them, saying: “At the end of every seven years, at the appointed time in the year of **release**, at the Feast of Tabernacles, ¹¹ when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing.” Deuteronomy 31:10, 11*

I chose this for our text verse because the *shemita* is mentioned only five times in Scripture. Four of those times are in the passage we are looking at today, and the final time is in the passage from Deuteronomy 31. That is all of the information that we have on it. Anything brought up, or claimed, apart from those verses has nothing to do with what Scripture teaches.

As we will see today, the year of release was at the same time as the seventh-year sabbath. If you remember from Leviticus 25, the Year of Jubilee occurred after seven of these cycles, in the fiftieth year. It’s important to understand that there is no biblical record of the year of Jubilee ever being observed, nor of which year it was started, even if it was ever observed.

Further, it could not have been observed during times of exile. And more, the *shemita* year does not correspond to the year of Jubilee. Rather, it precedes it. And more, there is no biblical record of the *shemita* being observed, nor is it known if anyone ever observed it while in exile. And more, if it was observed, nobody knows the first year that it was observed.

In other words, based on Scripture alone, nobody knows when any of these mandates were observed, or even if they were ever observed even once. This should clue people into the fact that the mandates given in the law are typical of Christ. That is the reason they are included. Nothing else about them is relevant to the biblical narrative. If you bought the book, you wasted your money.

Stick with the Bible and you will be far better off. Great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. A Release to the Lord (verses 1-6)

The transition from Chapter 14 to 15 is interesting. Chapter 14 ended with the thought of the third year of tithing which especially is intended for the care of the poor, even though the tithe is designated for Levi, it extends to the poor of the land. Now, Chapter 15 begins with a seven-year period, also pertaining to the care of the poor.

The number ten, as in the tithe, signifies *the perfection of Divine order*. The number three, as in the year of the tithe, signifies that which is *solid, real, substantial, complete, and entire*. The number seven, as in this year of release, is the number of *spiritual perfection*.

There is a harmonious working together of the various concepts in order to reveal how these things anticipate the work of Christ in redemptive history. The words of the law find their fulfillment in what He has accomplished. Understanding that, we begin...

¹“At the end of every seven years you shall grant a release of debts.

miqets sheva shanim taaseh shemitah – “From end seven years you shall make remission.” The meaning of “end” is not “after seven years,” but “the end of the seven-year cycle,” meaning the seventh year is what is being discussed.

This was seen already in Leviticus. It is not “seven and then,” but “six and then.” Each six-year period is followed by a special one-year time of remission. This is the same as the year of tithe of the previous chapter. It was not “three and then,” but “two and then.”

Here is introduced the word, *shemitah*, or “remission.” This is the first of five times it will be used, all in Deuteronomy, and with four of them in this chapter. It means, “a letting drop,” and thus a remitting. The word comes from *shamat*, signifying to let drop or even cast down. The precept here follows from Exodus 21:2 –

“If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing.” Exodus 21:2

However, and before continuing, the precept concerning Hebrew slaves being released in the seventh year is one that is debated over. Does this mean the year of remission now being looked at, or does it mean six years of service regardless of the year of release? That will be evaluated when we get to verse 12. The next reference is found in Exodus 23 –

“Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its produce, ¹¹ but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat. In like manner you shall do with your vineyard *and* your olive grove.” Exodus 23:10, 11

This allowance is the seventh year Sabbath of the land. It is not the same provision as the *shemittah*, but it surely is the same seven-year period. One is a Sabbath of the land, the other is a release from debts. The Sabbath of the land is then further detailed in Leviticus 25 –

“When you come into the land which I give you, then the land shall keep a sabbath to the LORD. ³ Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather its fruit; ⁴ but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the LORD. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard. ⁵ What grows of its own accord of your harvest you shall not reap, nor gather the grapes of your untended vine, *for* it is a year of rest for the land. ⁶ And the sabbath *produce* of the land shall be food for you: for you, your male and female servants, your hired man, and the stranger who dwells with you, ⁷ for your livestock and the beasts that *are* in your land—all its produce shall be for food.” Leviticus 25:2-7

To understand all the details, it would be good to go back and review those particular sermons. Moses is now giving a new stipulation to be performed on this sacred seventh year.

One could look at this as an expansion of what has been thus far presented. A remission, or letting go, of all debts is to be made. As Moses next says...

² And this *is* the form of the release:

v'zeh debar ha'shemittah – “And this word the remission.” In other words, “What will now be stated is the principle set forth for the remission.” And that word is...

^{2 (con't)} Every creditor who has lent *anything* to his neighbor shall release *it*;

shamot kal baal masheh yadow asher yasheh b'reehu – “shall let drop every master of the loan of his hand who has lent in his neighbor.” Here is a word found only this once in Scripture, *masheh*. It means a loan. It is from the verb *nashah*, also found in this verse, which means to lend.

The picture is made vibrant with the words. The owner of the loan is to open his hand and simply let it fall to the ground. From there, Moses says...

² (con't) **he shall not require *it* of his neighbor or his brother,**

lo yigos eth reehu v'eth akhiv – “no exacting *of* his neighbor and *of* his brother.” The word *nagas* is used. It is from a root signifying to drive an animal. It was used of the harsh taskmasters over the people while in Egypt. It gives the sense of coming hard after the one with the debt.

This was not to be done to neighbor or brother, but the meaning of this has to be drawn from the surrounding context. A person may have a non-Hebrew neighbor. For him, this did not apply. Thus, “neighbor” is further defined as “brother.” In other words, this is referring to dealings solely between the Hebrew people.

² (con't) **because it is called the LORD's release.**

ki qara shemitaH l'Yehovah – “for called, ‘remission to Yehovah.’” In other words, one could paraphrase this as, “because proclamation has been made of the Lord's release” (Barnes). This is not a release in a general sense, but it is a release to the Lord.” This year of remission is, like the Sabbath year, to honor the Lord.

It was to be an acknowledgment of their position before the Lord, and they were to deal with their neighbor as the Lord would deal with them. In the end, they are the Lord's people, they were stewards of His land, and they were the recipients of His kindness.

To honor Him because of these things, they were to thus act accordingly with their fellow Hebrews. This continues to be seen in the next words...

³ **Of a foreigner you may require *it*;**

Here it speaks of the *nokri*, or stranger. It signifies a foreigner or alien, thus someone outside of the covenant people. This is not a mark of superiority over them, nor is it a mark of severity of treatment towards them.

The reason for this is because they were not bound to the same laws as Israel. While Israel was obligated to not sow, plow, or prune during the Sabbath year, the strangers were not under that obligation. Hence, they would have the usual income as during any

other year. Thus, they were expected to pay their debts. Such was not the case with Israel. As this was so....

³ (con't) **but you shall give up your claim to what is owed by your brother,**

v'asher yihyeh lekha eth akhikha tashmet yadekha – “and which become to you your brother you shall let drop your hand.” The greatest debate concerning this remission is whether it applies only during the seventh year, or if it is permanent. If during the seventh year, it means that the debt is let go of, or released, during that year, but it can then be picked up again in the next year.

This is the view that most scholars take. Keil uses Exodus 23:11 to justify this view. There, using the same word, it says –

“Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its produce, ¹¹ but the seventh *year you shall let it rest* and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat. In like manner you shall do with your vineyard *and* your olive grove.” Exodus 23:11

His analysis says, “it must be interpreted in the same manner here as there. And as it is not used there to denote the entire renunciation of a field or possession, so here it cannot mean the entire renunciation of what had been lent, but simply leaving it, i.e., not pressing for it during the seventh year.”

One does not logically follow after the other. How someone can see a precept that instructs someone to not plow a field for a year equate directly to canceling a debt for only one year is hard to follow. The point of releasing a debt is to restore a person to a debt-free, productive state. The point of not plowing one’s field was for the field to renourish itself and to provide for the poor.

It goes against everything that the Lord does for His people to say that the remission of the debt is only for a temporary period. Even Jesus spoke of this precept in Luke 7 –

“There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?” Luke 7:41, 42

Jesus went on to equate the woman weeping at his feet with the one who knew she owed a great debt. When He went on to say to the woman in verse 48, “Your sins are forgiven,” He didn’t mean they were forgiven, but would be remembered again someday. He meant that they were forgiven forever.

⁴ except when there may be no poor among you;

ephes ki lo yihyeh b’kha evyon – “End: for no may become in you poor.” The words are widely translated, many simply passing over the word *ephes*, or end. It signifies a ceasing, an end, an uttermost part, and so on. What is surely being conveyed is not “except” as the NKJV says. Verse 11 clearly and unambiguously says there will always be poor among the people.

What is being conveyed is, “For the end purpose of there being no poor among you.” This was to be a remedy to alleviate the poor from the land. As more poor people cropped up in the next six years, they were to then be given the same relief.

The remission of this debt for those who had come into poverty was an act of the Lord’s mercy. It is His law, and it is His provision within the law. To not obey the precept then reflected a disobedience to His command as well as a lack of faith in the Lord. The lack of faith is because of what Moses next says...

^{4 (con’t)} for the LORD will greatly bless you in the land

It is a statement of surety: *ki barekh yebarekha Yehovah ba’arets* – “For blessing will bless you Yehovah in the land.” It is a precept that is found several times in the Proverbs, such as –

“He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD,
And He will pay back what he has given.” Proverbs 19:17

What seems contradictory, but which is taken almost as an axiom in Scripture, is that the person who gives generously generally receives increase because of what he has given. In the case of Israel, the Lord – through Moses – indicates that in being obedient to the precept, He will bless them abundantly in the land...

^{4 (con’t)} which the LORD your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance—

They are the often-repeated words of Deuteronomy, something which forms its own emphasis. The Lord is the Giver of the land. Israel is the recipient of the land. As this is so, then Israel has a responsibility to act in accord with the precepts of law. In failing to pay heed, they can just as easily be dispossessed from what they possess. As Moses next conveys to them...

⁵ only if you carefully obey the voice of the LORD your God,

raq im shamo'a tishma b'qol Yehovah elohekha – “ONLY if hearing you will hear the voice of Yehovah your God.” The word *raq* is used in a limiting sense. This is how things are, but only if certain conditions are met. If they are not, then the promise of blessing cannot be anticipated, nor will it be forthcoming.

Also, the words here once again reveal the doctrine of divine inspiration. Moses is the one speaking, and yet he explicitly states that what he is saying is the voice of Yehovah. That continues to be seen in his next words...

^{5 (con't)} to observe with care all these commandments which I command you today.

The translation is incorrect. It says *lishmor laasot eth kal ha'mitsvah* – “to watch to do all the commandment.” It is singular, not plural. It is one commandment even if it is made up of various precepts, statutes, and judgments. To neglect one part of the whole is to fail to observe the commandment.

Moses just spoke of hearing, meaning hearkening to, the Lord's voice. He now says that His voice is conveyed in “all the commandment which I command you.”

Moses is carefully relaying to Israel that what he is speaking out is, in fact, the voice of the Lord. What he says is to be considered as conveyed by Yehovah himself. Therefore, if the people are obedient to the commandment, they can expect the blessing that comes with the commandment. As he next says...

⁶ For the LORD your God will bless you just as He promised you;

The Hebrew is in the perfect form and is thus stronger: “For the Lord your God has blessed you.” The meaning is that His favor is on them, and it will continue on them if they are careful to keep the commandment. For this reason, there is no excuse to oppress one another.

They are blessed and that will continue, so why should dropping a loan in the seventh year even be considered an inconvenience? They were given grace, and they needed to be gracious and merciful as well. And because of the Lord's blessing...

⁶ (con't) **you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow;**

v'haavata goyim rabim v'atah lo taavot – “and you shall lend nations many, and you no shall borrow.” Here is a new and rather rare verb, *avat*. It comes from the noun *avot* which is an article that is pledged. Thus, it can mean to lend or to borrow depending on the form of the verb. Both meanings are used in this one clause.

This verb, *avat*, is closely related to the word *eved*, translated as “servant.” The connection is easily seen in the proverb –

“The rich rules over the poor,
And the borrower *is* servant to the lender.” Proverbs 22:7

In lending to the nations, they would become debtor nations of whom Israel would then rule...

⁶ (con't) **you shall reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over you.**

This was certainly fulfilled during the reign of David and then Solomon, but it is also true that other nations reigned over Israel from the time of the Judges and on occasionally. Thus, it shows that Israel was not obedient to the commandment. If they were, such would not have been the case.

Nehemiah even explicitly states this during his lengthy prayer of confession to the Lord while using the same word that Moses now uses. Thus, admitting that they had failed to do as he instructed –

“Here we *are*, servants today!
And the land that You gave to our fathers,
To eat its fruit and its bounty,
Here we *are*, servants in it!
³⁷ And it yields much increase to the kings
You have set over us,
Because of our sins;
Also **they have dominion** over our bodies and our cattle

At their pleasure;
And we *are* in great distress.” Nehemiah 9:36, 37

*Obey the voice of the Lord your God
Observe that which He has spoken to you
Be careful to observe in this life you trod
This is what I am instructing you*

*You are to release all debts in the seventh year
You shall do this because I have so instructed you
Do not worry about the loss; you shall not fear
Just be obedient; to the precept remain true*

*And I will bless you with a blessing in all that you do
Things will turn out fine, if you hearken to my word
Good things shall come upon you
If you just carefully observe all you have heard*

II. You Shall Open Your Hand Wide (verses 7-11)

Of the following 5 verses, there is a decidedly chiasmic structure –

Deuteronomy 15:7-11 The Seventh Year, the Year of Release
Taking care of the needy (1/25/21)

- a. you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother
- b. but you shall open your hand wide
- c. lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs
- d. Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart
- x. The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand
- d. and your eye be evil against your poor brother and you give him nothing
- c. You shall surely give to him
- b. You shall open your hand wide
- a. to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land

⁷ **“If there is among you a poor man of your brethren,**

ki yihyeh b'kha evyon me'akhad akhekha – “For become in you poor from one your brothers.” The Hebrew reads as it did in verse 4, *b'kha* – “in you.” Moses has been consistently speaking in the singular.

At times, such as now, it is surely speaking of the nation, “in you, Israel. At times, he is probably referring to each individual. You, Israelite, are to do this. The entire passage is being kept very personal. Here, when he speaks of a person in Israel, he says that person is “in you.” One of the people within the body becomes needy. Moses then further defines him saying...

^{7 (con't)} **within any of the gates in your land which the LORD your God is giving you,**

Being within the gates signifies closeness. It would also generally signify not just a Hebrew brother, but a person probably within the same tribe of Israel. But regardless of that, Moses again notes that it is in the land given to them by the Lord.

They did nothing to merit what they possessed, and yet they possessed the land. Further, they lived within the gate of the land, implying security. And yet, there is a brother who is not secure. He is, rather, in need. If so...

^{7 (con't)} **you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother,**

To harden the heart is to be equated with searing one's conscience. The heart is the seat of reasoning and understanding. And yet, one can purposefully say, “I see no reason to help this person. He got himself into his pickle and so he can get himself out.” In this, he will then shut his hand.

It is a new word, *qaphats*, translated as “shut.” It comes from a primitive root meaning to draw together. One can think of walking by the poor guy, thinking his evil thoughts, and then clenching his hand so that no chance of money being passed on to him could occur. And yet, this person is in a land that was given to him, and he is living securely within the gates of a city of the land. Thus...

⁸ **but you shall open your hand wide to him**

ki phatoakh tiphtakh eth yadekha lo – “for opening you shall open your hand to him.” Notice the contrast: Shutting hand, bad. Widely opening, good. The sense is just the opposite of the last thought. The miserly person will literally clench his fist as he

encounters poverty Pete, but the people are to instead not just open the hand, but to open it generously.

Obviously, the hand is being used in place of what the hand possesses. Therefore, a wide-open hand signifies gracious and abundant giving. And more...

8 (con't) and willingly lend him sufficient for his need,

Moses uses the same word, *avat*, that was introduced in verse 6, and it is repeated for emphasis: *v'haavet taavitenu dei makhsoro* – “and lending, you shall lend sufficient his need.” In other words, this stress is said in contrast to the hardened heart. Thus, the paraphrase of “willingly” is well stated.

Also, there is another new word here, *makhsor*. It signifies a lack or a need. It is the noun form of the more common verb found in the next clause...

8 (con't) whatever he needs.

asher yekhsar lo – “whatever needs to him.” This is added to ensure that the idea of the stresses in the previous two clauses are perfectly understood. If he needs five dollars, you are to open your hand. If he needs five thousand dollars, you are to open your hand. He has a need. If you can meet the need, you are to do so. And this is especially to be considered at all times, excepting none...

9 Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart,

The Hebrew is very forceful: *hishamer lekha pen yihyeh davar im l'vavekha veliyaal* – “Watch to you! Lest become word in to your heart – worthless.”

The person knows that he is supposed to help out his fellow Hebrew. But then he suddenly realizes that if he does, he will lose his money in doing so. It is a worthless thought set in contrast to the high value of what this poor person needs. That thought is...

9 (con't) saying, 'The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand,'

qarevah shenat ha'sheva ha'shemitah – “Is near year the seventh, the remission.” In other words, the person has to pay back any loans during the first six years, but in the

seventh year, the loan is to be forgiven. But then he thinks, “Wait! This is the third month of the sixth year.” In less than a year, I will have to let the loan drop.”

It is a worthless thought to the Lord, and it is not to be considered. It is the Lord’s land, this guy belongs to His people, the law was given by Him, and there can be no excuse for withholding what he is supposed to willingly provide.

These words surely indicate that the remission of the debts is not a temporary, one year, remission to be taken up again after the *shemittah*. Rather, the year of remission means the debt is to be forgiven – wholly and entirely – forever. Otherwise, the importance of these words would be wholly without merit. The remission was to be forever. Thus, the wrong attitude creeps in...

^{9 (con’t)} **and your eye be evil against your poor brother and you give him nothing,**

Here it says, “and your eye be evil *b’akhikha*, or in your brother.” Again, the words of Moses are close and personal throughout the entire passage. Whether speaking of Israel in the singular, or speaking to the individual of Israel, the words demonstrate evident closeness in the matter at hand.

The evil eye is an eye of wickedness. It is uncaring, greedy, and so on. Jesus uses the term in the New Testament, first in a parable –

“Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?’ ¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen.” Matthew 20:15, 16

And again, in general discourse He says –

“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, ²² thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. ²³ All these evil things come from within and defile a man.” Mark 7:21-23

If someone is to be this way, it will not go unnoticed...

^{9 (con’t)} **and he cry out to the LORD against you, and it become sin among you.**

Again, it is close and personal, “and become in you sin.” The *shemitah* is “to Yehovah.” Thus, in neglecting the need of the needy, it is an attack against the precept of the Lord. And the precept of the Lord is to be considered as a representation of the character and moral nature of the Lord.

To treat this matter as such is to trample on the name of the Lord who designated the *shemitah* in the first place. In such a situation, the imputation of sin is a given. To avoid such a thing...

¹⁰ You shall surely give to him,

The Hebrew is again emphatic, “Giving you shall give to him.” Despite the coming year of remission, there should be no consideration at all of that fact. Rather...

¹⁰ (con’t) and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him,

This is set in contrast to the words, “lest there be a wicked thought in your heart.” Instead of entertaining a worthless thought, there should be no evil in the heart, but rather a sense of joy. This is because it is in accord with the law, it is right towards a fellow Israelite, and it is pleasing in the sight of the Lord who gave the command in the first place. As Moses says...

¹⁰ (con’t) because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you

The word translated as “because” is *galal*. It is a noun coming from the verb *galal* which means “to roll.” In other words, in doing right, blessing will roll back upon the right-doer. And that will be...

¹⁰ (con’t) in all your works and in all to which you put your hand.

The words translated as “put your hand” signify an outstretching of the hand. This takes the reader right back to verses 7 and 8 where Moses said to not shut the hand, but to open it wide. In the act of the unclenched hand, blessing will come back upon the all works of that person’s outstretched hand.

¹¹ For the poor will never cease from the land;

The point of opening the hand wide is to alleviate the plight of the poor who arise in the land. Life is time and chance according to Solomon. In this, circumstances change, and

difficult conditions arise for even the most industrious or talented soul. The Lord doesn't interfere in these things.

He allows people to make decisions and some of them will be poorly made. This is why the poor will never cease from the land. The *shemitah* was given to alleviate this and to restore such brothers through the remission of debt. In this, the poor will be restored. It is the Lord's land, they are His people, and these are His precepts. And so, Moses says...

***11 (fin) therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land.'**

Moses repeats his words from verse 8, "opening you shall open," thus stressing the importance of the matter. The hand is to be extended and what comes to it is to be given away without consideration of the year of remission.

But Moses extends the thought now to close out the passage by adding in another word to describe his plight, *ani*. It signifies one who is humbled, lowly, or afflicted.

The idea for adding this in is surely to contrast the blessing that lies ahead for tending to his need. He is humbled; you will be blessed. He is lowly; you will be exalted. He is needy; you will be filled.

*The shemitah has come and I must let go of what you owe
And I know that it is the right thing to do
It would be great if I got it all back, but even so
The Lord has instructed that I provide remission to you*

*And who can argue with that? It is a small thing to do
When everything came from Him in the first place
And all along, He has been faithful and true
From Him has come goodness as a smile from His face*

*I know that from Him has come so much more
Than anything that I could ever have returned from you
He has given more than I could ever ask for
Certainly, this is a small thing he asks me to do*

III. The *Shemitah*. Fulfilled in Christ.

In Luke 6, Jesus said –

“And if you lend *to those* from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. ³⁶ Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.” Luke 6:34-36

The *shemitah* anticipates the state of all people who are the Lord’s. Through sin, we have become poor before God. In our poverty, we have a debt we cannot pay. The *shemitah* of Israel was given to anticipate this. It is a correction of our impoverished and needy state.

Jesus saw us in our poverty, and He has given to us freely, asking nothing in return. He extended His hand and paid the debt that we could not pay. And He brought us back to a right standing before God.

The word *shemitah* signifies a letting drop. One opens his hand and lets go of what it holds. Thus, it is a remission. In the New Testament, the noun translated as remission is *aphesis*. It is derived from the verb *aphiémi*, that carries essentially the same meaning, to let go. Thus, *aphesis* is a letting go, and thus forgiveness.

In Hebrews 9:22, the author tells us, “And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.” The Lord, through Moses, told the people of Israel to “let go” of the paltry money they held in their hands in order to restore their fellow brother to a right standing, free from the impoverished state that he could not correct.

In Christ, the Lord let go of the most precious thing, His life, in order to restore us to a right standing before God, free from the impoverished state we were in and that we could not correct.

And the Lord, through Moses, told the people of Israel not to even take into consideration the wicked thought of the heart that would say, “The seventh year, the year of remission, is at hand.” The nearer the day of release, the more likely there would be loss, and the higher the loss was sure to be.

And the Lord, through Christ, was willing to provide us remission even up to the last moment of our existence, where not even a single work could be worked back in some

attempt to repay the infinite debt that we owed. This is the lesson of the first recorded death after that of the Lord Himself –

“Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, ‘If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.’

⁴⁰ But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, ‘Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? ⁴¹ And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.’ ⁴² Then he said to Jesus, ‘Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.’

⁴³ And Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.’” Luke 23:39-43

The time of *shemitah* was coming, the criminal had no way of paying the debt he owed, he implored his Brother Israelite, and the letting go, the remission, was granted. To see the end of the account, but which is not the end of the story, one has to continue on to the Gospel of John –

“Therefore, because it was the Preparation *Day*, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away. ³² Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him.” John 19:31, 32

As far as recorded history goes, these are the first two people who died after the death of the Lord. And what a difference between the two.

For the one, God was his Creditor, and Christ is the remission of his debt because he identified with Him. Though a debtor with a debt he could not pay, the Lord – through His shed blood – became the means of God’s letting go. And that, even though the time of remission was – literally – moments away.

God got nothing in repayment. Not a single tract handed out, not a single person to lead into the kingdom, not a single Sunday morning saying, “It’s the Lord’s Day again. Thank you, JESUS, for having saved me.” Nothing was repaid, and yet God, through Christ extended His hand out to him and forgave the debt.

The other criminal with Jesus did not identify with Him, and his debt to God remained unpaid. For him, there is no remission, no letting go, no *shemitah*.

I once watched a History Channel program on what it means to be saved. During the program, a Baptist minister was interviewed. He openly and boastfully proclaimed that he did not accept the premise that someone who had lived a bad life, right up until the end, could be saved.

He said, "There is no deathbed forgiveness." That person neither understood the premise of the *shemita*, nor does he understand how it points to Christ – meaning, he does not understand the meaning of the word "grace."

I find it probable that such a lifelong sinner on the deathbed with a heart that has called out to God through Christ is more likely to be saved than that ridiculous minister who has spent his life working for what he cannot earn and trying to pay a debt that he cannot pay.

The *shemita* was given to end the cycle of human debt and poverty that we find ourselves trapped in. But it is only open to those who are the Lord's. The provision was not granted to the foreigner. But God in Christ took care of that, calling all people near through the blood of Christ, *if* they will simply respond and identify with Him. In doing so, we are accepted, and in Him, the *shemita*, the letting go, the remission, is given.

The premise in this was that there would be no poor among the Lord's people, and indeed, He not only brought that about, but He made us rich in Christ in the process. Paul says –

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."
-2 Corinthians 8:9

Imagine someone in Israel walking around finding every single person that needed help and giving to them all. In doing so, he would bring himself to a state of poverty. Who would do that? God in Christ would. And God in Christ did.

He offers to do so for you as well. Today is the day. Your time for needing remission is at hand, and the Lord already knows when you are going to die. It may be today, or it may be many long years from now. But He has graciously offered to help you out, even if you will never pay back a penny. He is a great God, a wonderful Lord, and a marvelous Savior. He is JESUS.

Closing Verse: *"...in whom we have the redemption through his blood, the remission of the trespasses, according to the riches of His grace." Ephesians 1:7 (YLT)*

After giving the sermon, I received some insightful thoughts from a friend, Chris Smith. Please enjoy his thoughts -

The sermon mentions, "The stranger the fatherless and the widow." Christ was offered in the third year of his ministry, so I see a parallel to the 3rd year tithe. The stranger reflects the state of the gentiles (Ephesians 2:12). The orphan, those cut off from the Father. And the widow, those that need a kinsman-redeemer. I find the term "a third" referenced as interesting in that Jesus is a third of the Godhead offered for the poor. The first two years they (Israel) consumed their portion or tithe for themselves, as Christ stated that He came for the lost children of Israel, but after that, the blessing was to go to everyone else who needed it. In essence, Jesus is our tithe! The abundance God gave us. Also, for those that were far away, they can change their blessing which had become a burden for money. In Hebrew, "silver." Silver represents redemption and blood. Jesus said, "come to me you who are heavy laden and I will give you rest for my burden is light." Judas was paid the price of a Female slave....you could Also say Christ paid for us with 30 pieces of silver and his blood to make our burden light taking on our sin debt so that we can be in the presence of God and rejoice in the Lord.

Next Week: Isaiah 26:19 What Power does the Resurrection Give?... (Your Dead Shall Live) (Resurrection Day Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Ha'Shemitah - The Remission

"At the end of every seven years you shall grant a release of debts
And this is the form of the release:
Every creditor who has lent anything to his neighbor
Shall release it; the obligation shall cease

He shall not require it of his neighbor or his brother
Because it is called the LORD's release, this name and not another
Of a foreigner you may require it

But you shall give up your claim to what is owed by your brother

Except when there may be no poor among you
For the LORD will greatly bless you in the land
Which the LORD your God is giving you
To possess as an inheritance, from His open hand

Only if you carefully obey the voice of the LORD your God
Pay heed, please, to what I say
To observe with care all these commandments
Which I command you today

For the LORD your God will bless you just as He promised you
You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow
You shall reign over many nations
But they shall not reign over you – not today, and not tomorrow

“If there is among you a poor man of your brethren
Within any of the gates in your land which the LORD your God
-----is giving you
You shall not harden your heart
Nor shut your hand from your poor brother, such you shall not do

But you shall open your hand wide to him
-----such shall be your deeds
And willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs

Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart, saying
‘The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand
And your eye be evil against your poor brother
And you give him nothing; such wickedness you have planned

And he cry out to the LORD against you
And it become sin among you
You shall surely give to him
And your heart should not be grieved when you give to him
-----as you are instructed to do

Because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you

In all your works and in all to which you put your hand
This shall certainly be the case
For the poor will never cease from the land

Therefore I command you, saying
'You shall open your hand wide to your brother
To your poor and your needy, in your land
Be sure to not simply pass it on to another

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 15:12-23 **(The Lord Your God Redeemed You)**

The verses today are broken into two separate concepts. The first is that of the Hebrew slave, which is followed by the law of the firstborn of the flock and herd.

As we saw from an example in the last passage (the Shemitah), it is fashionable to take portions of the Law of Moses and try to inject them into the modern world, as if God is still working out His precepts under the law in our lives today.

If this were so, there ostensibly should be such books dealing with the same things from all of the other passages as well. But curiously, nobody is writing books like that about Hebrew slaves or the disposition of the firstborn animals.

The reason for this is that these things do not find their substance in the world today. Rather, the reality of them is found solely in Jesus Christ and in our relationship to Him. The world at large has nothing to do with the Law of Moses. Our only connection to it at all is in our relationship to Him.

It is man's natural desire to place himself into the redemptive narrative in relation to his current time and place. Since Christ ascended, people have done this. They have inserted the Roman Empire into it, they have inserted England or America into it. And so on.

And one would be hard-pressed to find a single generation of scholars that did not write as if the book of Revelation or the coming of Christ was dealing with their specific timeframe. It is problematic but it is our human nature to want it to be so.

Instead, He has given us the overall picture of what is coming. However, He has reserved most of the details for Himself. Our futile attempts at filling in the blanks are counterproductive at best.

Text Verse: *“And He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.’” Acts 1:7, 8*

It might seem like an odd text verse for a sermon from Deuteronomy, but it is used here to remind us that we have a job to do. That job will end when the Lord returns for us. In

the meantime, we are to work on the conversion of others, make disciples, and be witnesses to what we know.

And the fact is that the more we know about the Law of Moses, the more we will understand God's workings in redemptive history and how it all points to the Person of Jesus Christ. That is absolutely certain. In the passage today are all kinds of things that will increase our knowledge, firm up our doctrine, and help us to better understand what God has done.

For example, it is often argued whether salvation is eternal or not. Verses are used, or misused, to justify one stand or another, but we have already seen – numerous times and right out of the law itself – which is correct. We will see that again today.

God provides typology so that we can be more assured in our doctrine because of what that typology presents. The two will always work harmoniously together. Let us be sure of this and let us be grounded in our faith.

Great things, such as the doctrine of eternal salvation are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. A Servant Forever (verses 12-18)

¹² **"If your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman,**

This law follows after what was given in Exodus 21:1-11. Due to its being placed immediately after the giving of the Ten Commandments and the law of the Earthen Altar, it is obviously an important point.

There are some differences between what is stated here and what was given in Exodus 21, especially the more detailed words concerning the rights of the female in that previous passage. Here in Deuteronomy, it uses the feminine form of the word "Hebrew," *ha'ivriyah*. This is found only here and in Jeremiah 34:9.

In Exodus, there are rights and protections for the female that was brought into a state of betrothal within the household. This passage here doesn't refer to that, but only speaks of a Hebrew man or woman who has been sold into bondage. That is seen in the next words...

12 (con't) **is sold to you and serves you six years,**

The repeating pattern of six leading to a seventh is seen again here. God created six days and then rested. The Sabbath called for six days of work and then rest. There were to be six years of harvesting and then a seventh year of having the ground lay fallow. There were to be six years where debts were acceptable, but they were to be released on the seventh. And so on. In this case, there is six years of servitude for the Hebrew or Hebrewess...

12 (con't) **then in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you.**

The cycle completes with the granting of freedom. God created and then was free from His labors, man worked, and then was freed from his labors, and so on. Here, there is a time of servitude, and then a mandated release from that state.

The word is *khophshi*. It was introduced in Exodus 21 and it has not been used since then. It is an adjective signifying free, or liberty. It is debated as to whether this means a full six years of work and then freedom, or if the person was to be freed in the Hebrew year of release which is a rotating seven-year period.

If the latter, it would mean they were to be released whether they had been slaves for any time up to six years. When the year of release came, release was to be granted. In other words, a Hebrew could serve *no more* than six years at the outside.

There is nothing specific to justify this interpretation. One must suppose this, but there is nothing to disprove it. And more, the year of release that we looked at last week specifically referred to the event. This does not. It states six followed by the seventh without any qualifiers. This is true each time the precept is mentioned.

Leviticus 25 is more detailed concerning slavery, such as noting that a slave can be redeemed from that state at any point. If not redeemed during that time, he was to be released at the seventh year.

However, Leviticus 25 also detailed what is known as the Year of Jubilee. Every Hebrew slave, with but one exception, was to be released in the fiftieth year *regardless* of how many years he had been a slave.

It would make no sense to mention that provision while not specifically speaking of the same during the seven-year cycle. Thus, the Hebrew slave was to work six and be freed

on the seventh. The only exception is the Year of Jubilee. It is this exact provision, and the failure to abide by it, that brought about the Lord's wrath in Jeremiah –

Therefore the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, ¹³ “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: ‘I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, saying, ¹⁴ “At the end of seven years let every man set free his Hebrew brother, who has been sold to him; and when he has served you six years, you shall let him go free from you.” But your fathers did not obey Me nor incline their ear. ¹⁵ Then you recently turned and did what was right in My sight—every man proclaiming liberty to his neighbor; and you made a covenant before Me in the house which is called by My name. ¹⁶ Then you turned around and profaned My name, and every one of you brought back his male and female slaves, whom you had set at liberty, at their pleasure, and brought them back into subjection, to be your male and female slaves.’” Jeremiah 34:12-16

Because of their failure to uphold this provision of the law, the Lord promised He would judge them, saying –

“‘You have not obeyed Me in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother and every one to his neighbor. Behold, I proclaim liberty to you,’ says the LORD—‘to the sword, to pestilence, and to famine! And I will deliver you to trouble among all the kingdoms of the earth.’” Jeremiah 34:17

¹³ And when you send him away free from you, you shall not let him go away empty-handed;

It is obvious that after six years of slavery, if a person who had originally been sold into slavery because of poverty was set free with no provision, that person would immediately have to sell himself into bondage once again. This was not to occur.

The idea here follows after the Sabbath cycle. In the giving of the Ten Commandments, the Lord said, “Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it” (Exodus 20:11). And more to the point, in the initial giving of the Sabbath, it said –

“And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.” Exodus 16:5

In other words, the Lord did not just take care of the people for six days and then tell them to rest on the seventh without any provisions. Rather, He provided *before* the Sabbath so that in their time of release from work, they would be well supplied. The same is true with the seventh year Sabbath of the land –

“And if you say, ‘What shall we eat in the seventh year, since we shall not sow nor gather in our produce?’” ²¹ Then I will command My blessing on you in the sixth year, and it will bring forth produce enough for three years. ²² And you shall sow in the eighth year, and eat old produce until the ninth year; until its produce comes in, you shall eat *of* the old *harvest*.” Leviticus 25:20-22

This precept was seen in the previous sermon as well. Verses 9 and 10 presuppose that the people are to be gracious enough that the year of release will be a time of increase for the one who was given that release. Hence, Moses instructs for the released slave that...

¹⁴ **you shall supply him liberally**

There is a stress in the words: *haaneq taaniq lo* – “As a necklace, you shall necklace him.” It is a new verb in Scripture, *anaq*, meaning to serve as a necklace. It is found these two times and then once in the Psalms, where it says –

“Therefore pride serves as their necklace;
Violence covers them *like* a garment.” Psalm 73:6

The symbolism, then, is that of the owner heaping up all kinds of goods upon the person so that he will have a new start to life after his years of bondage. This is an addition to the law at Sinai. When the law was first given, it said, “If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing” (Exodus 21:2).

Instead of simply going out without paying for his freedom, exactly the opposite was to be the case. He was to go out necklaced with abundance. Moses says these goods are to be...

¹⁴ (con't) **from your flock, from your threshing floor, and from your winepress.**

The words here follow after those of the previous chapter in the tithing verses –

“And you shall eat before the Lord your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil, of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks, that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always.” Deuteronomy 14:23

It is certain that if the man had a Hebrew slave, a part of that slave’s work would involve care of these things. Thus, the owner benefited from the labors of the slave. As this was the case, the slave should be cared for from those labors as well. This is certainly the case because Moses next says...

14 (con’t) *From what the LORD your God has blessed you with, you shall give to him.*

This follows from the next verse of Chapter 14 which said, “when the Lord your God has blessed you.” The Lord has blessed the owner through the slave. His work has brought increase, and so it is right that he should be weighed down with a portion of that after his six years of labor. And there is a specific reasoning behind this that Moses once again brings up...

15 *You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you;*

The idea of having been slaves in Egypt, and having been redeemed from there by the Lord, has been repeated numerous times already in Deuteronomy, but it is also poignantly stated elsewhere as well. In Leviticus 25, the underlying basis for the law of release from slavery is explicitly stated –

“For the children of Israel *are* servants to Me; they *are* My servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.” Leviticus 25:55

A Hebrew slave is ultimately a servant of the Lord. Therefore, they were to be released to their rightful Master after their time of servitude. As Moses says...

15 (con’t) *therefore I command you this thing today.*

al ken anoki mesvekha eth ha’davar ha’zeh ha’yom – “upon thus I command you the word the this today.” In other words, the command rests upon the truth that they were once slaves and the Lord redeemed them.

Again, and again, everything comes back to the fact that they were slaves and that they were redeemed. Thus, the law is justified in mandating these things. However, there may be a slave that doesn't want his freedom...

¹⁶ And if it happens that he says to you, 'I will not go away from you,' because he loves you and your house, since he prospers with you,

In these words, Moses sums up the previous law which was more expansive. From Exodus 21 –

“If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he *comes in* married, then his wife shall go out with him. ⁴ If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. ⁵ But if the servant plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' Exodus 21:3-5

The slave is content, disposed towards both his life and those who he tends to, and his soul is prospering. If so...

¹⁷ then you shall take an awl and thrust *it* through his ear to the door,

An extra step is overlooked here from Exodus 21. It is a step which is presupposed based on the former command –

“then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.” Exodus 21:6

Having him brought before the judges was a future protection for both the slave and the owner. There in Exodus, rather than “to the judges,” the Hebrew says to take him *el ha'elohim*, or “to the God.” The Greek translates that as *pros to kriterion Theo*, or “to the judgment of God.” In the end, it is God who will see the act and accept it. The wording is specific.

Once he was brought before God, the action was then to be performed. This is the second and last use of *martsea*, or awl, in Scripture. It comes from *ratsa*, meaning to bore or pierce. With this, it says *v'nathathah b'azeno u-badelet* – “and give in his ear and in the door.”

In this, the words “ear” and “door” are parallel. The two are tied together as if they have become one.

¹⁷ (con’t) **and he shall be your servant forever.**

v’hayah lekha eved olam – “and will be to you servant forever.” The change is made, and it is permanent. The mark is a witness to the permanent ownership. This rite, repeated from Exodus 21, is given to picture our position in Christ.

It is accepted that this boring through the ear is what is being referred to in Psalm 40. That is a messianic psalm which speaks of Christ’s work –

“Sacrifice and offering You did not desire;
My ears You have opened.
Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.
⁷ Then I said, “Behold, I come;
In the scroll of the book *it is* written of me.
⁸ I delight to do Your will, O my God,
And Your law *is* within my heart.” Psalm 40:6-8

That is cited in Hebrews 10. However, Hebrews modifies the psalm just enough to show us that Christ’s work *is* what is being pictured. There, it says –

“Sacrifice and offering You did not desire,
But a body You have prepared for Me.” Hebrews 10:5

Instead of “My ears You have opened,” it says “a body You prepared for Me.” The ears are being used in parallel with the entire body. Thus, the opening of the ear in the psalm refers to Christ's crucifixion. Because of His work, He is the Door of salvation –

“Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who *ever* came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. ⁹ I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.” John 10:7, 8

The slave wanting to stay with his owner, who is then united to him by uniting to the door, is a picture of our proclamation before God of receiving the work of Christ.

The slave willingly gave up his freedom and his rights in one economy and transferred them to another. When he was a free man of Israel, he was bound to the Law of Moses. As Paul shows in Galatians, the law is bondage. It is what shows us our sin and it is what condemns us. The law is not freedom; it is bondage, as both Paul and Peter say again and again in the New Testament –

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.” Galatians 5:1

The very thing that we think is freedom is, in fact, only another type of bondage. But for the slave of his master, it is *his master* who was bound to the law and the slave is bound to his master *under the law*. It is a picture of Christ fulfilling the law on our behalf. He is the Master, we are His slaves, and we are crucified with Him. As Paul says in Galatians 2:19-21 –

“For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. ²¹ I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness *comes* through the law, then Christ died in vain.”

But there was always the chance that the master might have forced his slave to remain in bondage against his will. Who could tell if no public affirmation of his intent was made known? This is why Exodus specifically said that he had to be taken *el ha'elohim*, or “to the God.”

The affirmation is one which is voluntarily made and openly witnessed. The ownership is not forced but willingly accepted. This is an obvious picture of the free-will of man in his voluntary surrender to the Lord in the presence of “the God.” The picture is clear – we who are in Christ are free from the law because He fulfilled it on our behalf. As Paul says-

“For he who is called in the Lord *while* a slave is the Lord’s freedman. Likewise he who is called *while* free is Christ’s slave. ²³ You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.” 1 Corinthians 7:22

And this position we possess is, as this verse says, *olam*. Here in Deuteronomy, we have a picture of the doctrine of eternal salvation. The picture given to us in the law tells us

all we need to know. We are His servants forever! And that means any who come to Him...

¹⁷ (con't) **Also to your female servant you shall do likewise.**

This is an obvious reference to Paul's words in Galatians –

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:28

With the picture of Christ complete, Moses now continues with words concerning the Hebrew who has served his time...

¹⁸ **It shall not seem hard to you when you send him away free from you;**

lo yiqsheh b'enekha – “No hard in your eyes.” The master was not to view the matter as any burden at all in letting the slave have his freedom. And the reason goes in two directions at once. The first is backwards to what has been...

¹⁸ (con't) **for he has been worth a double hired servant in serving you six years.**

ki mishneh sekar sakir avadekha shes shanim – “For double the hire of the hireling serving you six years.” In other words, the owner saved the cost of paying a hired laborer. Because the slave wasn't paid, he was worth twice as much to him.

As a point of context, the words of Isaiah 16:14 are not what is being referred to here –

“Within three years, as the years of a hired man, the glory of Moab will be despised with all that great multitude, and the remnant *will be* very small *and feeble.*” Isaiah 16:14

Jewish interpretation of this is that a hired servant was to be for no longer than three years, and thus the Hebrew slave would be worth twice that. That is not at all what Isaiah is saying. He is referring to a hired man counting the days for his pay, and that no work would be done without proper wages.

In other words, Isaiah's prophecy was spoken and there would be no delay. The same thought is expressed again in Isaiah 21:16. The second direction of Moses' words concerns the future...

18 (con't) **Then the LORD your God will bless you in all that you do.**

Not only had the past been good to the master because of the free labor, but in being gracious to the slave upon his departure, the Lord would take note and bless him into the future.

As a point of theology, when viewing slavery as the consequences of sin (and sin coming through a violation of law), these words provide instruction. The people of God have been redeemed from that life. Thus, we are to then interact with others as redeemed sinners rather than righteous saints. It is why the master was to treat his Hebrew slave so generously.

And the limitation on the length of bondage, that of six years, certainly makes a picture of man's bondage to the devil. The Bible shows that all people are born under his power. Our sin is inherited. John says that "He who sins is of the devil" (1 John 3:8).

As all have sinned, then all are born under the devil's power and authority. But the good news is that Jesus came to correct this. When we call on Christ, we move from the bondage of the devil to being servants of a new Master.

The six years of slavery, followed by the seventh year of freedom, surely forms a double picture. First, it looks to our time before coming to Christ and then the freedom we have in Him. This follows in picture from the six days of work followed by the seventh day of Sabbath rest.

Secondly, it is a picture of the six thousand years of man, living in the world of sin from the time of the fall. That is to be followed by the final thousand years called the millennium. It is a time where Christ will rule over all the nations. It is a time of liberty from the yoke of the devil and rest in Christ.

*I was a slave to the law which only pointed out my sin
I couldn't meet its expectations though I tried and tried
But in my place the Lord Jesus, the victory did win
Now my yoke is light and easy because for my sin He died*

*And so, with Him I desire ever to stay
As His slave, may I forevermore remain
May the joy of serving Him begin right now, today
I give up my freedom to sin and receive heavenly gain*

*My Master is tender and caring; to Him I will cleave
For all of eternity in His presence I will stay
All that I was asked to do was just believe
And now, life under my Master gets sweeter each day*

II. The firstborn of the herd and flock (verses 19-23)

¹⁹ “All the firstborn males that come from your herd and your flock you shall sanctify to the LORD your God;

Of these firstborn, Exodus 22:30 says, “It shall be with its mother seven days; on the eighth day you shall give it to Me.” Deuteronomy 12:6 then instructed the people to eat the firstborn in the place the Lord chooses.

What this obviously means is that the animal was to be set apart as holy on the eighth day, regardless as to when it was actually eaten. From the eighth day they were sanctified and set apart for when they traveled to where the tabernacle resided. During that time, however long it might be...

^{19 (con’t)} you shall do no work with the firstborn of your herd, nor shear the firstborn of your flock.

The animal already belonged to the Lord because of His claim on all the firstborn of man and beast. This was first as a memorial of having spared the firstborn of Israel while taking the firstborn of Egypt – of both man and livestock.

Secondly, it typologically anticipates Christ and those in Him, as it says in Romans 8:29 that He is “the firstborn among many brethren.”

These animals were sanctified to Him, and they were therefore not to be used for ordinary purposes. Nor could they be dedicated in a vow to the Lord (Leviticus 27:26). One cannot dedicate something to the Lord that already belongs to Him. Of them, Moses now repeats the general thought already seen three times in Deuteronomy...

²⁰ You and your household shall eat *it* before the LORD your God year by year in the place which the LORD chooses.

This is perfectly in accord with the previous verses of 12:6, 12:17, and 14:23. At the time when the tithes were dedicated, so were the firstborn to be eaten.

The term “year by year” speaks of the pilgrim feasts which came around at the set times each year. But before eating them, they had to first be sacrificed and offered to the Lord—

“But the firstborn of a cow, the firstborn of a sheep, or the firstborn of a goat you shall not redeem; they *are* holy. You shall sprinkle their blood on the altar, and burn their fat *as* an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the Lord. ¹⁸ And their flesh shall be yours, just as the wave breast and the right thigh are yours.”

-Numbers 18:17, 18

The animal was not worked or sheared for personal gain. Instead, it was sacrificed to the Lord, a sacred portion belonging to the priest (and which both priest and portion picture Christ), and the rest was then eaten by the family in the presence of the Lord in joy and rejoicing. However, Moses next provides an exception...

²¹ But if there is a defect in it, *if it is lame or blind or has any serious defect, you shall not sacrifice it to the LORD your God.*

Though not stated, we can assume that the rule of the firstborn surely still applies in this situation. The animal was to be sanctified to the Lord and neither worked nor sheared. However, it was not to be sacrificed to Him if it had a defect. Offering any animal to the Lord that possessed a defect would destroy the typology of the pure and undefiled Christ who offered Himself to the Lord. Of such a defect...

²² You may eat it within your gates; the unclean and the clean *person alike may eat it, as if it were a gazelle or a deer.*

Saying, “You may” gives the impression that it could be otherwise. However, being a firstborn, and probably not to be worked or shorn, this is more likely a command, “You shall.” Either way, this refers back to Chapter 12 –

“However, you may slaughter and eat meat within all your gates, whatever your heart desires, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you; the unclean and the clean may eat of it, of the gazelle and the deer alike.”

-Deuteronomy 12:15

The firstborn that bore a defect was to be eaten as a common animal, within the gates and without first being presented to the Lord as a sacrifice. But, like all animals at all times...

***23 (fin) Only you shall not eat its blood; you shall pour it on the ground like water.**

raq, eth damo lo tokel, al ha'aretz tishpekenu kamayim – “Only! It’s blood no you shall eat; on the ground you shall pour it like water.” With minor exceptions, the words are almost identical to Deuteronomy 12:16.

As was then noted, to eat the blood is to assimilate into oneself something that belonged to the Lord alone because the life is in the blood. It is considered an act of idolatry to use it in any other way than designated by Him. If blood was not used in the rites of the tabernacle, it was to be poured out and covered with earth.

When it was used in the temple rites, it typologically anticipated Christ. When it was poured out and covered with the dust, as is explicitly stated elsewhere, that also typologically anticipated Christ. Either way, to eat the blood was to destroy the typology, and thus, like presenting a defective animal for sacrifice, was also forbidden.

Though not all of the details were explained in the passage today, because they have been explained several times in the recent past, everything about these twelve verses in this passage points to God’s workings for us in Jesus Christ.

Paul, as a Pharisee and one who was completely educated in the law, saw this perfectly. Hence, he calls the law a shadow of which Christ is the Substance. Paul lived out his life fulfilling this law as best he could. But when Christ came, He missed the fulfillment of the typology.

However, with the coming of a great light and a voice from heaven, it all started to come into focus. He was able to take all of that knowledge he had been endowed with, and he was able to then say, “I see how this is fulfilled in Him.”

As this is so, he then realized the purpose of it all. The countless details, the many years under the law, the call of the prophets, and the coming of Christ... It was all to show that God had kept His promises.

From the Lord’s words in Genesis 3 concerning the Seed of the woman, to His loving utterance on the Mount of Transfiguration – “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” – right up to the words of the Lord on the cross, “It is finished,” everything was pointing to God’s work in Christ. And this includes all of the Law of Moses.

Paul saw that and he turned from his self-centered hopes for righteousness to the imputed righteousness of God in Christ. From that awakened standpoint, he spoke out concerning the law. It was a tool, a pointing arrow, a tutor, and a revealer of what God was doing and would do.

Paul and the other apostles never spoke against the law, although they were certainly accused of having done so. Rather, they confessed that the law had a purpose, and that purpose was now fulfilled. To speak against the law would be no different than to speak against the prophet Isaiah who was a prophet under the law.

However, these men learned to situate the law in its proper place, showing that it was only a steppingstone to a higher, richer, and more glorious place where we can sit at the feet of the Redeemer of mankind and revel in what He did with the law – living it out perfectly, fulfilling it, and then setting it aside through a better and surer covenant based upon a better and surer hope.

If you have not come to that realization yet, I pray that today will be the day. In your feeble attempts at meriting righteousness through the observance of the law, you are – exactly and nothing less – saying to God, “I will do it on my own. I don’t need Jesus. I’ve got this one.”

I pray that you will find proper perspective concerning this law – this marvelous treasure of wisdom and understanding – by finding in it the Person of Jesus Christ. And then, it is my prayer that you will set yourself aside, believe that God has done it all for you, and submit to that fact by simply trusting in Christ, and in Christ alone, for your salvation. In this, you will become an acceptable receptacle for the dwelling of God’s Holy Spirit.

May it be so, and may it be today. And may all of God’s people say, Amen.

Closing Verse: *“To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:20*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 16:1-8 He is our Lamb, and to Him we do applaud... (A Passover to the Lord your God) (49th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Lord Your God Redeemed You

“If your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman
Is sold to you and serves you six years, such he may do
Then in the seventh year
You shall let him go free from you

And when you send him away free from you
You shall not let him go away empty-handed
You shall supply him liberally from your flock
From your threshing floor, and from your winepress
-----be sure this is clearly understood

From what the LORD your God has blessed you with
You shall give to him; pay careful heed to what I say
You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt
And the LORD your God redeemed you
-----therefore I command you this thing today

And if it happens that he says to you
‘I will not go away from you;’ such he does do
Because he loves you and your house
Since he prospers with you

Then you shall take an awl
And thrust it through his ear to the door – a bit ouchy I surmise
And he shall be your servant forever
Also to your female servant you shall do likewise

It shall not seem hard to you
When you send him away free from you
For he has been worth a double hired servant
-----in serving you six years
Then the LORD your God will bless you in all that you do

“All the firstborn males that come from your herd and your flock
You shall to the LORD your God sanctify
You shall do no work with the firstborn of your herd
Nor shear the firstborn of your flock; these rules you shall apply

You and your household shall eat it before the LORD your God
Year by year in the place which the LORD chooses; take it there
But if there is a defect in it, if it is lame or blind
-----or has any serious defect
You shall not sacrifice it to the LORD your God; of this beware

You may eat it within your gates
The unclean and the clean person alike may eat it, as if it were
-----a gazelle or a deer
Only you shall not eat its blood
You shall pour it on the ground like water; and so
-----the Lord Your God you shall fear

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 16:1-8 **(A Passover to the Lord your God)**

The opening words of the passage call out for the people of Israel to pay heed to at a certain time of year, keeping the Passover to the Lord. There is a reason for this that we will look at today. But for now, suffice it to say that if you don't pay attention to something you are supposed to see, you miss that thing will most certainly.

The entire Old Testament asks the people of Israel to pay attention. In fact, if they had really taken the stories, the commandments, the warnings, and the shadows laid down there to heart, there is no way they could have missed Christ when He came. Everything pointed to Him.

At the same time, if you read a book that said someone was coming and would actually be the Messiah, would you recognize Him when He came? I mean, there's that Guy. He doesn't act the same as everyone else, but we saw Him grow up in Nazareth. He doesn't look any different than we do. How can we be sure? Well, one way people believed in Him is found in our text verse –

Text Verse: *“Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did.” John 7:23*

Jesus did signs. Like the prophets of old, signs were given to confirm things. If there was a sign, it pointed to something else. The things Jesus did pointed to the fact that He was, in fact, Israel's Messiah. However, it might still be hard to accept that someone who can do amazing things is really the Messiah. How far does someone need to go to actually prove – beyond a shadow of a doubt – that He is that Person?

If the people of Israel didn't look at things like the Passover as being about them, they would not have missed who Christ is. But they took the Passover as a past act and a memorial of what occurred. Instead, they should have looked at it only as a steppingstone to the true Passover.

In seeing this, they would then see who He truly is. And from that, the Feast of Unleavened Bread would then make all the sense in the world to them as well. Someday, they will see Him for who He is, and they will realize it is all about Him, not all about them.

For now, we can see this if we are willing to acknowledge that we are in need of a Savior. When someone realizes that, the imagery of the Passover suddenly makes all the sense in the world. And the imagery of Unleavened Bread can then be understood in its proper context. This is why studying the law is so important. It is a marvel and a treasure box full of wonder.

Yes, great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Bread of Affliction (verses 1-8)

¹“Observe the month of Abib,

shamor eth khodesh ha'aviv – “Observe month the aviv.” The word *shamar*, translated as “observe,” signifies to keep, watch, preserve, and so on. It comes from a primitive root meaning “to hedge about” (as with thorns). Thus, one can think of guarding.

Moses tells them they are to guard this month, meaning not forget, and be sure to observe. One would think, “It’s the Passover, how could they forget that?” The answer is, “Because they failed to guard carefully what they had been given.”

It is often said that the Passover is the longest continuously held annual ceremony in the world, being observed for 3500 years. This is incorrect. The failure of Israel to observe the Passover is noted several times in Scripture, such as –

“Then the king commanded all the people, saying, ‘Keep the Passover to the Lord your God, as *it is* written in this Book of the Covenant.’”²² Such a Passover surely had never been held since the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah.” 2 Kings 23:21, 22

One cannot observe what one is unaware of, and it is the words of Moses now that are intended to make them aware of this particular responsibility. But the Book of the Law given by Moses had been neglected to the point that Israel didn’t even know it existed.

Just one chapter earlier, King Josiah had the temple repaired. During the work, the high priest “found the Book of the Law in the house of the Lord” (2 Kings 22:8). How could Israel carefully guard the month of the *aviv* in order to observe the Passover if they didn’t even know they were supposed to do so?

Moses' words to guard the month were ignored until the Book of the Law was rediscovered. As far as the word *aviv*, it speaks of the March-April timeframe when the ears of grain are fresh. It was introduced into Scripture in Exodus 9:31, "Now the flax and the barley were struck, for the barley was **in the head** and the flax was in bud."

The redemptive calendar for Israel was then set by the Lord in Exodus 12:2, saying, "This month *shall be* your beginning of months; it *shall be* the first month of the year to you." This was at the institution of the Passover. After that, designating the month as "the *aviv*" was first proclaimed in Exodus 13 while the Feast of Unleavened Bread was being described to the people –

"Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out of this *place*. No leavened bread shall be eaten. ⁴On this day you are going out, **in the month Abib.**" Exodus 13:3, 4

The word *aviv* is used only eight times. Six times it is used to describe the month and twice to describe fresh ears of grain. It means "greenness" or "fresh" and it indicates fresh young ears of barley grain which come forth at this time of year.

In Exodus, it is also called "the *aviv*." Thus, this is not technically the name of the month, but it is a designation. It is in this month, the first month of the fresh ears, that Moses says...

¹ (con't) **and keep the Passover to the Lord your God,**

v'asita pesakh l'Yehovah elohekha – "and keep Passover to Yehovah your God." In this, Moses leaves off the article. Instead of "the Passover," he simply says, "Passover to Yehovah." He is making a general statement about what Israel is to do when they enter the land, even if it is about a specific event. The word *pesakh*, or Passover, comes from the verb *pasakh* that was introduced in Exodus 12. It signifies to pass or spring over –

"For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I *am* the Lord. ¹³ Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you *are*. And when I see the blood, I **will pass over** you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt. Exodus 12:12, 13

Because of this, it is called *pesakh l'Yehovah*, or “Passover to Yehovah.” The Passover is on the 14th of the month of Aviv, as was commanded in Exodus 12:6. The specific time of the day when the Passover was to be killed was first defined in that verse as well –

“Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.”

The translation as “twilight” is misleading. It does not mean “in the evening.” Rather, the Hebrew term, translated as “twilight,” is *ben ha'arbayim*, or “between the evenings.” It is a phrase that is based on biblical time. In the Bible, a day is divided into “evening” and “morning.” Thus, there are actually two evenings to be reckoned. The first began after 12pm and runs through until sunset.

The second evening begins at sunset and continues till night, meaning the whole time of twilight. This would, therefore, be between twelve o'clock and the termination of twilight. “Between the evenings,” then, speaks of the three o'clock sacrifices at the temple. They were considered as the evening sacrifices even though to us it would be deemed as an afternoon sacrifice. With that understood, Moses next says...

1 (con't) for in the month of Abib

Again, in this verse it says *ha'aviv*, or “the *aviv*.” In essence, “In the month of the fresh young ears, the Lord brought you out.” Also, this is the last time that the word *aviv* is found in Scripture. After this, the first month will be known by its proper name, Nisan, a name found in both Nehemiah and Esther. Or it will simply be called “the first month,” such as in Joshua 4:19.

1 (con't) the Lord your God brought you out of Egypt by night.

As the start of a new day in the Bible begins at sundown, this then refers to the 15th of the month, when the moon was full. The words here seem contradictory to those of Exodus 12:22 and Numbers 33:3. They state –

“And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip *it* in the blood that *is* in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that *is* in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning.” Exodus 12:22

“They departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the day after the Passover the children of Israel went out with boldness in the sight of all the Egyptians.” Numbers 33:3

Moses saying in this verse that they were brought out by night is inclusive of the entire process of the Passover. The Lord accomplished the work of bringing them out by night, Pharaoh gave them permission to leave at night, and the people prepared for their departure at night. They then departed in the morning with the completion of the process.

² Therefore you shall sacrifice the Passover to the Lord your God,

v'zabakhta pesakh l'Yehovah elohekha – “And you shall sacrifice Passover to Yehovah your God.” Again, no article precedes “Passover.” It is a general statement about the observance. It is a Passover to Yehovah and the statement encompasses not merely the Passover itself, but the entire feast adjoined to the Passover, meaning the Feast of Unleavened Bread. As it next says...

^{2 (con't)} from the flock and the herd,

tson u-baqar “flock and herd.” The Passover sacrifice was of the flock, either a lamb or a kid of the goats. By saying “flock and herd” here, it is referring not only to all of the sacrifices mandated throughout the entire Feast of Unleavened Bread which are precisely detailed in Numbers 28:16-25, but also to any festival meals eaten during the week of feasting. This could include firstborn of the flocks, tithe animals, and so on.

In other words, “Passover” without the article, is being used to signify the entire Feast. This is seen in the New Testament, where Luke also leaves off the article before “Passover” –

“Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover.”

-Luke 22:1

This is next mandated to be...

^{2 (con't)} in the place where the Lord chooses to put His name.

The unity of worship called for in the previous chapters continues to be conveyed here as well. Referring to appearing at the place chosen by the Lord is stated in one way or

another six times between now and verse 16. Thus, it is its own stress and is to be carefully heeded.

All of Israel was to appear before the Lord, without exception. Next, as a continued confirmation that the term “Passover” used here is inclusive of the entire feast, Moses says...

³ You shall eat no leavened bread with it;

lo tokal alav khamets – “No you shall eat with *it* leavened.” The word *khamets* used here speaks of that which is leavened. This was originally stated in Exodus 12:15 –

“Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.”

For the entire feast, known as Passover, nothing leavened was to be eaten by the people. As Moses next says...

^{3 (con't)} seven days you shall eat unleavened bread with it,

shivat yamim tokal alav matsot – “seven days you shall eat with *it* unleavened bread.” As the Passover is a single day, and yet it says it is to be eaten for seven days with unleavened bread, then this absolutely confirms that Moses is using the term Passover to speak of the entire feast, which is made up of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Moses next defines the *matsot*, or unleavened bread, saying...

^{3 (con't)} that is, the bread of affliction

lekhem oni – “bread affliction.” The word *oni* comes from *anah*, signifying to be bowed down, or afflicted. The question concerning this bread is whether it is referring to the bread itself, being tasteless and thus afflicting to eat, or is it referring to the bread as a memorial of afflictions.

It is probably speaking of both. The bread is bland and tasteless, and thus afflicting, but that is to then remind the people of what they had been delivered from and what they had been delivered to, as well as the process by which it came about. With that understood, Moses says...

³ (con't) **(for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste),**

The word translated as “haste” is *kipazon*. It signifies haste, but it implies haste which is in a state of alarm. It comes from the verb *khaphaz* – to be in trepidation, hurry, or alarm. This must speak of the entire process.

The people were in bondage in Egypt and were thus afflicted. The destroyer passed through and only the blood would save them, but others would die. The people were brought out quickly and without time to prepare their bread. They had a hope of a new and better future in a fairer land, but they had to endure the trials of getting to that future on the march there. And so on.

Thus, the bread of affliction is that tasteless bread which speaks of everything the people had faced and would continue to face in the process of their redemption from Egypt.

³ (con't) **that you may remember the day in which you came out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life.**

Moses says: *I'maan tizkor* – “to end purpose you may remember.” The eating of the bread during this feast has a specific intent, it is to remind the people. Moses ties the day in which they were brought out into the reason for eating the bread of affliction. And that remembrance was to be for “all the days of your life.”

The idea here is, essentially, “You are not to forget where you came from, how you got here, and who got you here.” With that understood, Moses says...

⁴ **And no leaven shall be seen among you in all your territory for seven days,**

Here Moses uses the word *seor*, or leaven for the last time in Scripture. The word used earlier referred to that which is leavened. This word refers to the leaven itself. In other words, not only is there to be nothing leavened in the houses, but there was not to be any leaven at all. It is an absolute prohibition in all ways. This takes the reader back to Exodus 12 again where all three of the pertinent words are used in one verse –

“Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread [*matsot*]. On the first day you shall remove leaven [*seor*] from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread [*khamets*] from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.” Exodus 12:15

^{4 (con't)} **nor shall *any* of the meat which you sacrifice the first day at twilight remain overnight until morning.**

This is referring to the paschal lamb as was originally stated –

“And they shall take *some* of the blood and put *it* on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. ⁸ Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it. ⁹ Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails. ¹⁰ You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire.” Exodus 12:7-10

Again, the word “twilight” must be explained. In using the term *ba’arev*, or “in the evening,” it is referring to the 14th of the month when the lamb was slaughtered. However, the meal is eaten in the night, making it the 15th of the month.

Here, it reads: *asher tizbakh ba’erev ba’yom ha’rishon la’boqer* – “which you sacrifice in the evening in the day the first to the morning.” The lamb is slain on the 14th, Passover. The evening is then the transition, the folding over into the next day. And then the 15th begins the first day of Unleavened Bread. Nothing that was eaten from the start of that day was to be left at morning time.

⁵ **“You may not sacrifice the Passover**

Here the article is used, *ha’pasakh*, or “the Passover.” It is not speaking in general terms, but rather of the sacrificial lamb itself which stands as representative of the day.

^{5 (con't)} **within any of your gates which the Lord your God gives you**

b’akhad shearekha – “in one *of* your gates.” The meaning is that they were not to sacrifice the Passover in one of their towns, symbolized by the gates of the town. Instead, Moses again speaks of the unity of worship, saying...

⁶ **but at the place where the Lord your God chooses to make His name abide,**

Again, as in verse 2, Moses refers to the place chosen by the Lord to make His name abide, which is thus referring to the location of the tabernacle/temple. It is to this place that...

6 (con't) there you shall sacrifice the Passover at twilight,

The phrase has to be taken in a general sense. Again, the word “twilight” is *ba’arev*, or “in the evening.” However, that has already been explained earlier as meaning, “between the evenings,” and thus, in the afternoon.

This is clearly understood from the rest of Scripture where the “evening sacrifice” refers to the afternoon, or 3pm, sacrifice – it occurs “between the evenings. It is at this time, and in the place the Lord chooses to make His name dwell, that this was to occur.

6 (con't) at the going down of the sun,

Again, the words have to be taken in a general sense and with other relevant passages. The sun starts going down at midday. In the afternoon, the Passover would be sacrificed, and in the next day, meaning at evening when the 14th passes into the 15th, the Passover was eaten. Moses then says...

6 (con't) at the time you came out of Egypt.

moed tsetekha mi-mitsrayim – “appointed time you came from Egypt.” This is not speaking of the time of day, but of the time appointed by the Lord for it to occur. It is a general statement of the entire process, all centered on the time of the sacrifice of the lamb. It happened during a particular month, on a particular day, at a particular time.

Everything is centered on that moment. From there, Moses then speaks of the events which occur at the outset of the next day, meaning the 15th of the month...

7 And you shall roast and eat it in the place which the Lord your God chooses,

Moses uses the word *bashal* which comes from the idea of growing ripe, as a harvest. At times, it means to boil or seethe, but the instructions for the original Passover explicitly said that the Passover was to be roasted over the fire and not boiled –

“Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it. ⁹ Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails.”

-Exodus 12:8, 9

As this is now to be conducted in a large gathering, rather than in the homes of Egypt, it was probably cooked over a fire, but maybe with cookware or gratings designed to accommodate innumerable people. This is seen, for example in 2 Chronicles 35:13, where the same word is used twice in obviously different contexts –

“Also they roasted the Passover *offerings* with fire according to the ordinance; but the *other* holy *offerings* **they boiled** in pots, in caldrons, and in pans, and divided *them* quickly among all the *lay* people.”

And again, Moses notes that it was to be both roasted and eaten at the place the Lord chose for His name to dwell. With that understood, he then says...

⁷ (con't) **and in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents.**

As the entire feast goes on for more than a week, the obvious meaning of this is that after the people had gathered and collectively eaten the Passover and spent the night together, they then returned to the tents they brought, or to the places they stayed, during the entire week. This is again evidenced in 2 Chronicles –

“And the children of Israel who were present kept the Passover at that time, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days.” 2 Chronicles 35:17

The entire night of the Passover was probably spent in a large gathering with much celebration and enjoyment, followed by a long morning of sleeping. Moses next turns to the rules of the adjoining Feast of Unleavened Bread...

⁸ **Six days you shall eat unleavened bread,**

These words certainly do not mean “only,” as in, “This is the only thing you can eat.” Rather, any bread that was eaten was to be unleavened. Joshua 5:11 notes that on the first Passover in the land they ate both unleavened bread and the produce of the land, specifically parched grain.

This week of the feast would be spent at the place of the sanctuary, and it would certainly involve eating the tithes and offerings the people brought to the various pilgrim feasts. However, for this feast, only unleavened bread could accompany those things. Nothing with leaven was to be eaten during the entire feast.

Another point which must be clarified is that this is actually an eight-day event. It involves the Passover and then seven days. And so, when it says here, six days you shall eat unleavened bread, it means six days followed by one which is...

^{8 (con't)} **and on the seventh day there *shall be* a sacred assembly to the Lord your God.**

Here, a word previously only used in connection with the Feast of Tabernacles is seen, *atsereth*, or sacred assembly. It comes from *atsar* which signifies to shut, restrain, and so on. Thus, it is a completing ceremony which is dedicated to Yehovah. Although it does not say it here, unleavened bread was to be eaten on this day as well. That is clearly defined in Leviticus 23 (and elsewhere) –

“On the fourteenth *day* of the first month at twilight *is* the Lord’s Passover. ⁶ And on the fifteenth day of the same month *is* the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the Lord; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. ⁷ On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it. ⁸ But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord for seven days. The seventh day *shall be* a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work *on it.*” Leviticus 23:5-8

As a special convocation, but not as a Sabbath, it says...

^{*8 (fin)} **You shall do no work *on it.***

This is defined more precisely in Leviticus 23 where it said, “no customary work.” In other words, meals could be prepared, but no regular work was to be conducted. Thus, unless it fell on a Sabbath, it was not a Sabbath observance.

*A Lamb, spotless, and pure – without any defect
Will be sacrificed in my place
And looking at that Lamb, I can certainly detect
The greatest love and grace... this I see looking upon His face*

*Oh! That I could refrain and not see Him die
Oh! If there could be any other way
How could this Lamb go through with it for one such as I?
Oh God! This perfect Lamb alone my sin-debt can pay*

*Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!
Behold the sinless One, there on Calvary’s tree*

*He has prevailed and the path to heaven has been unfurled
The Lamb of God who died for sinners like you and me*

II. Pictures of Christ

To get a full picture of everything that Moses summarizes in these eight verses would mean going back and watching quite a few sermons from Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. It's not possible to fit everything into a short summary.

However, a brief review of what Moses said will give an overall brushstroke of what is being pictured. First, Moses begins with the words "Observe the month of Abib."

He is telling the people, once and forever, to pay heed and keep watch during this month. That alone hints at the coming of Messiah. The Passover was conducted during this month and it was to be an annual memorial to the people. But the shadow would someday be replaced with the Substance.

If the people paid heed to the typology, it would be as clear as crystal to them what was occurring when the events coincided with the work of Christ. Without getting dogmatic about the significance of the word *ha'aviv*, or "the aviv," it may possibly be a reference to Jesus' words spoken on this exact day about fourteen hundred years later.

As He was going to be crucified, He said, "For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?" (Luke 23:31). Obviously, wood and grain are not the same thing, but the idea is. There is the fresh green ears and there is the moist green tree (as the Greek implies).

Of His words, Albert Barnes interprets the meaning as, "If they, the Romans, do these things to me, who am innocent and blameless; if they punish me in this manner in the face of justice, what will they not do in relation to this guilty nation?"

At the time of that which is fresh and green – meaning at the time of Christ's work, fire is resisted. But to reject that greenness would attract the fire, meaning judgment. As Jamieson-Fausset-Brown then says, "If such sufferings alight upon the innocent One, the very Lamb of God, what must be in store for those who are provoking the flames?"

The entire point of the Passover is the presentation of an innocent Lamb to redeem the people from their bondage, meaning sin. And so, Moses told them to watch at the time of the *aviv*, meaning the green, and at that time to observe "Passover to the Lord."

As noted, there was no article before Passover in verse 1. It speaks of the entire eight days of both Passover and Unleavened Bread. Thus, the term “flock and herd” speaks of all of the sacrifices of the feast, all of which speak of the work of Christ (see Numbers 28, and etc.). And that explains the constant repetition of the words, “the place where the Lord chooses to put His name.”

That is referring to Jesus, in whom is the Name of the Lord. He *is* the place where the people of God are to meet and share in those sacrifices which only prefigure the work He accomplished.

From there Moses noted that following the Passover the people were to eat unleavened bread for seven days. It is the Passover that leads into the Feast. As seen in previous sermons, it anticipates Christ’s cross, that leads into our sinless state before God. This is what the feast only pictured.

The people ate unleavened bread which pictures our positional state of sinlessness in Christ. Paul refers to it in 1 Corinthians 5 –

“Your glorying *is* not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? ⁷ Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. ⁸ Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.”

-1 Corinthians 5:6-8

When Paul says, “let us keep the feast,” he is not referring to the Passover. That is Christ and His work for us. Rather, he is referring to what the feast that followed the Passover pictures.

Moses then called it *lekhem oni*, or “bread of affliction.” As I noted this is surely referring to the bread itself, being tasteless and thus afflicting to eat, and it is also referring to the bread as a memorial of afflictions. As we saw, *oni* comes from *anah*. It is a word used twice in Isaiah 53 when describing Christ –

“Surely He has borne our griefs
And carried our sorrows;
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten by God, and **afflicted.**” Isaiah 53:4

“He was oppressed and He was **afflicted**,
Yet He opened not His mouth;
He was led as a lamb to the slaughter,
And as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
So He opened not His mouth.” Isaiah 53:7

That resolves the memorial of afflictions, but the bread itself is its own picture of affliction. As Israel was to eat the bread of affliction, it anticipates that we too will face our own afflictions –

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸ while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.” 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Just as Christ suffered and then entered into His glory, we are left here for a season, rather than being taken home immediately. And during our stay, we will suffer our own afflictions during this time of hope in Christ and of the glory to come.

Moses then went on to explain the reason for the bread of affliction, saying that the people came out in haste, and thus they were to remember that day all the days of their lives. This is exactly what happens to believers.

As noted, he used the word *kipazon*. It signifies haste, but it implies haste which is in a state of alarm. It comes from the verb *khaphaz* – to be in trepidation, hurry, or alarm.

We aren’t brought out of our bondage to sin gradually. Rather, we are brought out instantly, and certainly in a state of trepidation because of the sin we bore.

Those who understand the significance of the work of Christ in their lives know that the word “haste” hardly captures the sense. If we are wise, we will then remember that moment all the days of our lives. Never returning to the life we were saved from.

Moses then spoke again of not having any leaven among the people for the whole time of the feast. It is a picture of clearing it out of our lives – living for God and not with sin. It’s why Paul said to “purge out the old leaven.” But Moses continued by reminding the people to not leave any of the meat of the sacrifice till morning.

The idea here is that the feast anticipates our sinless state before God. As Christ died for our sins and then went into the grave that same day, we are to leave our sins behind. On the first day of our walk with Him, we are to live as if it is so.

As Paul notes, “But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” (Galatians 6:14).

Israel was redeemed by the blood of the lamb. They had nothing to boast in except what God had done. The deed was finished. They were to live for the Lord, and not for the world, from that time on. This is what they were to remember each year, and it is what we must remember every day of our lives in Christ.

Moses next spoke to them about not sacrificing the Passover *b’akhad shearekha* – “in one of your gates,” but only at the place where the Lord chose to place His name. First, it is a note of exclusivity. There is one place, and one place alone where redemption can be made – and that is at the cross of Calvary and in the Person of Jesus Christ.

He is the place where the Lord has chosen to make His name abide. And secondly, Moses’ words tend to anticipate the statement made by the author of Hebrews, where he said –

“Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.” Hebrews 13:12

The context of Hebrews is speaking of the animal sacrifices that were burned outside the camp, thus picturing Christ who died outside of the walls of Jerusalem. But even the walls of Jerusalem which surrounded the temple had their own gates, within which people lived. Christ, who is the true spot where the name of the Lord is placed, died outside of any gates. This may stretch the typology a bit too much, but it may not as well.

Moses next mentioned the sacrifice being at twilight. That is less specific than what has been previously stated, but the point is made. Christ died at the same time as the Passover lamb was sacrificed – three o’clock in the afternoon.

The Passover lamb’s sacrifice coincided with the daily afternoon lamb offering at the tabernacle. Each day two lambs were offered, one in the morning and one in the evening. Together they are equated as a single day’s offering and thus are considered as one offering. The gospel of Mark provides the clarity of this –

“Now it was the third hour, and they crucified Him.” Mark 15:25

It then next says –

“Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.³⁴ And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which is translated, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’

³⁵ Some of those who stood by, when they heard *that*, said, ‘Look, He is calling for Elijah!’ ³⁶ Then someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put *it* on a reed, and offered *it* to Him to drink, saying, ‘Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down.’

³⁷ And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last.” Mark 15:33-37

Mark, who is in agreement with the other gospel writers, shows that Christ was crucified at the same time as when the morning offering was being made – 9am. He then says that Christ died at the same time that the evening offering was being made – 3pm.

Thus, the two lamb offerings encompass, and stand representative of, the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. The Passover lamb, which was slaughtered at this same time, is given as one aspect of Christ’s work while the daily lamb offerings were given as another.

Moses finishes up with the instructions concerning how and where to prepare the Passover which was followed with the note of returning to their tents. In other words, there is one gospel, one way to receive it, and one Lord who makes it possible. Nothing else will suffice. After receiving that, we are to live out our lives as is right.

Moses then repeated the thought that the people shall eat unleavened bread. It is to be taken as a positive command. It doesn’t say, “You may not eat bread with leaven for six days.” Instead, it says, “six days you shall eat unleavened bread.”

They *were to eat* unleavened bread during the entire feast. This goes in picture to what was just cited from Paul in 1 Corinthians, “let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.”

Not only are we to *not* partake of sin, but we are to actively live our lives in “sincerity and truth.” It is not that we can abstain from the whole if we abstain from one; it is that we are to abstain from one while partaking in the other.

Moses then finished up with the note concerning the *atseret*, or “sacred assembly.” It is a completing ceremony to the Lord. That surely refers to the ending of life and our meeting with the Lord where we are given what we now only possess in God’s eyes. He deems us as sinless, and we are no longer being imputed sin. But someday, we will be sinless, no longer even committing sin.

This passage today speaks of the marvel of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ, and of our responsibility when we are in Christ. He is our Passover Lamb, and we are His people. Every detail associated with this passage anticipates the Person and work of Jesus Christ for us and then our responsibilities toward Him.

As this is so, and as He was faithful to uphold His portion of these types and pictures, then let us, likewise, be faithful to live the lives we have been called to.

Let us live for Christ and be pleasing and faithful people, living out our lives pursuing His righteousness and sinlessness as our highest desire and goal for all of our days. May it be so to the glory of God. Amen.

Closing Verse: *“A little leaven leavens the whole lump.” Galatians 5:9*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 16:9-12 *The final feast of the year for folks to tackle...*
(Observe the Feast of Tabernacles) (50th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

A Passover to the Lord your God

“Observe the month of Abib
And keep the Passover to the Lord your God, yes in His sight
For in the month of Abib
The Lord your God brought you out of Egypt by night

Therefore you shall sacrifice
The Passover to the Lord your God; exalting His fame
From the flock and the herd
In the place where the Lord chooses to put His name

You shall eat no leavened bread with it
Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread with it
-----of leaven not even a taste
That is, the bread of affliction
(For you came out of the land of Egypt in haste)

That you may remember the day
In which you came out of the land of Egypt
All the days of your life
To keep this memory from being from you stripped

And no leaven shall be seen among you
In all your territory for seven days, take this as a warning
Nor shall any of the meat which you sacrifice
-----the first day at twilight
Remain overnight until morning

“You may not sacrifice the Passover
Within any of your gates which the Lord your God gives you
But at the place where the Lord your God chooses
-----to make His name abide
There you shall sacrifice the Passover at twilight, so you shall do

At the going down of the sun
At the time you came out of Egypt in a march and not a run

And you shall roast and eat it
In the place which the Lord your God chooses it to be so
And in the morning
You shall turn and to your tents you shall go

Six days you shall eat unleavened bread
And on the seventh day there shall be
A sacred assembly to the Lord your God
You shall do no work on it, as instructed by me

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard

Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 16:9-12 **(You Shall Keep the Feast of Weeks)**

I'm always giddy about the thought of the rapture, except for one – and only one – reason. No, it's not about an upcoming wedding, scheduled cruise, retirement, or coming inheritance. It's not about my next anniversary (sorry, Hideko), or the thought of getting a new car (the old pickup suites me just fine).

There is, literally, nothing that I do from day to day, nor anything that is yet ahead of me that I can experience or possess that at all makes me think, "I really want to be here for that." But there is something that I have done that keeps me from wanting to be raptured.

Our friend Sergio has memorized pretty much every password I have. He can access my computer and my life at any given moment to bail me out of a crisis, to print something off with my printer without asking permission (how dare he!), or to pretend he is me in order to send himself an email that he then sends back to me with a response to something I never wrote.

We are kids like that. But from time to time I send him the same email that involves this ability of his to access my life – "Sergio, if something happens to me, please be sure the sermons are read to the church." He knows where they are, and it is his obligation to get them printed for either someone here, or for him personally, to read to the church.

That is, literally, the only thing I will wish had been presented before the rapture. But, as long as I keep typing new sermons, there will always be a time that a certain number of sermons will go unread – not heard by anyone. That is assuming, of course, that Sergio actually makes the rapture too.

It is for this reason that I wouldn't mind punching my ticket a couple months before the rapture – if it could be planned that way. It is the word of God, and apart from seeing the face of the Lord with my own two eyes, it is all that I care about in any measure.

Everything else is temporary and will come to an end, but the word of the Lord stands forever, and I just want my part of analyzing it available for those who are left behind. When I sit down to type on Monday morning, it is a point of rejoicing because it is a blessing from the Lord that I can do so.

Text Verse: *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ⁵ having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.” Ephesians 1:3-6*

The passage today tells the people to rejoice before the Lord, and that rejoicing is to be an acknowledgement of how the Lord God had blessed them. The temporal blessings of Israel are mere shadows and types of the spiritual blessings found in the church.

Where Israel celebrated the Passover with a lamb, we celebrate it with *the* Lamb. Where Israel celebrated Firstfruits with a sheaf of the first harvest of grain, we celebrate it in the resurrection of the Lord. Where Israel celebrated the Feast of Weeks with a new grain offering to the Lord, we celebrate it with...

Well, we will go through the verses and remind ourselves of some of the typology already seen in the past sermons concerning this feast. So, there is no need to spoil what lies ahead during the introduction.

But the fact is that every material blessing of these feasts for Israel is realized in spiritual blessings for the church. And so, how can we not rejoice? We were sinners and Christ died for our sins. We were in bondage, and Christ has set us free. We were without the Spirit, and we are now reconnected to God because of the Spirit.

What is there to not rejoice about when we consider where we stand in relation to where we were! Typing these sermons is a point of rejoicing because they analyze the word of the Lord from a perspective Israel had no idea about.

To them, they were words of law. To us, they are words of grace. To them, they spoke of condemnation. To us, they speak of salvation. When one sees Christ Jesus in what is presented, it goes from a temporal blessing to a spiritual blessing.

Yes, the law was a blessing to them because it unified them and kept them as a people, but it could not bring them life, except as it was finally fulfilled in Christ. To us, it is life because Jesus embodies what it presents. Let us consider this and rejoice before the Lord God all our days.

And if I die before the rapture, don't feel bad – even one bit. It will be its own blessing to me and a grace from God. But... the rapture is still the best deal of all. We'll leave such things in the Lord's hands and continue on awaiting whatever He determines for each of us.

Until then, great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Tribute of a Freewill Offering (verses 9 & 10)

The feast now to be described was first introduced in Exodus 23:14-17 with the introduction of the three annual pilgrim feasts –

“Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year: ¹⁵ You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (you shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt; none shall appear before Me empty); ¹⁶ and the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you have gathered in *the fruit of your labors* from the field.

¹⁷ “Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord God.”

This was repeated in Exodus 34:22 where it is called the Feast of Weeks. After that, it was detailed in the listing of the eight Feasts of the Lord. That will be cited in a few minutes. It was again referred to in Numbers 28 which provided details concerning the offerings to be made to the Lord during the feast.

Moses is repeating the requirement and he will build upon it in these few short verses. The main ideas to be conveyed here are in relation to the people's responsibilities during the feast. Remembering that Christ is the fulfillment of the typology found in these feasts, there is to be a connection to His people in what He has done.

That is the purpose of the symbolism of these three pilgrim feasts. They take what Christ has done and then deal with the responsibility of those who participate in what was fulfilled in Him. What Israel, the people, did under the law as is recorded in these verses is to be lived out by the people of the church because of our relationship to what Jesus did.

The first of these pilgrim feasts was recorded and looked over last week, meaning the Passover which is immediately followed by the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Christ is the Passover Lamb, and we are to live our lives in sinless holiness before God, represented by the seven days of having no leaven in the territory.

Obviously, none of us are sinless in our conduct, but because of the non-imputation of sin for those who have entered the New Covenant, we are deemed as sinless before God. When one is under law, the imputation of sin is the result.

However, Paul repeatedly conveys the thought that believers in Christ are not under law, but we are rather under grace. Without law, sin is not imputed. That is the idea which was typologically lived out by Israel when the yeast was purged from the land during that feast.

The next pilgrim feast, that of Weeks, will now present another typological anticipation. What Israel did under the law anticipates what we are to do under grace. What Christ did in fulfillment of the symbolism, we are now to participate in with the reality. Where the typology was only shadow, we now possess the Substance. With that, we begin with...

⁹“You shall count seven weeks for yourself;

The words here and in the next clause follow after Leviticus 23 where the Feast of Weeks is first described –

“And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. ¹⁶Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD.” Leviticus 23:15, 16

It is “from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering.” That was clearly identified in the Feasts of the Lord sermons to be a picture of the resurrection of Christ.

As was seen in the earlier Leviticus 23 verses dealing with the Feast of Firstfruits, Christ’s resurrection was on a Sunday (the first day of the week) after the Sabbath. The waving of the sheaf of the wave offering looked forward to the presentation of Christ Jesus alive and well before the Father.

It is from this starting point that a set counting was to take place. As it says here, “You shall count seven weeks for yourself.” That is in accord with the counting of Leviticus 23, of which Moses is now restating for the people who are about to cross over the Jordan and enter the land of promise. And so, he says...

⁹ (con’t) **begin to count the seven weeks from *the time* you begin to put the sickle to the grain.**

mehakhel khermesh baqamah takhel lispor shivah shavuoth – “from begin sickle in the standing, begin to count seven weeks.” Here, we have a new word, *khermesh*, meaning a sickle. It comes from *kharam* which is the act of devoting something to God through destruction, exterminating, and so on. This word will be found only here and in Deuteronomy 23:25.

It is interesting that the root signifies something devoted to God, and that is exactly what happens to the sheaf of the Firstfruits. Though the word is usually taken in a negative context, it can be positive as well, such as in Leviticus 27:28 –

“Nevertheless no devoted *offering* that a man may devote to the LORD of all that he has, *both* man and beast, or the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed; every devoted *offering* is most holy to the LORD.”

This sheaf was solely devoted as a presentation to the Lord, just as the work of Jesus in destroying sin and annulling the law is solely set apart and dedicated to the Lord.

The sickle, as a tool of devotion, anticipates what happens to that which is cut down. Christ was cut down for the utter destruction of sin, but He was raised as an acceptable offering before the Lord because He had no sin of His own. The idea here of the Firstfruits as an offering before the Lord was precisely detailed in Leviticus 23:10-14 –

“When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. ¹¹ He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. ¹² And you shall offer on that day, when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the LORD. ¹³ Its grain offering *shall be* two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the LORD, for a sweet aroma; and its drink offering *shall be* of wine, one-fourth of a hin. ¹⁴ You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an

offering to your God; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.”

As I just said, this sheaf of the firstfruits, which Moses is alluding to here again, is a picture of Christ in His resurrection. Though He was cut down, He was presented alive before the Father, symbolized by the waving of the sheaf before the Lord by the priest.

As was seen during that sermon, the word translated as “wave,” *nuph*, gives the sense of “to quiver,” because of the motion of it vibrating up and down or rocking to and fro. Elsewhere the word is translated as “to wave,” “to beckon,” “to sprinkle,” “to rub,” “to saw,” and so on. Each of these implies motion and vibrancy.

In this was seen a picture of Christ, the true High Priest causing this preeminent sheaf to be vibrant before the Lord, just as occurred in the resurrection. His life that was cut down was reanimated. The fulfillment of that symbolism is found in Paul’s words from 1 Corinthians 15 –

“But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” 1 Corinthians 15:20

The background information is necessary to understand the timeline of what Moses is now referring to in Deuteronomy. From that day, meaning the day of the presentation of this sheaf of the Firstfruits, seven weeks are counted off...

¹⁰ Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the Lord your God

In this clause, the word *khag*, or pilgrim feast, is used. It comes from *khagag* which signifies to make a pilgrimage or a pilgrim feast. That, in turn, comes from a primitive root signifying to move in a circle. Thus, one thinks of being giddy and celebrating.

When this term is used, it signifies the people’s part of what the Lord has initiated. In other words, the Lord was the first of the resurrection and thus the first of the church. He is emblematic of all others in the church who follow after Him. This *khag*, or pilgrim feast, is given as an anticipatory type to the people of the Lord whose work made the feast possible.

As far as the dating, the seven weeks after the Feast of Firstfruits means one arrives at the fiftieth day. We just read that from Leviticus 23, but let us read it once again –

“And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. ¹⁶Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD.” Leviticus 23:15, 16

The day after the Sabbath means a Sunday. It is the first day of the week. Fifty days after the Firstfruits of Israel equates to fifty days after the resurrection of Christ Jesus.

As a point of correction of doctrine which should always be remembered when discussing these things, is that these words of Leviticus 23, along with the words of Exodus (and elsewhere), and which form the basis for the timeline of the work of the Lord, clearly indicate that Christ, the Passover Lamb, was crucified on the 14th and raised on the 16th of the first month –

“Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.” Exodus 12:6

“And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath [which would be the sixteenth], from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering.”
-Leviticus 23:15

Christ was crucified on a Friday and resurrected on a Sunday. This is evidenced in the Old Testament typology, and it is clearly revealed in the New Testament. For reference, a detailed timeline of this will be included at the end of this sermon, as posted to the Superior Word website, to substantiate this.

For now, the period of fifty days after Firstfruits is directly equated to fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus. As it says in Acts 2 –

“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Acts 2:1-4

In other words, Pentecost, the day which the Holy Spirit was poured out on the believers – thus establishing the church – is the fulfillment of the presentation of the

new grain offering to the Lord. The shadow is fulfilled in the Substance. The type is realized in the reality.

With the work of the Lord fulfilled in the giving of the Holy Spirit, the typology of Israel's pilgrim feast is then applied to the reality which is to be lived out by those in the church.

It should be noted, however, that of these three pilgrim feasts, this is the only one that does not give a timeframe for how long the feast was to be held. Passover is one plus seven, meaning Passover and then seven days of the feast. On the first and last days there were sacred assemblies. Tabernacles is seven plus one, meaning an eighth-day closing affixed to the feast.

In Numbers 28, the Feast of Weeks only records offerings for one day, the day of firstfruits. If the people were there longer, the Bible says nothing of that. The reason seems clear. The Holy Spirit is given to the believer only once.

Unlike Unleavened Bread, which looks to believers living sinlessly before the Lord, and like Tabernacles that looks to living our lives working in the harvest field before the Lord, Weeks looks to the time when the believer is sealed with the Spirit. It is a one-time and for-all-time event in the believer's life.

As a short insert to the thought of what occurred at Pentecost, the typology that anticipated the Lord's work for His people – and that of how the people are to live out their lives in the Lord – reveals the false teaching of hyperdispensationalism.

It is a heretical doctrine which says that there are two gospels and that the church did not start until Paul was commissioned as the apostle to the Gentiles. If the teachers of this false doctrine understood the typology presented in the Old Testament, they would not make this fundamental error in thinking.

Despite this, the presentation of these pilgrim feasts anticipates those who are truly of the church, meaning saved believers in Jesus Christ. For Israel, at the time of the feast, Moses continues the thought of keeping the feast to the Lord...

¹⁰ (con't) **with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand,**

misat nidbat yadekha – “tribute of free will offering your hand.” There is no article before the word tribute, as if it is understood what is being referred to. Further, the

word *misah*, or tribute, is found only here in the Bible. It is from *masas* meaning to dissolve or melt. Thus, it speaks of abundance or giving liberally.

What is of note in this is that it does not say what is done with the tribute. One can assume that it is presented to the priests, but that is only an assumption. This is perplexing, because everything in the law is so precise and clearly defined.

As this is a freewill offering, it cannot be speaking of the mandatory offerings that are listed in Leviticus 23 and Numbers 28 that are prescribed for the feast.

The word *nedevah*, or freewill offering, generally speaks of an offering to the Lord, but one would think, like in such cases, it would then say, “to the Lord.” Again, it does not. The word is used elsewhere when speaking of the Lord loving freely (Hosea 14:4), making an offering of the mouth (Psalm 119:108), and so on.

Nothing concerning the offering (type or amount) is defined, and what is to be done with it is left undefined. All that is noted is...

¹⁰ (con't) **which you shall give as the Lord your God blesses you.**

The entire thought of this verse, and how it points in type to a New Testament truth, is surely summed up in these words. Unlike all of the other mandatory prescriptions of the law – each pointing to Christ in some way or another, this points to the blessing from the Lord and it is completely voluntary, without set limit, and without set type. It is what Paul lays out in several places in the New Testament, such as –

“On the first *day* of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.” 1 Corinthians 16:2

“Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which *you had* previously promised, that it may be ready as *a matter of* generosity and not as a grudging obligation. ⁶ But this *I say*: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ *So let* each one *give* as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.” 2 Corinthians 9:5

“For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God, ¹³ while, through the

proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for *your* liberal sharing with them and all *men*,¹⁴ and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you.¹⁵ Thanks *be* to God for His indescribable gift!" 2 Corinthians 9:12-15

The Corinthians had made a freewill offering from their liberality. There was no condition set upon it. There was no amount prescribed, and there was no type mandated. Paul's only desire was to see that what had been vowed would, in fact, be prepared and presented accordingly.

This sets the pattern for all other giving within the church. It is to be voluntary, of whatever amount is decided upon solely by the giver, and in whatever manner and type the giver decides is right. And it is to be, just as Moses says to the individual Israelite now, "as the Lord your God blesses you."

The type in Israel is only a shadow of the substance for the church. It is the Lord who has blessed, and thus, each individual is to determine what that blessing means to him. Everything is to be in relation to the gratefulness of the believer for what the Lord has done in his life. With that in mind, and with that thought upon the heart, Moses will continue when we get to verse 11. For now...

*Rejoice before the Lord! Again, I say, "Rejoice!"
You have been redeemed, what could possibly rob your joy?
Rejoice before the Lord! Lift up your cheerful voice
Let it be that shouts of thanks and praise you willfully employ*

*The Lord has given you of His Spirit, and for that rejoice!
He has sealed you for the glorious coming day
To Himself He will gather His people, so lift up your voice
And, let all of the Lord's redeemed jubilantly say...*

*"We will rejoice in our God while we yet live!"
We will raise our hands and our voices to Him forevermore
To Him, eternal praises we shall give
When He carries us across to the other shore*

*O great and glorious Lord, in You we shall rejoice
To You, O mighty Savior, we shall forever raise our voice*

II. Be Careful to Observe These Statutes (verses 11 & 12)

¹¹ You shall rejoice before the Lord your God,

This is now the fifth of nine times the word “rejoice” is found in Deuteronomy. It is a positive command. The people are not to be unhappy or miserable. Rather, they are to actively rejoice before the Lord.

As the Feast of Weeks anticipates the giving of the Holy Spirit, and because it is also a pilgrim feast, it is typical of life in Christ, having been sealed with the Holy Spirit. Because of this, the imperative to “rejoice” is obvious, and it is abundantly stated in various ways in the New Testament.

Most especially, Paul says, “rejoice in the Lord” (Philippians 3:1), rejoice in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:3), “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4), and “Rejoice always” (1 Thessalonians 5:16).

These, and other examples – found in abundance in the epistles – are given as prescriptions to those of the church because of the blessings of the Lord upon them, just as the people of Israel were to rejoice because of the blessings of the Lord upon them. The typology of the Old leads directly to the fulfillment of it in the New.

For those in the church, the words of our text verse today concerning every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ are meant for every saved believer. And the knowledge of them is to be shared with every person we can share them with. For Israel, rejoicing in the temporal blessings was not just for the men of the house, but for...

^{11 (con't)} you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite who *is* within your gates, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who *are* among you,

When I lived in Japan, I climbed Mt. Fuji one night. The goal for those who climbed was to leave at evening and make it to the top by sunrise. In this, you would see innumerable torches and lamps being carried up the various paths that crisscrossed the side of the mountain.

If you drove by it on a highway at night, the same sight could be seen for vast distances. Thousands upon thousands of individual lights zigzagging upwards toward the summit.

If one has seen the movie, “Field of dreams,” the very ending of the movie had something similar – a line of cars with their lights on stretching back for miles that were heading to the field at night.

The words of Moses in this verse are a matter of law. None were to be excluded. It is incorrect to say that only the men were required to attend the three annual pilgrim feasts. Rather, all the men were to go, and they were to be accompanied by all of these categories.

Like Mt. Fuji, Israel would have looked like an ant farm as every path, every road, and every highway was filled with people heading to the place where the Lord God resided. Some walked, some rode animals, some may have been carried, but all were heading to one specific location in order to feast and to rejoice.

It should be noted that the wife is noticeably missing from the list mentioned in this verse. Moses says you, your son, your daughter, your male servant, your female servant, the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, but nothing is said of the wife.

What seems obvious is that this is not saying that the wives were to stay home and take care of the pets. Rather, it is a way of acknowledging her importance within the household. It takes us back to the very beginning of man’s time on earth –

“And Adam said:

‘This *is* now bone of my bones

And flesh of my flesh;

She shall be called Woman,

Because she was taken out of Man.’

²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” Genesis 2:23, 24

Rather than being an oversight by Moses, it appears he is reiterating the fact that the man and his wife are one. In mentioning him, she is implicitly mentioned as well. Therefore, there is no reason to include her in the list. It would be unthinkable for him to observe the feast without her. Thus, all were to attend...

11 (con’t) at the place where the Lord your God chooses to make His name abide.

These words have been stated again and again. The people were to gather in the presence of the Lord, right where He resided, and they were to rejoice and have a feast,

even to the point of being giddy. It speaks of unity of worship This is the type. The antitype is first seen in Jesus' words of John 4 –

“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴ God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” John 4:23

What is supposed to be the case, in order to fulfill the typology, is that Christians are to rejoice *wherever* they are. As the nations saw Israel rejoicing before the Lord in Israel, so the nations should see the people of the church doing so before the Lord at any place they currently are standing.

What Israel experienced for a week at a time, the church is to experience in a fuller way from moment to moment. We have been redeemed. How can we do anything, but rejoice? As he next says...

¹² And you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt,

As he has done time and time again in Deuteronomy, Moses again reminds the people of where they came from and what that meant while they were there. They were slaves, they are now the Lord's people. They were in Egypt, Double Distress, and now they are on the shores of the Jordan, free from Pharaoh and from their harsh taskmasters.

Because of this, the act of remembering as stated here is probably twofold. First, it is to spur the people on to generosity in the tribute offering mentioned earlier, and also toward those who came together with them on the pilgrim feast. They were once in bondage, and so now they were to remember those who currently had less than they did.

And, secondly, the purpose of the pilgrim feasts was to have them experience the joy of delighting in the abundance of the Lord. In Egypt, they suffered and had lack. In Canaan, they could expect prosperity and abundance. In Egypt they were slaves. In Canaan they were property owners.

Because of these truths, the contrast was to be remembered by them so that they would always be grateful for what they did have. They were never to focus on what they didn't have, but they were rather to be grateful for what they possessed.

And what they possessed and were blessed with was a result of the covenant that they agreed to. Therefore...

***12 (fin) and you shall be careful to observe these statutes.**

After all of the words of blessing, abundance, and rejoicing, these words serve as a reminder and even a warning. Israel had what they had because the Lord gave it to them. They had nothing substantial to speak of before He did.

Israel was where they were because the Lord had brought them out from where they previously were. They could not save themselves, and without His hand of intervention, they would still be where they were.

Israel had covenanted with the Lord, and in that covenant, they had agreed to the stipulations. What they possessed, and where they were to be in Canaan was a result of that agreement. If the agreement was made based on obedience, and it was, then disobedience to it would incur the opposite of the blessing.

That was previously laid out, and Moses was telling them now that they were to carefully observe the stipulations in order to remain in that state of abundance, blessing, and the ability to rejoice. Should they fail, they could expect it to end.

In this, one can see the contrast and the similarities between the type and the antitype. When Israel was obedient to the covenant they agreed to, they would receive the temporal blessings. When we receive the work of the Lord, we receive the spiritual blessings.

Israel was freed from physical bondage, but they were brought into a spiritual bondage being servants to the law. We are the Lord's freedmen from spiritual bondage, and we are brought in to being the Lord's slaves to righteousness.

When Israel was not obedient to the words of law, they received temporal judgments, but they were never cast off permanently from the Lord. When we fail to live out our lives in accord with the obligations expected of us, we too can expect temporal judgments, but the Lord has promised to never cast us off permanently.

Israel was promised earthly reward; we are promised heavenly reward. Israel is a nation and a culture set apart from the world. The church is a body taken out of the world.

There are differences and there are similarities, but both reflect the workings of God in Christ, leading all to anticipate Him and to glory in what God has done through Him for us. Let us remember this as we contemplate the Feast of Weeks and what it signifies in us.

We have been given the Holy Spirit, poured out upon us. In this, we have been sealed for the day of redemption as the Lord's purchased possession. It isn't a day that might come, it is a day that is coming. We weren't saved in order to fight our way until the end. Rather, Christ did the fighting and He prevailed.

There is no struggling to attain the promise. Rather, in Him, we are those who have prevailed; we have received the promise. And so, remember this. When life is beating you up, when it seems your prayers aren't being heard, when you are sick, in pain, agonizing over circumstances, or even facing the end of your physical existence – remember this.

We have every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus. They are ours with a guarantee, and they will never be taken from us. Cling to this, and even in times of the greatest of distress – even in those times – rejoice in the Lord. Again, I say, "Rejoice in the Lord!"

Closing Verse: *"For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ's slave. ²³ You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men." 1 Corinthians 7:22, 23*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 16:13-22 *Hey ma! Why is everyone building little shackles?...* (Observe the Feast of Tabernacles) (51st Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Observe the Feast of Tabernacles

"You shall count seven weeks for yourself
Begin to count the seven weeks, as I explain
From the time you begin
To put the sickle to the grain

Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks
To the Lord your God with the tribute, so you shall do
Of a freewill offering from your hand
Which you shall give as the Lord your God blesses you

You shall rejoice before the Lord your God
You and your son and your daughter, also
Your male servant and your female servant
The Levite who is within your gates shall also go

The stranger and the fatherless
And the widow who are among you, all side by side
At the place where the Lord your God chooses
To make His name abide

And you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt
And you shall be careful to observe these statutes
-----none shall be skipped

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 16:13-22 (Observe the Feast of Tabernacles)

The Passover and the first two *khag*, or pilgrim feasts, have been detailed. In our passage today, Moses turns to the third of these pilgrim feasts, Tabernacles. Of this feast, Charles Ellicott states –

“The Passover is His sacrifice and death. We keep the feast of unleavened bread by serving Him in ‘sincerity and truth.’ The Feast of Tabernacles has not yet been fulfilled by our Lord like the two other great feasts of the Jewish calendar. Unfulfilled prophecies regarding it may be pointed out, as in Zechariah 14.” Charles Ellicott

Ellicott is correct concerning the Passover. It anticipates Christ’s sacrifice and death. He is correct concerning the Feast of Unleavened Bread as well, citing Paul as a demonstration of it being worked out in our lives.

But... is it correct that the Feast of Tabernacles has not yet been fulfilled by our Lord? Anyone? For those of you who said, “No, that is a bunch of malarky,” you can give yourself a pat on the back. For those of you who went on to say, “That is actually heresy,” you get bonus points and accolades.

Is there anything else wrong with what he said? Well, yes. Yes, there is. He said, “like the two other great feasts of the Jewish calendar.” In stating it this way, he is implying that these are Jewish feasts. That is incorrect. They are feasts observed by the Jews, but they are feasts of the Lord in His redemptive calendar.

In matters such as this, it is important to be precise. As far as Zechariah 14, what he is referring to there, it forms our text verse –

Text Verse: *“And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. ¹⁷ And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. ¹⁸ If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. ¹⁹ This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.” Zechariah 14:16-19*

Has the prophecy of Zechariah 14 been fulfilled? We'll no. It never has. As this is the case, then how can Charles Ellicott be wrong? Anyone? Let's ask other questions from the Old Testament. Has Ezekiel 38 been fulfilled? How about Isaiah 65:22? How about Amos 9:15? No, no, and no.

And those are just a smattering of the as yet unfulfilled prophecies of the Old Testament, even some found in the law of Moses have yet to find their fulfillment. Unfulfilled prophecy does not equate to an unfulfilled law.

Unfulfilled prophecy means we have more to look forward to in the redemptive narrative. An unfulfilled law means we have nothing to look forward to – at all. Let us remember this and let us stand fast on the truth that the law is fulfilled. And, in its fulfillment, it is now set aside.

Keeping our categorial boxes straight in our theology is exceedingly important. In fact, when they get out of whack, the result can be eternity-changing for those who are so instructed. Let us handle this word with care and let us be sure to be precise in our words when it is called for.

This is what the Lord expects of us. Such truths as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. You Shall Rejoice in Your Feast (verses 13-15)

¹³ “You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles

khag ha'sukkoth taaseh lekha – “Feast the sukkot shall do to you.” The words now reintroduce the third of the three pilgrim feasts, here called *ha'sukkoth*, or “the tabernacles.” It was first noted in Exodus 23 where it was called *ha'asiph*, or “the ingathering” –

“Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year: ¹⁵You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (you shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt; none shall appear before Me empty); ¹⁶and the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you have gathered in *the fruit of* your labors from the field.” Exodus 23:14-16

It was noted again a second time as the Feast of Ingathering in Exodus 34:22. It is these words that set the tone for the three pilgrim feasts and how they anticipate the believer's life in Christ. Unfortunately, Israel – and many ill-informed Christians – see this Feast of Ingathering as being about the end-times Jews.

In other words, it is common to hear people equate the ingathering of the Jews to the land of Israel as a fulfillment of this feast. This is not only incorrect, it is also terrible theology. The feasts have nothing to do with that. The Jews are being brought back to Israel as a fulfillment of the promises found in the law and the prophets. They have seven more years under the law in order to come to Christ.

During those seven years, the large majority of the Jewish people will die. If the Feast of Ingathering were about the Jewish people, it would be a rather sad event, not one to be rejoiced in. Further, if Ingathering were about the Jews, it would mean it was not about the Lord because the Jews have not yet come to the Lord. There is error from every angle in this failed typology.

The eight Feasts of the Lord are fulfilled in, or made possible by, Christ. The three pilgrim feasts anticipate the believer's life in Christ – whether Jew or Gentile – because of what He has done.

For example, Christ is the Passover that makes our sinless life in Christ possible – the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Christ is the first Sheaf cut down and presented before the Lord alive again. His work anticipates the believer's life in Christ, sealed with the Holy Spirit as the guarantee that we too will be raised again – the Feast of Harvest. And Christ is the One whose work then allows our works to bear fruit – the Feast of Ingathering.

These three pilgrim feasts of Israel were conducted in the presence of the Lord and they each anticipate us living our lives in the presence of the Lord. Israel was living out an annual series of feasts, based on the Lord's provision towards them which anticipated believer's lives in Christ based on what He has provided to us during this dispensation known as the Church Age.

What the Lord provided for Israel is what made their pilgrim feasts before Him possible. What the Lord has done for us is what makes our conduct before God possible.

The greatest detail concerning the feast is found in Leviticus 23. There, instead of Ingathering, it is called Tabernacles. It would be hard to understand the greater part of

the workings of the feast without reading or watching the sermon from that passage. The feast is introduced there in verses 33-36 –

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ³⁴ “Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘The fifteenth day of this seventh month *shall be* the Feast of Tabernacles *for* seven days to the LORD. ³⁵ On the first day *there shall be* a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work *on it*. ³⁶ For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. It *is* a sacred assembly, *and* you shall do no customary work *on it*.” Leviticus 23:33-36

The feast is then more fully explained beginning in verse 39-43 –

“Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD *for* seven days; on the first day *there shall be* a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest. ⁴⁰ And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. ⁴¹ You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. *It shall be* a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. ⁴² You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, ⁴³ that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.”

-Leviticus 23:39-43

The Lord gave the name, the Feast of Tabernacles, and then He gave the reason for the name, saying, “I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt.” There the Hebrew said, *ki ba’sukkoth hovoshavti eth bene Yisrael b’hotsyi otam meerets mitsrayim* – “for in the sukkoth I made dwell sons of Israel in bringing them out from land Egypt.” That is based on the words of Exodus 12:37 –

“Then the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children.” Exodus 12:37

The location, known as Succoth, was the first place Israel journeyed to after leaving Egypt. It may have been named Succoth at that time based on the fact that Israel dwelt in tents, or it may have already had that name, but either way, the point is that Israel

had left Egypt, and that was based on the work of the Lord at the Passover – the slaying of the Lamb, the sprinkling of the blood, and the passing over of the people.

But one can only slay a lamb if there is a lamb to be slain. Of this feast, Jamieson-Fausset-Brown states –

“Various conjectures have been formed to account for the appointment of this feast at the conclusion of the whole harvest. Some imagine that it was designed to remind the Israelites of the time when they had no cornfields to reap but were daily supplied with manna; others think that it suited the convenience of the people better than any other period of the year for dwelling in booths; others that it was the time of Moses' second descent from the mount; while a fourth class are of opinion that this feast was fixed to the time of the year when the Word was made flesh and dwelt—literally, ‘tabernacled’—among us (Joh 1:14).” Jamieson-Fausset-Brown

Unless one sees Christ as the reason for these feasts, there can only be wild conjecture. And even in knowing that Christ is the reason for them, there is still often wild conjecture. What is correct and why? That will be seen as we continue.

¹³ (con't) **seven days,**

Leviticus 23 said, “on the first day *there shall be* a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest.” There is no contradiction here. The words are focusing on the seven-day feast itself because it is that which pictures the believer’s life in Christ, based on what Christ has done to make it possible. The seven days, like the seven days of Unleavened Bread (verse 3) refer to the period observed by the believer based on the work of the Lord. This feast was to be...

¹³ (con't) **when you have gathered from your threshing floor and from your winepress.**

Some translations say “after” while others say “when.” Saying “after” is incorrect, and “when” can be misleading based on how you interpret it. The Hebrew reads, “in your gathering.” It is true that this occurred towards the end of the harvest season, but not everything was fully harvested at this time.

Olives, for example, will continue on into the next month. Other crops may still not be fully harvested by the time of this feast as well. The idea here is that the feast is observed, like the Feast of Weeks, in the time of the harvesting. It was to be a time of celebration at the bounty provided by the Lord. As it next says...

14 And you shall rejoice in your feast,

As in verse 11 with the Feast of Weeks, it is a positive command. Considering the symbolism of the feast, it is understandable why this is stated. For now, we are to simply read the words as they are given. The men of Israel, the heads of these agriculturally based households, are told that they are to rejoice. Along with them...

14 (con't) you and your son and your daughter,

As in verse 11, the wife is noticeably missing from the list. It goes straight from the man to the son and to the daughter. Like last week, this is a note by Moses that there is no need to mention the wife separately. The husband and wife are one flesh. As such, when the man goes, the wife was to go as well. Along with them, the children were to be brought along as is fitting. Further...

14 (con't) your male servant and your female servant

During the pilgrim feast, none in the household were to be left behind. Those in the household, but who were not a part of the family, were to go as well. Along with them...

14 (con't) and the Levite, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow, who *are* within your gates.

No person was to be left in the city. All who dwelt there were to go when the people loaded up and headed out. Once they had arrived at the place where the Lord resided, Moses again says...

15 Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast to the Lord your God

shivat yamim takhog l'Yehovah elohekha – “Seven days you shall keep a feast to Yehovah your God.” The word “sacred” isn’t in the Hebrew and it should be italicized. Like in Exodus 23:14, it simply says, “keep a feast.”

Like during the other pilgrim feasts, it would be at this time that the people would bring their tithes and offerings and eat them in the presence of the Lord. It would be a time of relaxing, vacation, parties, dancing, and getting to see old friends, and meeting new friends. And Moses again notes that it is to be...

15 (con't) in the place which the Lord chooses,

Again, as has been seen numerous times already, the unity of worship is what is being highlighted here. The people were to gather around one common sanctuary where the Lord dwelt. Thus, there is a note of exclusivity here.

If this is where the Lord dwells, and his people are gathered around Him, then those not gathered are not a part of what the Lord is doing. In other words, there are the redeemed of the Lord, and there are all others. For the redeemed, they were to keep the feast...

15 (con't) because the Lord your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands,

Israel was to keep the feast because the Lord would bless them. The point was to remember that the blessings came from the Lord. In turn, they were to bless the Lord in their time of rejoicing before Him. What their hands had produced was only because the Lord provided that it would be so. Of this, Jamieson-Fausset-Brown says the following –

“According to Jewish tradition, no marriages were allowed to be celebrated during these great festivals, that no personal or private rejoicings might be mingled with the demonstrations of public and national gladness.” JFB

If this is so, it is an unfortunate and legalistic addition to the word of the Lord, and it explains much concerning why they have had so much trouble in their history. First, the law never speaks of such a thing, and so it is an unsanctioned addition to the law. Secondly, the most propitious time for someone to get married is when their minds and lives are set on honoring the Lord. Such traditions are harmful, not helpful, to a right relationship with the Lord.

15 (con't) so that you surely rejoice.

v'hayita akh sameakh – “and you will become only rejoicing.” It is a remarkable phrase. Again, and again, Moses has commanded the people to rejoice. Now, his words are less of a command and more of a statement of certainty.

The work throughout the year would be long, hard, and tiring. The people would be closed in at night, up early, and life would be good but maybe – as it often is – a bit boring. But to go out on a pilgrim feast would mean a different perspective, a time without work, a time of sharing in one another, and so on. In this, they would be nothing but rejoicing.

*We are here in Your presence, dwelling in temporary tabernacles
And we are rejoicing in all that You have done for us
A fire is inside to warm us as each ember burns and crackles
We are safely secure as we await the Lord Jesus*

*Oh, to dwell in our eternal home; for this we long
May that day be soon, but we will rejoice until then
Hear our praises; hear our joyous song
Coming forth from the lips of Your redeemed among men*

*Thank You for our great hope, and the peace it does provide
Thank You for the surety we have in Christ Jesus
In His hope, we now patiently abide
Anticipating all that He has prepared for us*

II. Pictures of Christ

We saw earlier that one can only slay a lamb if there is a lamb to be slain. After that, we cited a commentary that gave various views on why the feast is placed at the end of the harvest season.

One view not given, but which is quite commonly taught is reflected in the words of Charles Ellicott that we cited in the opening comments. Meaning, that it is not yet fulfilled. That is not only poor theology; it is heresy. To say that the feast is not fulfilled by Christ is to say that the law is not yet fulfilled by Christ.

As we noted in our opening comments, just because there are prophecies that are yet to be fulfilled from the time of the law, it does not mean that the law itself is unfulfilled. That distinction is both important and it must be clearly articulated. The Feasts of the Lord are just that. They are not Jewish Feasts, and they are not Feasts of Israel.

They are given in the law to reveal the working of God in Christ. In review of these appointed times, only three are actually designated as *khag*, or pilgrim feasts. The order from Leviticus 23 is first the Sabbath. Through faith in Him, He is our Rest, and He is our place of Rest. *Appointed time fulfilled.

The next is the Passover. He is our Passover Lamb and through Him we are redeemed from the bondage of sin. *Appointed time fulfilled. After that is the first *khag*, or pilgrim

feast, the Feast of Unleavened Bread. That is based on Christ's work as the Passover Lamb, and it is what makes the believer's life sinless before God.

As we are so deemed, so we are to conduct ourselves. *Feast being worked out in us because Christ made it possible.

After that was the Feast of Firstfruits. It is a picture of the Resurrection of Christ. *Appointed time fulfilled. From there is the counting of weeks until the fiftieth day. On that day, the Holy Spirit was poured out because of the finished work of Christ.

This is the second *khag*, or pilgrim feast, the Feast of Weeks. As noted in last week's sermon, it is the only feast that does not have a specific timeframe, such as "seven days." It is fulfilled in believers, once and for all time for each believer, as they come to Christ and receive the Holy Spirit of promise. *Feast realize in us because Christ made it possible.

The next is the Day of Acclamation (Yom Teruah). It corresponds to the birth of Christ. *Appointed time fulfilled. That is followed by the Day of Atonement. It looks to Christ's one-time atoning sacrifice for believers. *Appointed time fulfilled.

The events of the redemptive year finish with the third *khag*, or pilgrim feast, the Feast of Tabernacles. It is emblematic of our life in Christ before we are glorified. The final option suggested by Jamieson-Fausset-Brown is the correct one in the sense that Christ made it possible for us when He came and "tabernacled" among us. As it says in John 1:14 –

"And the Word became flesh, and did tabernacle among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of an only begotten of a father, full of grace and truth."

-John 1:14 (YLT)

Christ "dwelt" or "tabernacled" among humanity. It is the same word that is used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament when speaking of this feast. In other words, the Lamb that was slain was only slain because He had a body. That body is His tent, His tabernacle.

He came and tabernacled among us in order to make our Exodus possible, just as the slaying of the Passover lamb made the Exodus of Israel from Egypt possible. The first location Israel stopped at after the Exodus, Succoth (meaning Tabernacles), was

selected to show that the people had been brought out of Egypt. They tabernacled apart from the land of bondage.

Thus, the name of the feast was given – Tabernacles. Israel’s annual Feast of Tabernacles typologically anticipated the lives of believers dwelling in temporary tents, awaiting their final glorification.

The very fact that the Passover lamb is what made the Exodus possible, and that the Exodus resulted in stopping in Succoth, or Tabernacles, demonstrates that the Feast of Tabernacles finds its fulfillment in Christ’s work of the past and not at some point in the future. The types were given in the Old Testament to point to what Christ would do in the New.

We are redeemed, and yet we continue to tabernacle in our earthly body. It would make no sense at all for a person to believe and then to be taken immediately to glory. Who would continue to spread the message?

Rather, there is redemption (Passover) and being deemed sinless (Unleavened Bread). There is then the sealing of the Holy Spirit (Weeks). And then there is the tabernacling with the Holy Spirit residing in us (Tabernacles). These all occur immediately upon belief, but they are logically ordered.

The other acts of Christ within the Feasts of the Lord are interspersed throughout the redemptive year as they occurred in the actual life events of Christ. As far as the *khag*, or pilgrim feast of Tabernacles, Paul clearly shows that it is being worked out in us, just as the other two are –

“For we know that if our earthly house, *this tent*, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ² For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, ³ if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. ⁴ For we who are in *this tent* groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. ⁵ Now He who has prepared us for this very thing *is* God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.” 2 Corinthians 5:1-5

There, Paul twice uses the word *skénos*, or tent, when referring to us in this earthly body. This life in Christ *is* our pilgrim feast. That could not be any clearer when reading

the last verse cited from Paul: ὁ καὶ δοὺς ἡμῖν τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος, – “the and having given to us pledge the Spirit.”

The second feast, Weeks, is conditioned upon the first, Unleavened Bread. And that is conditioned on the Passover. Christ redeems from sin and then the Holy Spirit can move in.

The third feast, Tabernacles is an outworking of the second feast, Weeks. The Holy Spirit is given and the person tabernacles with the Holy Spirit because of Christ. The *arrabón*, or earnest deposit is what assures the believer that the final redemption **will** (not maybe) come to pass.

The symbolic point of the feast is that we will stay and continue tabernacling in the harvest, bringing all that are the Lord’s with us. And it is inclusive of all who are the Lord’s. That is evidenced in the words of Paul –

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:26-28

The work by Christ is done. The appointed times are fulfilled, and the Feast of Tabernacles is realized through His work. *Feast being worked out in us because Christ made it possible.

*Dwelling in these tents, we hope for our heavenly home
We await the day when we shall be taken there
But until that day, each place we roam
We do it knowing the Lord tends to us with care*

*He has filled us with His Spirit to carry us along
And with that, we shall remain content
We will praise the Lord in psalm and in song
Until our final day in this tent is spent*

*And then, we shall be taken to glory
A new dwelling – one to last for all eternity
Such is the marvel of the gospel story
Such is the wonder of what Christ has done for you and me*

III. Justice, Justice You Shall Do (verses 16-21)

¹⁶ “Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God

Because of the prominence of these words, the most common, and yet incorrect, comment concerning the pilgrim feasts is that only the males were required to go. Even more oddly, Joseph Benson goes further into the absurd, saying, “That is, from twenty to fifty years of age. The women were not obliged to be present at these solemnities; 1st, Because...”

Nothing like this is even hinted at anywhere in Scripture. There are no age limits at all on the men, all must go. This is simply stated because they represent the household. As has been seen half a dozen times, all people – without exception – were commanded to go up and be before the Lord. That is explicitly stated in Deuteronomy 31 concerning Tabernacles –

“And Moses commanded them, saying: ‘At the end of *every* seven years, at the appointed time in the year of release, at the Feast of Tabernacles, ¹¹ when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. ¹² Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who *is* within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully observe all the words of this law, ¹³ and *that* their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land which you cross the Jordan to possess.’” Deuteronomy 31:10-13

All Israel was to go at each pilgrim feast year by year. And on the seventh year during Tabernacles, they were to hear the law read. The mandate to come was not just once every seven years, but every feast every year. It was to be...

¹⁶ (con’t) in the place which He chooses:

It is where the tabernacle was situated, or later where the temple was built. These three times are...

¹⁶ (con’t) at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles;

The three pilgrim feasts. They were the people's responsibility to the Lord for what the Lord had done for the people. Likewise, they anticipate our responsibility to the Lord for what He has done for us. We are to live out our lives in sincerity, we are not to grieve the Holy Spirit, and we are to continue to work out our lives, bearing fruit to God for what He has done for us in Christ.

¹⁶ (con't) **and they shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed.**

The statement was made in Exodus 23:15 and 34:20. The word translated as "empty-handed" is *reqam*. It gives the sense of something being vain. It was used in Exodus 3:21 when the Lord promised Israel that they would not come out of Egypt empty-handed –

"So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst; and after that he will let you go. ²¹ And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be, when you go, that you shall not go **empty-handed.**" Exodus 3:20, 21

The intent here is that "Just as the Lord brought you out of Egypt (as Moses has so often reminded them) with hands that were not empty, so you shall come before Me with hands that are not empty. To do so would be a vain thing." The Lord provided for Israel; Israel was to acknowledge that...

¹⁷ **Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you.**

ish kematenat yado kebirkat Yehovah elohekha asher nathan lak – "Man according to gift his hand according to blessing Yehovah your God which He has given you." This is surely speaking of the tithes and offerings that have been specified in the previous chapters.

The people were to bring these things. But tithes, firstborn, and so on are based upon what one has received. It is these things that are given. This, as you already know, means that they are to be sanctified to the Lord as holy and then eaten before the Lord. In the third year, they were to be handled according to the law of the third-year tithe.

With these words, a major section of Deuteronomy, that of the unity of worship, comes to an end. Now, without any fanfare at all, Moses immediately turns to a new section, that which Charles Ellicott calls, "the seat of the Kingdom of Jehovah."

However, the seemingly abrupt change of direction is not really so. Rather, in order to ensure unity of worship before the Lord, there must be a unity of judgment among the people. Without this, there would be no remembrance of the law of the Lord that required the unity of their worship. With this understood, Moses continues...

18 “You shall appoint judges and officers in all your gates,

This takes the reader back to Deuteronomy 1. There he spoke of not being able to bear the burden alone. And so, he instructed “Choose wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men from among your tribes, and I will make them heads over you” (1:13).

He now notes that this practice is to continue in Canaan. He says that all cities (in all your gates) were to give 1) *shophtim*, meaning judges, and 2) *shoterim*, or officers. This second word comes from a root probably meaning “to write.” Thus, they are scribes.

The term “in all your gates” means “in all your cities.” The gate stands as representative of the city. But it is also a literal place for these people to work. Legal matters were brought to the gates where these men sat in order to have them decided upon. That is seen throughout Scripture.

18 (con’t) which the Lord your God gives you,

As Moses has consistently done, he reminds the people why they are to do these things by noting that what they have has been given to them. As this is so, they are to act in accord with the word of the Lord who gives and who can, thus, take away. They were to give (*natan*) judges and officers in the cities that the Lord gave (*natan*) to them. And this was to be...

18 (con’t) according to your tribes,

lishbatekha – “to your tribes” The word *shevet*, or tribe, signifies more of a political than a genealogical arrangement. Each tribe was to individually ensure the political system was maintained within the tribe, but under the parameters of the law given to Israel...

18 (con’t) and they shall judge the people with just judgment.

The words of this verse were probably what are being referred to by the Lord through Zechariah –

“These *are* the things you shall do:
Speak each man the truth to his neighbor;
Give judgment in your gates for truth, justice, and peace.” Zechariah 8:16

19 You shall not pervert justice;

The word is *natah*, it signifies “to stretch out,” “extend,” and so on. In other words. One can think of what is just being extended to what becomes unjust. Just think of any democrat-appointed judge and you will get the picture.

19 (con’t) you shall not show partiality,

lo takir panim – “no recognize faces.” In other words, justice is to be blind. One is not to favor the rich or take advantage of the poor. If it is a high official, a national superstar, or a son, there should be no more favoritism than if it is an arch enemy. There was to be one standard for all.

19 (con’t) nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous.

The words are extremely similar to those of Exodus 23:8. The only difference is that there it says a bribe blinds the eyes of the “discerning.” Here it says, “of the wise.” Rather than allowing such morally corrupt things to occur, Moses says...

20 You shall follow what is altogether just,

tsedeq tsedeq tirdoph – “Justice, justice, you shall pursue.” The repetition of the word is its own stress. It signifies justice or righteousness. This was to be followed after as if in hot pursuit, as if hunting, as the verb indicates. It is the call Amos made to Israel, though they would not heed –

“But let justice run down like water,
And righteousness like a mighty stream.” Amos 5:24

When water runs downward, it pursues its path. Any obstacle to it is circumvented and the water continues on. This is what Moses is calling for now. This is so...

20 (con’t) that you may live and inherit the land which the Lord your God is giving you.

Moses, as he so often does, uses the term *l'maan* – “to end purpose.” The law is spoken, and the goal is given. The implication here is like that of verse 18. That which is given can be taken away. But more, that which is alive can be terminated, and that which is inherited can be disinherited. The words call out for right reason, proper conduct, and obedience to the word.

²¹ “You shall not plant for yourself any tree, as a wooden image, near the altar which you build for yourself to the Lord your God.

The word is *asherah*. It signifies a wooden image used as a symbol of fertility. These were entirely forbidden in the land. They were to be cut down and destroyed. But here, Moses specifically says “near the altar.” This doesn’t mean they are ok in other locations. That has already been noted earlier in Deuteronomy –

“But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire.” (7:5)

Rather, the reason for including these words is because this is what those of the other nations did. Not only did they erect fertility symbols, but they specifically put them near to the altars where they sacrificed.

Everything about the rites and rituals of Israel was set and nothing could be added to it, or taken from it, without violating the typology of what it anticipated in the Person of Jesus.

Unfortunately, setting up such *asherim* near the altar is just what Israel eventually did. After this, a good king would come along and tear them all down, and then, along would come another king and erect them once again. The hopeless state of corruption in Israel permeates the sacred writings. Now, the chapter ends with...

***²² (fin) You shall not set up a *sacred* pillar, which the Lord your God hates.**

The *matstsevah* is mentioned again as it was in verse 7:5 –

“But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire.” Deuteronomy 7:5

Not only were they to destroy such pillars that were formed by the inhabitants, but they were forbidden from setting any up for themselves. Here it says, “which the Lord your God hates.” And yet the same word is used to describe pillars set up by Jacob.

Because of this, it can't be the pillar itself that is an abomination, but what it represents. For Israel, they had been given the necessary instructions, structures, and implements for proper worship that typologically anticipated Christ. This is the entire reason for the minute and exacting care.

As Israel was a people given in anticipation of Messiah, and as the law was given as a tutor to lead them to Him, then anything not sanctioned in the law would interfere with that set and uncompromising goal. Therefore, the Lord said he hated such things.

The perfect thought of what is being conveyed here is that of Hebrews 12:2 – “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus.” In looking at what the Lord mandated in the law, the people were looking unto Jesus in type. When they looked to any other rite, idol, or practice, their eyes were being diverted from Jesus.

And, today, the same should be true with us – not in the shadow, but in the Substance. We should set our eyes, our minds, and our hearts on the Lord. As He is just, we are to be just. As He is impartial in His judgment, we are to judge likewise. As He is the embodiment of the law, we are to follow Him into the New Covenant, clinging to what He has done and cherishing it as if it is our highest joy.

Let us cling to the cross, boast in the cross, and revel in what the cross signifies – the riches of God in Christ poured out upon poor sinners like us, sinners that have failed to make the grade, and so the grade was imputed to us by Another. Thank God for Jesus Christ.

Closing Verse: *“And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’” Revelation 21:3, 4*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 17:1-13 *Until you get it, it's rather awkwardly said...* (Shall Be Put to Death the Dead) (52nd Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Observe the Feast of Tabernacles

“You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days
So to you I address
When you have gathered from your threshing floor
And from your winepress

And you shall rejoice in your feast
You and your son and your daughter, your male servant
-----and your female servant and the Levite
The stranger and the fatherless and the widow
Who are within your gates, as is good and right

Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast to the Lord your God
In the place which the Lord chooses, so bring your singing voice
Because the Lord your God will bless you in all your produce
And in all the work of your hands, so that you surely rejoice

“Three times a year all your males shall appear
Before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses
-----and as I have commanded
At the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks
-----and at the Feast of Tabernacles
And they shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed

Every man shall give as he is able, so he shall do
According to the blessing of the Lord your God
-----which He has given you

“You shall appoint judges and officers in all your gates
Which the Lord your God gives you; to where you are sent
According to your tribes
And they shall judge the people with just judgment

You shall not pervert justice
You shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe
For a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise
And twists the words of the righteous as I now describe

You shall follow what is altogether just, so you shall do
That you may live and inherit the land
-----which the Lord your God is giving you

“You shall not plant for yourself any tree, as a wooden image
Near the altar which you build for yourself to the Lord your God
You shall not set up a sacred pillar
Which the Lord your God hates in this land upon which you tread

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 17:1-13 **(Shall Be Put to Death the Dead)**

Years ago, I watched a movie where two guys were outside in the heat of the day. One of them was visiting the other while traveling. The one who owned the house was drinking something out of a can – maybe a beer or a soda.

He said to the guy who was visiting something like, “Hoowee, it sure is hot out here.” The other guy said, “Yeah, it sure is.” The first guy says, “I sure bet you’d like a cold drink too, wouldn’t you?” The other guy said, “Yeah, that would be really great.” The first guy, without missing a beat, handed his drink to the visitor then bent over, pulled a fresh drink out of his cooler, opened it up, and started drinking it.

Although I do remember not liking the movie very much, and not remembering almost anything else about it, that has always stuck with me. Sometimes I think I’d like to do that to someone, just for fun, to see their reaction. But it is actually so perverse to me that I couldn’t get myself to do it, even as a joke.

A guest is a person who is to be treated with respect and treated kindly. There are plenty of other things you can do to kid around with friends or family who are visiting, but to me, that is just too brazen to even consider. It really was funny to watch though.

The idea of Deuteronomy 17 follows that of what has already been presented, holiness before the Lord, right conduct, proper judgment, and so on. When this is lacking, the people will quickly turn away from what is right, and chaos – as is seen throughout the rest of the Old Testament – will ensue.

It all comes back to the people’s attitude towards the Lord. How they perceive Him and their relationship with Him will dictate how they conduct their lives before Him. This is no different today. Churches are filled with leaders and people who do not treat the Lord and His word with holiness. Old Testament or New, the Lord sees and is aware of the conduct of the people...

Text Verse: *“You offer defiled food on My altar,
But say,
‘In what way have we defiled You?’
By saying,
‘The table of the LORD is contemptible.’
⁸And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice,*

*Is it not evil?
And when you offer the lame and sick,
Is it not evil?
Offer it then to your governor!
Would he be pleased with you?
Would he accept you favorably?
Says the LORD of hosts.” Malachi 1:7, 8*

This seemed to be an obvious passage for today’s sermon because it ties exactly in with the first verse we will look at. Imagine having a half-finished and now lukewarm drink, and passing it off to a guest, and then reaching into the cooler for a new, cold, fresh, and bubbly drink. It made for a great comedic scene because the very idea of it is so offensive.

But this is just the thing Israel was doing toward the Lord. The whole book of Malachi follows this tone. What could the people expect of the Lord when they treated Him with contempt? They looked for blessing, but their actions toward Him were as cursing.

And as He notes, they would never dare to take such an offering to their own governor. The level of disrespect is only heightened because of this. Holiness before the Lord. That is what was expected, and it is the expectation today. Let us bring our best before Him at all times.

Whether it is an offering from what we have been blessed with, the quantity and quality of time spent in His word, or the type of sermons and studies we will participate in – or even our attitude towards our personal failings in His presence – such things as these are what He is evaluating.

He is a great God, and He has given us His best in the giving of His Son. Let us remember this and respond in kind. Such truths as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. You Shall Inquire Diligently (verses 1-7)

¹“You shall not sacrifice to the LORD your God a bull or sheep which has any blemish or defect,

Moses begins Chapter 17 with the same train of thought that he has already put forth – holiness before the Lord. This was the case with the pilgrim feasts, with the standards of justice expected of the people, and of maintaining pure religious expression by removing anything pagan and unauthorized.

Now, he reminds them of the necessity to present sacrificial offerings that are perfect in their being. He specifically mentions the *shor* and the *seh*. The *shor* is a bull or ox, an animal of the herd. The *seh* can be either a sheep or a goat, an animal of the flock. Thus, it is an all-encompassing expression to cover that which is offered to the Lord.

Of them, they are to be without any *mum*, or blemish, or any *davar ra*, or “thing evil.” Anything that was not absolutely perfect was not to be brought before the Lord. This thought was already carefully presented in Leviticus on several occasions, but a good all-encompassing explanation is found in Leviticus 22 –

“Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it shall not be acceptable on your behalf. ²¹ And whoever offers a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD, to fulfill *his* vow, or a freewill offering from the cattle or the sheep, it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it. ²² Those *that are* blind or broken or maimed, or have an ulcer or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to the LORD, nor make an offering by fire of them on the altar to the LORD. ²³ Either a bull or a lamb that has any limb too long or too short you may offer *as* a freewill offering, but for a vow it shall not be accepted.” Leviticus 22:20-23

As was seen in our text verse today, this was something Israel did. What they would never present to their human rulers, they gladly brought before the Lord. And the offense is twofold. This wasn’t just an offense because of their negative attitude toward Him, which was certainly bad enough. It was further an offense against the typology of the coming Christ.

In offering marred sacrifices, it diminished their perception of what God would do in Him because these anticipated Him. The question one might ask is, “What kind of a Messiah were the people anticipating.” Would He be perfect and without spot, or were they expecting God to provide something flawed, just as they did towards Him? Their attitude towards Him reflected their thoughts about Christ. But the word says otherwise–

“And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay *here* in

fear; ¹⁸ knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” 1 Peter 1:17-19

As a side note concerning these first words of Chapter 17, the KJV says, “...*any* bullock, or sheep, wherein is blemish, *or* any evilfavouredness.” It should not be necessary for the average reader of the Bible to have to carry around a lexicon in order to understand the intent being conveyed.

The Hebrew reads, *kol davar ra*, “all thing evil.” Coming upon words like “evilfavouredness” in archaic translations shows how good it is that we have up to date translations for people to appreciate what is being said. Concerning such blemished or evilfavouredly animals being presented, Moses says...

¹ (con’t) **for that is an abomination to the LORD your God.**

The Hebrew is emphatic: *ki toavat Yehovah elohekha hu* – “for abomination Yehovah your God **it**.” Nothing further needs to be said. No further words of explanation are required. The law has been given, Moses repeats it now, and it is the expectation henceforth. God is great, and what is offered to Him is to reflect that greatness. Anything else is abominable to Him.

² **“If there is found among you, within any of your gates which the LORD your God gives you, a man or a woman who has been wicked in the sight of the LORD your God, in transgressing His covenant,**

The idea here is similar to that of Chapter 13. There, it was an active attempt by others who were working to turn people away from the Lord, whether it was a person in general, someone close in friendship or relationship, or even a town of Israel. The idea was actively trying to turn others away from serving the Lord. Here, it is rather a person who has turned away on his or her own, as is seen in the next words...

³ **who has gone and served other gods and worshiped them,**

Such a person is a member of the covenant community. He has been considered a servant of the Lord because of that covenant relationship, and yet he (or she) has departed from that in order to serve *elohim akherim*, or “gods other” and bow down to them.

The idea here of serving could be burning incense to them, sacrificing to them, and so on. It is a form of physical service. The word translated as “worship” means to bow down to. Thus, worshipping, as if a master or overlord, is implied. What rightly belonged to the Lord has been transferred to another...

^{3 (con't)} **either the sun or moon or any of the host of heaven,**

The Hebrew says *l'kal tseva ha'shemayim* – “to all host the heavens.” The thought has already been seen in Deuteronomy 4 –

“And *take heed*, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and *when* you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the LORD your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage.” Deuteronomy 4:19

Not only did Genesis clearly indicate that these things were created by the Lord, but He has given them to all peoples under the heavens. The same sun, moon, and stars that shine over Jerusalem also shine over Moscow. They are in view at one time and out of view at another.

These things were never intended to be objects of worship. The heavens, being plural, means any and every view of the sky by man at any point in time. If these were gods, they would – like the Lord – always be present. But the Lord has divided them among the peoples because He is the Creator of them, and the One who appoints their seasons.

Therefore, these have been given by the Lord to serve man, not to be served by men. As He created them, the departure to them as “another god” was reprehensible enough, but to worship something clearly stated as having been created by Him – and thus not a god at all – would be perfectly demeaning of His authority. With that noted, Moses next says...

^{3 (con't)} **which I have not commanded,**

Two points of interest concerning these words come forth. First, instead of saying, “which I have forbidden,” He says it in the negative, *lo tsiviti*, or “no have I commanded.” In this, it produces a highly emphatic pronouncement.

But more, it is stated in the first person. The Lord takes up the speech, right in the middle of Moses' words. This has already happened several times in Deuteronomy, such as in Chapter 7 –

“For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the Lord will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly.”

-Deuteronomy 7:4

One can almost sense the burning anger of the Lord at just the thought of what lies ahead. The Spirit is inspiring Moses to speak, and then right in the middle of his discourse, the Lord interjects His own words. It is a rather remarkable thing to consider. With the Lord's words spoken out, Moses again takes up the conversation...

⁴ and it is told you, and you hear *of it*, then you shall inquire diligently.

As with the whole passage, the words are in the singular. Moses is either speaking to each person individually, or to the nation collectively. Probably the latter as appears the case from later verses. Either way, it is personal and very direct. The thing is brought forth and a process of inquiry is thus to be taken...

^{4 (con't)} And if *it is* indeed true *and* certain that such an abomination has been committed in Israel,

The Hebrew is again very precise: *v'hineh, emet, nakon ha'davar* – “And behold! True! Certain the word.” What was brought forth has been confirmed. The matter is established, and the offense is made manifest.

The importance of the matter is brought forth with the final word, *b'yisrael*, or “in Israel.” The offense has occurred among the covenant people, by a member of that people, and it is brought to light among that people. To not take action would be to deny the responsibility of every aspect of the matter.

There is the responsibility of the people because of who they are. There is the responsibility to the covenant that they agreed to. And there is the responsibility to the Lord with whom the covenant was made. Therefore...

⁵ then you shall bring out to your gates that man or woman who has committed that wicked thing,

The Hebrew is again very emphatic – “and you shall bring out to your gates the man **that** or the woman **that.**” The idea by the emphasis is that there was to be no leniency regardless of who it was that did it. It could be someone famous, wealthy, in the priesthood, or a noble.

Whoever it was, he (or she) was to be taken out to the gates. As a point of clarification, this is not the same as was seen in Leviticus and Numbers where offenders were taken outside the camp and stoned. The reason for that was to not defile the camp of the Lord.

Once in the land of Canaan, the idea was not that the city would be defiled. Rather, it is because the gates of the city are the place where judgment is rendered among the city people. If someone was expelled from a city, he would be taken to the gates as a sign of his judgment and shoved out, “Beat it, buddy. And don’t come back!”

This is the same idea. They are taken out to the gates for judgment and then stoned outside them as a sign of judgment, “You are thus expelled from Israel.” It is to that place the person was to be taken...

⁵ (con’t) **and shall stone to death that man or woman with stones.**

eth ha’ish o eth ha’issah u-seqaltam ba’abamin v’metu – “the man or the woman and shall stone them in the stones and they die.” The same who are taken to the gates are the ones who are to be stoned. And they are to be stoned until they have expired. The entire thought is one of no mercy and no leniency towards such a person. With that in mind, a protection is given in this regard...

⁶ **Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness.**

The Hebrew is direct concerning the guilty – *yumat ha’met* – “shall be put to death the dead.” In other words, because of his guilt, he is already dead. Thus, it is an emphatic command to ensure that the one who is dead is put to death. He is beyond rescue and the punishment must be meted out.

However, that person can only be considered as “the dead” when his or her actions are confirmed. One witness cannot be sufficient for such a judgment. The precept here was rarely carried out, and violations of the command permeate the time of the later kings.

However, there are also instances where the law was again picked up and followed to varying degrees –

“So they gathered together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. ¹¹ And they offered to the LORD at that time seven hundred bulls and seven thousand sheep from the spoil they had brought. ¹² Then they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul; ¹³ and whoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel was to be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman. ¹⁴ Then they took an oath before the LORD with a loud voice, with shouting and trumpets and rams’ horns. ¹⁵ And all Judah rejoiced at the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and sought Him with all their soul; and He was found by them, and the LORD gave them rest all around.” 2 Chronicles 15:10-15

Whether this was actually carried out or not, it was right for them to affirm the matter. But in due time, and at the leading of a new king, the nation would again fall away from the precept and the people would again serve other gods, bowing down to them. When the precept was obeyed, and a person was judged and found guilty, there was an important part of the process to be adhered to...

⁷ The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him to death,

The reason for this precept is because there are those who will eviscerate another with their mouths, but who would not dream of lifting a finger to otherwise do what needed to be done. This is to weed out such people, and to let them know that the guilt of blood would first and foremost be upon them.

In other words, what is determined to be a legal and judicial act is – in the case of a false witness – an act of murder. Further, the Hebrew says “hand” in the singular – “the hand of the witnesses.” It is a unified act by them. If they are false witnesses, their single hand is one of blood and the Lord will know of it.

^{7 (con’t)} and afterward the hands of all the people.

The word “hand” is again in the singular. It is a unified act by the people, acknowledging that what they have done is for the collective good. They are one people united in one act of the hand.

^{7 (con’t)} So you shall put away the evil from among you.

It is word for word and letter for letter the same as the final clause of verse 13:5. The word translated as “put away,” is *ba’ar*. It signifies to burn, or to consume and this is certainly what is on Moses’ mind. It is as if the evil has been purged through fire, and thus it is a point of purification.

*Do not worship anything, but Me alone, says your God
In doing this, you will do well
I will keep you safe on this earthly path you trod
And will open to you heaven, instead of opening hell*

*I am the Lord your God, so you are to worship only Me
And I will lead you in paths of righteousness for My name’s sake
I will guide you each step, watching over you tenderly
If you will follow Me – may this be the path you take*

*Forget the false gods, all of which are only vanity
Don’t bow to the heavenly host, and you will do well
Don’t allow yourself to be pulled into idolatrous insanity
And I will open to you heaven, instead of opening hell*

II. You Shall Put Away the Evil (verses 8-13)

⁸“If a matter arises which is too hard for you to judge,

The word translated here as “hard” is *pele*. It is widely translated, but the sense here is “extraordinary.” It is something beyond the ability of the people to resolve. It is a matter of judgment that is...

**⁸ between degrees of guilt for bloodshed, between one judgment or another, or
between one punishment or another,**

The Hebrew reads in a comparative manner: *ben dam l’dam, ben din l’din, u-ben nega, la’nega* – “between blood to blood, between judgment to judgment, and between stroke to stroke.”

This final word, *nega*, or “stroke,” was used many times in Leviticus when referring to a plague or an infection of leprosy. It may be speaking of a wound or stroke incurred between people in a fight, but it very well may refer to the inability to decide a matter of ritual cleanliness not clearly defined by the law, but appearing to be something that

defiles – “Shall this person be deemed unclean or not?” Either way, what is clearly implied here is that a decision cannot be made concerning a matter.

The importance of this notion is that if a decision can be rendered, the matter ends at that time. There is no higher court of appeal within the land. If a judgment for stoning occurs, the person is simply taken out of the gates and stoned. If a person is fined, he is to pay the fine. Elevation of a matter is only made when there are...

8 (con't) matters of controversy within your gates,

divre rivot – “Words of strife.” The idea is that there is no consensus on the judgment of a matter of judicial importance. When such a case occurs...

8 (con't) then you shall arise and go up to the place which the LORD your God chooses.

Wherever the sanctuary of the Lord is, the matter is to be taken there for a decision. This, however, may include some other location when dealing with a judge because the judges of Israel did not necessarily judge from the location of the sanctuary.

However, the accounts of the judges show that they led Israel according to the word of the Lord. The reason for noting this distinction is seen in the next verse. Either way, in such a case, the decision is taken out of the hands of the city and presented before the Lord’s representatives...

9 And you shall come to the priests, the Levites, and to the judge *there* in those days, and inquire of them;

There are at least two categories here, and maybe three. It may say, “the priests the Levites,” or “the priests, the Levites.” The former is certainly correct, thus making only two categories – “the priests the Levites” and “the judge.”

As this is the case, the priests would decide matters of Levitical law, and the judge would decide the other laws. This seems obvious because it is apparent that Joshua was to lead Israel upon the death of Moses, not the priests.

At some point, Joshua would then be succeeded by another, and so on. And this line of judges (later to be kings) was not responsible for matters of Levitical law. And the Levitical priesthood was not responsible for matters outside of their priestly duties.

In other words, the structure of authority in Israel is being implied here in these words, and it is a structure that clearly defines the parameters of the two branches. Understanding this, in such a case, and whichever one applied...

⁹ (con't) **they shall pronounce upon you the sentence of judgment.**

The Hebrew reads, “word the judgment.” Whatever they spoke forth was to be considered final and binding. In such a matter, though, it would keep things harmonious within the city. If there was strife about a judgment, that strife was to be left behind once the matter was elevated and the decision was rendered.

¹⁰ **You shall do according to the sentence**

v'asita al pi ha'davar – “And you shall do upon mouth the word.” Whatever the spoken word of the priest or judge was, it was to be considered binding and it was to be performed accordingly...

¹⁰ (con't) **which they pronounce upon you in that place which the LORD chooses.**

Again, as noted in verse 8, judges of Israel did not necessarily judge from the place of the sanctuary. For example –

“Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time. ⁵ And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.” Judges 4:4, 5

Despite the location, this is certainly what is being referred to by Moses. The place of the priest, or the place of the judge, is the place that the Lord chooses for such a decision. In going there, the decision would be rendered and final, as is next noted...

¹⁰ (con't) **And you shall be careful to do according to all that they order you.**

The word translated as “order” is *yarah*. It signifies to throw or shoot, such as an arrow. Figuratively, then, it means to point out, teach, or instruct. One shoots an arrow to hit a mark. In speaking out what is decided, that is the mark that has been set, and it is to be followed...

¹¹ **According to the sentence of the law in which they instruct you,**

al pi ha'torah asher yorukha – “Upon mouth the law which they instruct you.” Again, Moses uses the word *arah*. It is as if a mark was made, it was determined as such, and it is binding.

This is more poignant because the word *torah*, or law, comes from *arah*. If one wanted to loosely, but notably, paraphrase this, they could say, “Upon the mouth of instruction by which you were instructed.” Everything is coming back to the instruction, the law, which is to take preeminence in all such matters. When the law is given it is to be heeded...

11 (con't) according to the judgment which they tell you, you shall do;

v'al ha'mishpat asher yomeru lekha taaseh – “and upon the judgment which they say to you, you shall do.” The previous clause spoke of the law. This clause speaks of the interpretation of the law. The judgment was based on the law, and the judgment is now the law which is to be performed. In this, Moses uses the word *amar* – to say. It is a word that implies participation in what is spoken.

In this case, those who receive the judgment are to communicate that judgment as they have received it to the one the judgment is directed to.

11 (con't) you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left from the sentence which they pronounce upon you.

These words are probably as much for the judges who disputed in the first place as they are for the one to whom judgment is ultimately pronounced. In other words, there was a hearing at the gate of the city where the elders gathered. No judgment was rendered because there was no agreement in judgment. Because of this, they took the case to the ultimate place of judgment.

With the decision rendered, one of the city judges will be unhappy about the decision, but that is irrelevant. Whatever is decided upon by the authority is to be heeded without addition or subtraction, signified by the term *yamin u-semol*, or “right and left.” The course the arrow flew is where the decision lies. It is this standard that is reflected in the way King Jehoshaphat organized his kingdom –

So Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem; and he went out again among the people from Beersheba to the mountains of Ephraim, and brought them back to the LORD God of their fathers. ⁵ Then he set judges in the land throughout all the

fortified cities of Judah, city by city, ⁶ and said to the judges, “Take heed to what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for the LORD, who *is* with you in the judgment. ⁷ Now therefore, let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take care and do *it*, for *there is* no iniquity with the LORD our God, no partiality, nor taking of bribes.” 2 Chronicles 19:4-7

Interestingly, his name, Yehoshaphat, signifies exactly what the account records. It is a compound name – *Yeho*, is derived from Yehovah and *shaphat* signifies “judge.” Thus, it means Yah has Judged, or Yah Judges. As far as the judgment once it is rendered, the matter is settled and fixed, or else...

¹² Now the man who acts presumptuously

It is a preposition and a noun, not an adverb: *v’ha’ish asher yaaseh b’zadon* – “And the man who acts in presumption.” It is a new word, *zadon*. It signifies insolence or presumption, coming from the word *zud*, meaning “to boil.” In other words, the person is like a boiling pot that refuses to act properly...

¹² (con’t) and will not heed the priest

This shows that what was surmised earlier is correct. When it said, “the priests the Levites,” it was referring to only one category. A priest is the one who would decide the matter of Levitical law. One would generally assume it would be the high priest, but any priest could certainly act in his stead.

¹² (con’t) who stands to minister there before the LORD your God,

Only the priests could stand and minister before the Lord. Levites could only minister between the priests and the people. Thus, this would be the high priest or his representative who would stand in this capacity. When they interpreted the law, it was considered on behalf of the Lord. For matters of non-Levitical law...

¹² (con’t) or the judge,

Whoever was the appointed judge for non-priestly matters, that person was to be heeded, just as if the Lord had rendered the decision. Should that not be heeded by a city judge, or by the person on whom the judgment was rendered...

¹² (con’t) that man shall die.

The words are emphatic: *u-met ha'ish ha'hu* – “and dead the man the him.” The judgment was made by the Lord’s representative. There could be no excuse and no appeal because he had not acted presumptuously against a person, but against the Lord who chose that person. In such a case...

¹² (con’t) **So you shall put away the evil from Israel.**

Moses again uses the word *ba’ar*, to burn or consume, but instead of saying “from among you,” he says, “from Israel.” Such a person wasn’t just a local cancer, but one who infected the entire nation. He was to be eliminated. And that, for a very good reason...

*¹³ (fin) **And all the people shall hear and fear, and no longer act presumptuously.**

Moses now uses the verb *zud*, or to boil, that was the source of the noun just spoken forth. The matter would become known throughout the land, and it would be a source of fear to those who judged. When the decision of the Lord was given, they were to comply with the decision.

Likewise, those who stood for judgment would know that if they refused to comply with the decision of the chosen authority, they were refusing to comply with the word of the Lord. As the Law of Moses was to be the standard for the people, to fail to act in accord with the judgment was to fail to uphold the law.

The difference between the person in verses 1-7 and the person in verses 8-13 is which god they had turned to. In the first section, it was to a false god external from them – the stars, the sun, the moon, and so on. In the second section, it was to the false god of self. The person had placed his decision above that of the Lord.

In either case, the person was dead before he was executed. Nothing could change the course of the decision because judgment was already rendered. The execution was just a point of completion for it. Unfortunately, this has become the norm in our society – and societies around the world today.

The Lord has spoken, but there is presumption in the leaders of the world to speak against Him. It happened openly and publicly in the House of Representatives at the end of February this year.

While one congressman from Florida was standing up and speaking of God's design for humanity as defined in Scripture, another congressman, a Jew from New York – Jerry Nadler – stood up and said, "What any religious tradition describes as God's will is no concern of this Congress."

Unlike Israel under the law, Nadler has a chance to redirect his thoughts and humble his heart. If he does, and if he turns to Jesus Christ for mercy, he will receive it. But as he stands right now, he is a dead man, simply awaiting the execution of his punishment.

God will not be mocked, and He will not tolerate such overflowing presumption, especially not from someone who bears the name of this holy, righteous, and just God. Jerry Nadler stands as a sinner in the hands of an angry God. The choice is his. The anger can be quelled, and a right and propitious relationship can be restored.

Will it come about? I'm not holding my breath, but the same God who saved Charlie Garrett through an infinite act of mercy can do so for a guy like Nadler. Only time will tell. The point is that we all must face the Lord for decisions concerning our life and actions. How will we meet Him?

For me, I appeal to the blood of Jesus Christ. It is in His cross, and in that alone, that I make my stand. The law is not a place to find mercy. But Jesus Christ, who fulfilled the law is. I pray you will act wisely and do the same. Come to the cross and be saved by His blood. May it be so, and may it be today – to the glory of God who redeems sinners such as us.

Closing Verse: *"But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast."* Ephesians 2:4-9

Next Week: Deuteronomy 17:14-20 *Who shall it be? Only time will tell...* (A King Over Israel) (53rd Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of

Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Shall Be Put to Death the Dead

“You shall not sacrifice to the LORD your God
A bull or sheep which has any blemish or defect
For that is an abomination to the LORD your God
Such inconsistencies He can detect

“If there is found among you
Within any of your gates which the LORD your God gives you
A man or a woman who has been wicked in the sight
-----of the LORD your God
In transgressing His covenant, so he does do...

Who has gone and served other gods and worshiped them
Either the sun or moon or any of the host of heaven
-----if such shall be
Which I have not commanded
And it is told you, and you hear of it, then you shall
-----inquire diligently

And if it is indeed true and certain that such an abomination
-----has been committed in Israel
Then you shall bring out to your gates that man or woman
-----even if it is your neighbor Mr. or Mrs. Jones
Who has committed that wicked thing
And shall stone to death that man or woman with stones

Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death
On the testimony of two or three witnesses, so shall it be
He shall not be put to death
On only one witness's testimony

The hands of the witnesses shall be the first
Against him to put him to death, so they shall do
And afterward the hands of all the people
So you shall put away the evil from among you

“If a matter arises which is too hard for you to judge
Between degrees of guilt for bloodshed
Between one judgment or another
Or between one punishment or another, as I have said...

Matters of controversy within your gates
Then you shall arise and go
Up to the place which the LORD your God chooses
Thus, it shall be so

And you shall come to the priests
The Levites, and to the judge there in those days, as you are sent
And inquire of them
They shall pronounce upon you the sentence of judgment

You shall do according to
The sentence which they pronounce upon you, so you shall do
In that place which the LORD chooses
And you shall be careful to do according to all that they order you

According to the sentence of the law in which they instruct you
According to the judgment which they tell you, you shall do
You shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left
From the sentence which they pronounce upon you

Now the man who acts presumptuously
And will not heed the priest who stands
To minister there before the LORD your God, or the judge
That man shall die just as the law demands

So you shall put away the evil from Israel
And all the people shall hear and fear
And no longer act presumptuously
The word will go out far and near

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 17:14-20 (A King Over Israel)

There is an irony in the verses today which is played out many hundreds of years later in Israel. Moses anticipated, even before the people entered Canaan, that they would want a king over them, just like all of the nations who were around them.

As we will see, that is exactly what occurred. Israel had a system that worked, it was developed by the Lord, and there was no need to change things. But we will look for change even when things are going along just fine, and even when we are aware of how the changes will negatively affect us. The idea is, "This time, it will be different."

It is a hopeless condition in us that says, "We can do it better. Just get out of the way and we will handle it." If that sounds familiar in today's world, it's because the exact same type of scenario is unfolding in the United States, right before our eyes. John Adams, our second president and one of the founding fathers, said –

"Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." John Adams

Contrast that to what we read from Jerry Nadler in last week's sermon, "What any religious tradition describes as God's will is no concern of this Congress." While much of the world has pursued a secular agenda where God has no part in their governments, the US has resisted this.

Instead, we have held to a moral and religious foundation to direct our affairs. But the cry has been raised more and more with each succeeding year until today the United States, which has been unlike most other nations, wants to be just like all of the nations.

What worked for Israel wasn't enough. And what has worked for the US isn't enough. 'God, get out of our way. We want to be like everyone else.'

Text Verse: *(For the LORD is our Judge,
The LORD is our Lawgiver,
The LORD is our King;
He will save us). Isaiah 33:22*

Isaiah was a prophet during the time of the kings. And yet, while serving under various kings, he wrote these words acknowledging that while Israel has kings, Israel has a King.

Today, thousands of years later, they still have not seen this. They have a government that is formed which is at odds with this notion.

They are a secular people and their idea of having a biblical morality is, like the United States today, only an idea displayed through lip service. The laws they enact are detestable, the conduct they allow is perverse, and the only time the name of the Lord is invoked is when they need to feel self-righteous or when there is a calamity looming. Other than that, He is far from their minds. Just like it is with the Jerry Nadler's of this nation.

Unfortunately, they are in power, and therefore, they determine the nations' direction. It will not go well for Israel, and it cannot go well for us. And it all could be avoided if people just accepted the will of the Lord. But that cannot happen unless the will of the Lord is known.

And that cannot come about unless the word of the Lord is available, read, meditated upon, and then applied to the conduct of the individual or group in question. This is a certain truth that is revealed today in this passage from His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Wisest Man Who Ever Lived (verses 14-17)

¹⁴ "When you come to the land which the LORD your God is giving you,

Similar words have already been seen several times, and they will continue to be repeated. They clearly indicate either Mosaic authorship or total fabrication. One cannot claim partial authenticity when an entire passage is anchored on a verse such as this.

And as each passage is logically placed within the main content of the book, a meticulously designed structure evolves that reveals a single, unified whole that bears the stamp of one Source as it is then conveyed through the chosen instrument of writing the words out, meaning Moses.

Moses is speaking of an event – coming into the land – that is, literally, days away. And yet, the words are referring to a possibility that may be years away, or that – ostensibly – may never come to pass. However, the fact that they are being conveyed to Israel now indicates that the Lord knows they will occur.

He is their Ruler, and He is giving them the land. Thus, this situation speaks of a theocracy. In this situation, entering the land with the Lord as their ultimate Leader...

¹⁴ (con't) **and possess it and dwell in it, and say,**

The use of the prepositions one after another provides its own emphasis: *v'rishtah v'yasavtah bah v'amarta* – “and have possessed it, and have dwelt in it, and you have said.” It is to be a reflection before the proposed action is taken.

Who promised you the land? Who delivered you into the land? Who gave it to you to possess? Who made that possession possible? You now dwell there. How did that come about?

A similar thought process is conveyed between conservative and liberal ideologies at any given moment in our world today. Where did what you have come from? To whom do you want to be accountable? Be careful what you ask for...

Unfortunately, it seems people always inevitably incline toward the wrong thing. Moses knows this because the Lord is working through him as he writes out the law. The people will reject the good. In this, they will say...

¹⁴ (con't) **'I will set a king over me**

The words have consistently been in the singular. It is Israel, the nation, who is being addressed, and it is Israel the nation who will – as a whole – take this path. “Who has led me all along? Look at all the good I have around me! The abundant blessings and productive land. All is marvelous! It's time for a change for something better.”

For an extended period of time, the land was led by Judges. The Lord raised them up, they served, and then they were replaced as the Lord saw fit. Israel was guided by them, but the Lord was their Head. However, it wasn't enough. Israel, instead of looking upwards to the Lord, focused their eyes outward – to the nations.

They saw how things worked, and they felt out of place. The sufficiency of the Lord was – to them – insufficient. Moses knew that Israel would want to be...

¹⁴ (con't) **like all the nations that *are* around me,'**

The thinking is perverse, in the extreme. Israel had circumcision on the eighth day. Israel had the Passover. Israel had the Sabbath. Israel had the tabernacle, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Sukkoth. Their garments had tassels, and their diet was set apart from all others.

All of this was based on their relationship with the Lord. And yet, they wanted to (well, otherwise) be just like the nations around them in calling for a king. Moses knew it was coming, and it came...

“Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel. ² The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; *they were* judges in Beersheba. ³ But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice. ⁴ Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, ⁵ and said to him, ‘Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.’” 1 Samuel 8:1-5

With this petition, the people – who were like none of the nations – decided that in this particular case, they would be like all of the nations. Everything else the Lord had done for them worked fine, but they needed to tweak things to make them better. It’s just a little tweak after all, at least from their perspective –

“But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, ‘Give us a king to judge us.’ So Samuel prayed to the LORD. ⁷ And the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.’” 1 Samuel 8:6, 7

When (not if!) this were to come about, Moses says...

¹⁵ **you shall surely set a king over you**

The words are emphatic: *som tasum alekha melek* – “setting you shall set over you king.” What will be said about such a king now becomes a point of law.

In the exchange between the Lord and Samuel, the Lord said, “Now therefore, heed their voice. However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them” (1 Samuel 8:9).

This is what Samuel did, carefully explaining and warning what the consequences of their request would be. That is found in 1 Samuel 8:10-18.

Despite the warnings, the people who are completely unlike any other people decided they wanted to be just like all the other people, well... at least in this one way –

“Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, ‘No, but we will have a king over us,²⁰ that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.’

²¹ And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he repeated them in the hearing of the LORD. ²² So the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Heed their voice, and make them a king.’” 1 Samuel 8:19-22

The people would ask, and the people did ask. However, there were to be conditions laid out by Moses now that must be heeded...

¹⁵ (con’t) **whom the LORD your God chooses;**

With the people adamant that they wanted a king, 1 Samuel 8 closes out with, “And Samuel said to the men of Israel, ‘Every man go to his city.’” The next chapter then immediately details the account of the selection of Saul as the first king of Israel.

His name means, “Asked For.” It is an appropriate name for what occurred. The people asked for a king, having rejected the Lord in this capacity. When a king is chosen by the Lord, he will be...

¹⁵ (con’t) **one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you;**

In the previous chapter, the appointment of judges and officers was commanded. Further, the line of the high priest had already been established and codified into law. However, the appointment of a king has not been commanded because the Lord is – ostensibly – their King.

But the precept is not forbidden. Rather, it is an allowance. And yet, in the approval of such an allowance, more commands then logically follow. This one says that only an Israelite was to be set as king over the nation.

The obvious implication is that if the Lord is to be their King, then any king set above the people is to emulate the true coming King, the Messiah. Such will be seen as the

prophetic writings later come. This may not have even been on the minds of the people, but it is was – with all certainty – on the mind of the Lord.

When Christ came, it is this verse that the people challenged Him with concerning a matter of law –

“Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in *His* talk. ¹⁶ And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, ‘Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. ¹⁷ Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?’”

-Matthew 22:15-17

Their question was duplicitous. If the Lord had answered, “Yes,” He would have become a lawbreaker of the Mosaic law and worthy to be condemned by Israel. If He had said, “No,” He would have become a lawbreaker to Rome, and would be condemned by the Romans (of course after being ratted out by the Pharisees).

However, they never considered the third option, an option that implied that even though they could not violate the Mosaic code in the selection of their rulers, they were – by default – set under the authority of Rome by the Lord, and thus they were responsible to Rome while still being responsible to Moses.

Jesus knew this because it is He who gave them the Law of Moses, and it is He who set them under Rome. He anticipated their question, and He shamed them with His response – “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22:21).

As an Israelite, He could not show partiality to the law, nor could He show partiality to Caesar, because it is the Lord who placed Israel under both. As the Lord, He expected compliance for both. For Israel however...

¹⁵ (con’t) **you may not set a foreigner over you, who *is* not your brother.**

The word is *nokri*. It signifies a stranger or something out of place. At times, the term is used for an adulteress. It is something that does not belong because the nature of the thing is foreign. This is then restated in apposition by saying “who *is* not your brother.” In other words, only a brother Israelite could be king, and when he was installed as the king, a king he would be.

Before going on, a point must be made. The leaders of Israel tried to trap Jesus into violating this law in order to obtain justification to have him destroyed. And yet, *while* they were having Him destroyed unjustly, *they* violated this very law that we are looking at right now with their own words –

“But they cried out, ‘Away with *Him*, away with *Him*! Crucify Him!’

Pilate said to them, ‘Shall I crucify your King?’

The chief priests answered, ‘We have no king but Caesar!’” John 19:15

They had rejected the Law of Moses, they had rejected the words of Isaiah that the Lord is their King, and therefore, the penalty of the law stood heavily upon them. For those who later failed to acknowledge Christ, their destiny will be a mournful one.

For now, and with Moses’ words concerning a brother Israelite ruling over Israel, that still would not mean that he was an absolute sovereign. As is seen in the next words...

¹⁶ **But he shall not multiply horses for himself,**

In a kingdom, and depending on the structure of that kingdom, a king could ostensibly wield unlimited power. His right to rule was absolute. However, limitations were set upon any future king of Israel.

This is seen immediately after the authorization for the appointment of a king in the words *raq lo yarbeh lo susim* – Only! No shall he multiply to himself horses.” There are numerous reasons for this prohibition, but the main one is that of personal pride or exaltation.

A king with many horses would elevate himself above those under his rule. And more, he would immediately begin to trust in a cavalry above the hosts of Israel that were given by the Lord for them to trust in Him. The thought is expressed in the Psalms –

“Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses;

But we will remember the name of the LORD our God.” Psalm 40:7

And again –

No king *is* saved by the multitude of an army;

A “mighty man is not delivered by great strength.

¹⁷ A horse *is* a vain hope for safety;
Neither shall it deliver *any* by its great strength.” Psalm 33:16, 17

Despite this, Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, failed to apply the wisdom he was given, notably disobeying this precept –

“And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen; he had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king at Jerusalem.” 1 Kings 10:26

Along with this, Moses next says...

¹⁶ (con’t) **nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses,**

l’maan harboth sus – “to end purpose multiply horse.” In other words, the people might say, “We are not returning to Egypt to live. Nor are we returning there for some other ignoble cause. Rather, We are going there with the set purpose of building up Israel. Thus, it is ok for us to do this.” Moses says otherwise.

Israel had left Egypt. They were not to return there. This was not a temporary prohibition. One might think, “Moses meant this as a short-term expedient until we are established in the land. After that, returning to Egypt would not involve a national departure as it might have back then.”

This thinking would be incorrect. First, it is spoken into the same law that all other commands are placed, and it is done so without any qualifiers. It is a matter of law, and to disobey it is to disobey the law.

Secondly, the issue had nothing to do with the possible desire for a national return to Egypt, thus abandoning the land of Canaan. This is evidenced, perfectly and clearly, by the prophet Isaiah –

“Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help,
And rely on horses,
Who trust in chariots because *they are* many,
And in horsemen because they are very strong,
But who do not look to the Holy One of Israel,
Nor seek the LORD!” Isaiah 31:1

Many hundreds of years after Israel was in the land, at a time when they were deeply rooted there, with no chance of the people packing up and moving back to Egypt, Isaiah repeated the sentiment found in this verse now.

For all intents and purposes, Egypt represents defeat. For Israel to go back and seek assistance for their kingdom, from a kingdom the Lord had defeated, was to implicitly reject the Lord who had gained them the victory in the first place!

In type, Egypt pictures bondage to sin. Who delivered us from that? The Lord. To go back to where we were in our sin in order to find a remedy to our plight is to reject the One who delivered us from sin in the first place: "I have this addiction, and to get myself through, I will return to where the addiction came from."

The path back to Egypt was to be cut. There was (and there is) to be only a reliance on the Lord. Throughout the prophets, horses are mentioned in relation to war or foreign assistance. In this, the people were trusting in something other than the Lord for their continuance.

What is it we need? Another drink? Another shot of dope? Another click on a porn site? Rather, it is the Lord to whom we are to look, and in Him we are to place our trust.

"Take words with you,
And return to the LORD.
Say to Him,
'Take away all iniquity;
Receive *us* graciously,
For we will offer the sacrifices of our lips.
³ Assyria shall not save us,
We will not ride on horses,
Nor will we say anymore to the work of our hands, "*You are our gods.*"
For in You the fatherless finds mercy.'" Hosea 14:2, 3

Despite this, Solomon – who according to 1 Kings 3:12 is the wisest man who ever lived – failed to apply the wisdom he was given, notably disobeying this precept –

"Also Solomon had horses imported from Egypt and Keveh; the king's merchants bought them in Keveh at the *current* price. ²⁹ Now a chariot that was imported from Egypt cost six hundred *shekels* of silver, and a horse one hundred and

fifty; and thus, through their agents, they exported *them* to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria.” 1 Kings 10:28, 29

16 (con't) for the LORD has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.'

This was not a minor, temporary prohibition. Nor was it a suggestion. It is a word of law. The way back to Egypt was not to be traveled again. The king was so warned. And more...

17 Neither shall he multiply wives for himself,

This was, and remains today in some places, the practice of many kings. The multiplication of wives has a variety of purposes including increasing one's offspring. Some purposes may be valid while others are not.

However, this cannot be taken as a verse forbidding polygamy. If that were so, we would have a contradiction in Scripture. When the Lord spoke through Nathan the prophet to David, He said –

“I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if *that had been* too little, I also would have given you much more!” 2 Samuel 12:8

Not only did David have his own wives, but the Lord gave him more, and avows that He would have even given him more. At what point having multiple wives becomes multiplying wives is not stated, but us to judge as to one, ten, or twenty falls under the fallacy of the beard. If the Lord provides, it cannot be considered wrong.

However, any good purpose and point of having a variety of wives was exceeded by David's son, Solomon. Despite being the wisest man who ever lived, he failed to live out the wisdom he was given, notably disobeying this precept –

“But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, *and* Hittites— ²from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, “You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.” Solomon clung to these in love. ³And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines.”

-1 Kings 11:1-3

There was a specific reason Moses now provides this law...

17 (con't) **lest his heart turn away;**

The issue is not because more than one wife was wrong. It is because a multitude of wives would lead the king down the wrong path, away from the Lord – exactly as happened to Solomon –

“...and his wives turned away his heart. ⁴ For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as *was* the heart of his father David. ⁵ For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. ⁶ Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as *did* his father David. ⁷ Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that *is* east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. ⁸ And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.” 1 Kings 11:3-8

17 (con't) **nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself.**

v'keseph v'zahav lo yarbeh lo meod – “and silver and gold no shall he multiply to himself greatly.” Based on the words here, David could be accused of violating this precept. He had in his possession one hundred thousand talents of gold, one million talents of silver, and bronze beyond measure.

But his wealth must be considered an exception to this precept, for one particular reason. He had acquired it with the set purpose of building the house of the Lord (see 1 Chronicles 22:14). On the other hand, along came his son, Solomon. Despite being the wisest man who ever lived, he failed to apply the wisdom he was given, notably disobeying this precept –

“All King Solomon’s drinking vessels *were* gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon *were* pure gold. Not *one was* silver, for this was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon.” 1 Kings 10:21

It is as if Moses had Solomon in mind when he looked into the future, and it is as if the chronicler of the life of Solomon had Moses’ words in mind as he wrote out his words. The case is that the Lord purposefully included these words in both to show us the

tragedy of relying solely on one's personal wisdom without relying on the Lord for its application.

The often-repeated thought in Scripture says –

“The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom,
And the knowledge of the Holy One *is* understanding.” Proverbs 9:10

In other words, true wisdom only begins with the fear of the Lord. If it begins with it, then it must continue with it, and it must end with it. If one were to say, “The best gas is the beginning of the race,” it is a statement that only the best gas is what can win the race.

Hence, it logically follows that the continuance of the race and the finishing of the race are dependent on that same gas. All of the wisdom in the world is pointless if the Lord is not the center of focus in the application of the wisdom.

The record of the wisdom, the wealth, and the power of Solomon is permanently tarnished because he failed to remember the precept of his own proverb. In his rush to find enlightenment apart from the Lord, he ultimately found that only in the Lord is found true enlightenment –

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:
Fear God and keep His commandments,
For this is man's all.
¹⁴ For God will bring every work into judgment,
Including every secret thing,
Whether good or evil.” Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14

In order to ensure that the king of Israel, whoever he may be, would comply with these precepts, Moses next gives another command to the would-be king...

*A book to study, seeking out its veins of gold
A king's adventure as he seeks the Lord's face
The Torah of God, daily to unfold
Lessons for the throne in every generation; in the king's place*

*What will speak out to him on today's trek?
This law seems so vast and complicated some of the time*

*Will the day's meditation be a burden on his neck?
Or will what he reads seem glorious and sublime?*

*"Open my eyes, O Lord, to what lies ahead
Direct my understanding and also guide my heart"
This is what the king petitions; looking to be fed
This is what he asks for, each day upon his start*

*Show the king the riches of Christ in his reading of the book
Be with him as he opens it, and for life's direction he does look*

II. A Copy of This Law (verses 18-20)

¹⁸ "Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom,

v'hayah kesivto al kise mamlakto – "And according to the sitting upon throne his kingdom." In other words, when he begins to reign." This would, ostensibly, be the first true duty of his kingship. That duty is...

¹⁸ (con't) that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book,

v'katav lo eth mishneh ha'torah ha'zot al sepher – "and write to himself copy the Torah the this upon book." Whether the king wrote out the law himself or had a scribe do it is debated.

To me, it seems to ignore the obvious to say a scribe could write it out. Otherwise, one would think Moses would say, "He shall be provided a copy of this law." Rather, the words seem personal and directive in nature: "The king shall write it out."

However, in 2 Chronicles 23, a boy king, Joash, was installed at the age of seven. He would have been too young to make such a copy. Because of this, it explicitly says –

"And they brought out the king's son, put the crown on him, gave him the Testimony, and made him king. Then Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and said, 'Long live the king!'" 2 Chronicles 23:11

As a side note, the words translated as "copy the law," as found in the Greek translation, form the basis of the word Deuteronomy. The words are *deuteros* and *nomos*, or literally, "second law."

Together, in Greek, they read *to deuteronomion touto*, In other words, one could say, “He shall write for himself the Deuteronomy.” It is from this that both the Latin and the English derive the name we now use. The words are found again in Joshua 8:32 when Joshua wrote a second copy on the stones of the altar Israel built on Mount Ebal.

However, it seems apparent that the phrase as it is given here for the king certainly does not mean only the book of Deuteronomy, but rather the entire Torah – meaning the five books of Moses.

The king was to be versed in the creation, the history of sin, the anticipation of the Messiah, the call of the patriarchs, the bondage of his people, their redemption from Egypt, the giving of the law, the turning of their hearts away from the Lord, of His faithfulness to them in punishment, the anticipated establishment of them in the land, and even of the prophecy of the Song of Moses that calls to attention both heaven and earth of the future apostasy of Israel.

All of this was to be copied by the king. Just as the law copied by Joshua on the altar stood as a guide, a warning, and a witness to Israel, so the copy the king made was to have the same purpose. That book copied by the king was to be...

¹⁸ (con’t) **from *the one* before the priests, the Levites.**

This is referred to in Deuteronomy 31 –

“So it was, when Moses had completed writing the words of this law in a book, when they were finished, ²⁵ that Moses commanded the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying: ²⁶ ‘Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there as a witness against you; ²⁷ for I know your rebellion and your stiff neck. *If* today, while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD, then how much more after my death?’” Deuteronomy 31:24-27

The original was kept in the sanctuary. Any copy of it was to be directly from it, and it was probably carefully checked by someone qualified to verify it as an authentic rendering. As far as the king’s copy...

¹⁹ **And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life,**

This is a command. To not read it would be a violation of the law. Thus, the burden of being a king actually bears more weight of judgment than that of others, at least in this regard. The thought is reminiscent of the words of James 3:1 –

“My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.” James 3:1

One who is expected to lead, or instruct, from the law must know the law. This is what makes Solomon’s violations of it so perplexing. It seems as if he read the first words Moses penned that we have already looked at, and then he decided to see how merciful the Lord could actually be by violating them all.

The king of Israel was given a command to read the law every single day of his life. This was so that he was aware of the law. Though no such explicit requirement is made under the New Covenant, the intent behind the precept is still there.

A person cannot teach what he does not know. And one cannot know that which he is not familiar with. And familiarity with something such as biblical precepts will not be remembered if they are not read and meditated on constantly.

And, for the Christian in the pew, there is – likewise – no excuse for you to be misled through incorrect instruction. This is especially so in today’s world. The word is available, it can be accessed at any time and almost during any activity we pursue. If it is to be the rule and guide of your life, it can only be so if you know it. For the king of Israel, it was so...

19 (con’t) that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes,

Moses uses the same word he so often does, *l’maan*, or “to end purpose.” The daily reading was to be the king’s vital connection between himself and his relationship with the Lord. If he failed to do as instructed, that could not exist. And if he failed to do so, he could not comply. And, fellow follower of Christ, neither can you. Of this, Adam Clarke rightly states –

“This was essentially necessary, as these laws of God were all permanent, and no Israelitish king could make any new law, the kings of this people being ever considered as only the vice-gerents of Jehovah.”

But does not this apply to us as well? We have the authoritative word of God. We cannot add to it, and we cannot take from it. Therefore, our conduct in relation to it, our training concerning it, and even the reception of someone's training from it, must be in accord with what is presented in the word. Nothing else can or will suffice. Again, Joseph Benson rightly states –

“It is not enough to have Bibles, but we must use them, yea, use them daily. Our souls must have constant meals of that manna, which, if well digested, will afford them true nourishment and strength.” Joseph Benson

The instruction for the king is instruction for you because the precept remains true for both. If Joseph Smith took to heart the words of Scripture, his heart would not have been lifted up against the Lord to start Mormonism. And if the followers of Joseph Smith were acquainted with the word, they would not face the certain prospect of an eternal swim in the Lake of Fire.

But this is exactly what they will face because they simply failed to abide by the precept. As for the king, in fearing the Lord and knowing his law and statutes, it was so...

²⁰ that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren,

The king was a king because the Lord chose him to be so. Saul obviously failed to observe the precept before us now. When he was first called as the king, he said to Samuel –

“Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then do you speak like this to me?” 1 Samuel 9:21

However, because he failed to heed the word of law, his kingship was removed from him–

“But Samuel said to Saul, ‘I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel.’

²⁷ And as Samuel turned around to go away, *Saul* seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. ²⁸ So Samuel said to him, ‘The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, *who is* better than you. ²⁹ And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For He *is* not a man, that He should relent.’” 1 Samuel 15:26-29

The word was to protect the king from such error, and it is intended to do so for us today as well. In the case of the king...

^{20 (con't)} **that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left,**

The king cannot stay on the right path unless the requirements of how to do so are known. Without the law, he is like a blind man in the dark. With the law –

“Your word *is* a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path.” Psalm 119:105

It is that simple. In the dark, we don't know if we are turning right, turning left, or going straight. And the fact is, that we will not go straight for very long. The natural inclination in the dark is to veer, and it happens very quickly. But with the light of the word, we will continue on the path without turning aside.

*As I sat typing these words on 8 March of 2021, I was thinking in my head, “How many people who hear them (or read them) will actually take what I am typing to heart?” All I can do is convey. In conveying, the words will hopefully convict. And in conviction, may there be willful and wholehearted compliance. The path is set, and the word is the lamp to illuminate it. What will you do?

And there is a good reason for what is conveyed...

^{*20 (fin)} **and that he may prolong *his* days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.**

There is no “and” in the Hebrew. The addition is unfortunate because the previous clause also began with “that.” But the word here, *l'maan*, is not in the previous clause. Here it says, “to end purpose.” In other words, there is a goal to be attained through the reading and meditation of the word.

Not turning aside is the action, but in not turning aside, the king would prolong his days. For Saul, this did not occur. For other kings, it did not occur. When the king departed from the word, even the most disastrous of calamities came upon him –

“Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father, or in the ways of Asa king of Judah, ¹³ but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and

have made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot like the harlotry of the house of Ahab, and also have killed your brothers, those of your father's household, *who were* better than yourself, ¹⁴ behold, the LORD will strike your people with a serious affliction—your children, your wives, and all your possessions; ¹⁵ and you *will become* very sick with a disease of your intestines, until your intestines come out by reason of the sickness, day by day.”

-2 Chronicles 21:12-15

“After all this the LORD struck him in his intestines with an incurable disease. ¹⁹ Then it happened in the course of time, after the end of two years, that his intestines came out because of his sickness; so he died in severe pain. And his people made no burning for him, like the burning for his fathers.”

-2 Chronicles 21:18, 19

As far as the words, “he and his children in the midst of Israel,” that was literally true on occasion as well –

“So they took the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they pronounced judgment on him. ⁷ Then they killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, put out the eyes of Zedekiah, bound him with bronze fetters, and took him to Babylon.” 2 Chronicles 25:6, 7

These, and countless other such terrible events, could have been avoided if the kings of Israel had simply taken the word to heart –

“Blessed *is* the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

² But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.

³ He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.” Psalm 1:1-3

But such was not to be. And the reason for this is that these men, like each of us, is fallen and fallible. To have a copy of the word, and to even hold it as close as meditation on the mind, is still insufficient to keep us from death.

This is proven in good kings as well as bad kings. And the reason for this is that our minds are pre-infected with the sin of our first father. The law could only be a guard for the king, not a ticket to restoration and life.

The king was to write out, read, meditate upon, and know this word to guard him until the time when the embodiment of this word, meaning Christ Jesus would come and fulfill it –

“Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—
In the volume of the book it is written of Me—
To do Your will, O God.’” Psalm 40:7

David, a king of Israel, knowing full well that he had turned from the path in his life, prophesied of One who would come and not do so. Instead, He would not only walk on the straight path, He would be that straight path – the way, the truth, and the life.

As the embodiment of the law, we find our restoration with God through Him because He lived out this impossible body of law for us. This is the lesson of the law, and it is a lesson of the King who sits on the throne of His kingdom.

It is a kingdom that will be prolonged for eternal days, and it is one to be enjoyed by His children forever. The final words of the verse and the chapter are summed up in the words of Hebrews 2 –

“Here am I and the children whom God has given Me.” Hebrews 2:13

Thank God for Jesus Christ. And all of God’s people say. “Amen.”

Closing Verse: *“He does not delight in the strength of the horse;
He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man.*

*¹¹ The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him,
In those who hope in His mercy.” Psalm 147:10, 11*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 18:1-8 *This didn’t come about by chance...* (The Lord is His Inheritance) (54th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

A King Over Israel

“When you come to the land
Which the LORD your God is giving you, when it shall be
And possess it and dwell in it, and say
‘I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me

You shall surely set a king over you
Whom the LORD your God chooses, him and not another
One from among your brethren you shall set as king over you
You may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother

But he shall not multiply horses for himself
Nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses
-----as I now say
For the LORD has said to you
‘You shall not return again that way

Neither shall he multiply wives for himself
Lest his heart turn away
Nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself
It shall not be this way

“Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom
That he shall write for himself a copy; yes, be sure he writes
Of this law in a book
From the one before the priests, the Levites
And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life
That he may learn to fear the LORD his God
And be careful to observe all the words of this law
And these statutes in the land which he shall trod

That his heart may not be lifted above his brethren
That he may not turn aside from the commandment

-----to the right hand or to the left, as to you I tell
And that he may prolong his days in his kingdom
He and his children in the midst of Israel

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen.

Deuteronomy 18:1-8 **(The Lord is His Inheritance)**

Most of us, at any given time, have something that we really yearn for. When we're hungry, a particular food may be on our mind. When we've been inside too long, we will yearn to get out and enjoy the outdoors. If we meet someone special, we may long to get the phone call we hope will come. With every passing hour, the yearning grows.

Whatever it is, it gives us a sense of anticipation that will often keep our minds from being productive at anything else. Lots of people yearn for the rapture. It is almost an obsession with them. But that has to be divided into at least two main categories –

- 1) Those who long to be out of this crummy world, meaning crummy for whatever reason – sickness, some misery or another, the depraved state of things, and so on. Or
- 2) Those who simply long to see the Lord, just because He is the Lord.

The reason for the yearning may change based on the current state of things as well. In other words, we may long just to see the Lord, but when something really major happens, we just long to get away from it – “Come soon Lord Jesus.”

If so, that means that the second option may not actually be as strong of a yearning as it otherwise could be. Or maybe our desire for the Lord has simply faded over the years. That can happen to anyone at any time.

The way to keep this from happening is to fix our eyes on the Prize. As the Source of all things, the Lord is the One who is the perfection of all goodness, light, joy, blessing, and so on. If we can remember this and meditate on it, then our current state will not drive the level of our yearning for Him.

Text Verse: *How lovely is Your tabernacle,
O LORD of hosts!
²My soul longs, yes, even faints
For the courts of the LORD;
My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.
³Even the sparrow has found a home,
And the swallow a nest for herself,
Where she may lay her young—
Even Your altars, O LORD of hosts,*

My King and my God.

*⁴ Blessed are those who dwell in Your house;
They will still be praising You. Selah*

*⁵ Blessed is the man whose strength is in You,
Whose heart is set on pilgrimage.*

*⁶ As they pass through the Valley of Baca,
They make it a spring;
The rain also covers it with pools.*

*⁷ They go from strength to strength;
Each one appears before God in Zion.*

*⁸ O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer;
Give ear, O God of Jacob! Selah*

*⁹ O God, behold our shield,
And look upon the face of Your anointed.*

*¹⁰ For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand.
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God
Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.*

*¹¹ For the LORD God is a sun and shield;
The LORD will give grace and glory;
No good thing will He withhold
From those who walk uprightly.*

*¹² O LORD of hosts,
Blessed is the man who trusts in You! Psalm 84*

The whole psalm needed to be cited because verses, right from the beginning of it to the end of it are reflected in our passage today. The psalmist understood the beauty of the Lord, and he knew the state of those who yearned to dwell in His glory and light so much that they were set on their pilgrimage even through the Valley of Baca, or Weeping.

This life is our valley of weeping. There are good times too, but none of us are immune from the times of overwhelming grief. This is a reality of life and how we respond to it will reveal the priority of our hearts, if we are willing to search them out.

To me, one of the most wonderful experiences I know of is when I hear from someone who is going through untold pains, miseries, or trials, and who is still able to say, "Oh how I love the Lord. He is my Rock." If nothing else will build you up, it is a person that is positive, even in the most negative of times.

“Whatever they have, that’s what I want.” What are you yearning for most of all? What is the inner impulse that is driving you at any given moment? The psalmist penned what was on his mind. Moses will tell us of another such person today.

Let us learn from them what is of the highest value. Great lessons such as these are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. With All the Desire of His Soul (verses 1-8)

In the words that open Chapter 18, Moses turns to the state of things among the tribe of Levi. This is a logical next step in his discourse. In the previous chapter, he said the following concerning judicial matters –

“If a matter arises which is too hard for you to judge, between degrees of guilt for bloodshed, between one judgment or another, or between one punishment or another, matters of controversy within your gates, then you shall arise and go up to the place which the LORD your God chooses. ⁹ And you shall come to the priests, the Levites, and to the judge *there* in those days, and inquire *of them*; they shall pronounce upon you the sentence of judgment. ¹⁰ You shall do according to the sentence which they pronounce upon you in that place which the LORD chooses. And you shall be careful to do according to all that they order you.”

-Deuteronomy 17:8-10

After that, in verses 14-20, he then spoke of the responsibilities of the king. The assumption was that the “judge” just mentioned in verse 9 would eventually become the position of a king. As such, his responsibilities would need to be defined.

With that thought completed, Moses will now refer to the rights of the Levites, also just mentioned in verse 9. This will go from 18:1-8. These are the earthly authorities to be sought out because they represent the Lord.

After that, verses 9-14 will give a warning about who to not seek out direction from, and that will then lead into the office of the prophet who speaks on behalf of the Lord in matters beyond, but in accord with, the law. Everything that is laid out is orderly and purposeful. With that understood, we begin with verse 1...

¹“The priests, the Levites—all the tribe of Levi—shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel;

The words here reflect the sentiment spoken by the Lord to Aaron in Numbers 18:20 –

“You shall have no inheritance in their land, nor shall you have any portion among them; I *am* your portion and your inheritance among the children of Israel.”

-Numbers 18:20

Here in Deuteronomy, by offsetting the words “all the tribe of Levi,” the Hebrew is well expressed by the NKJV. But because of the way it reads, various skeptical scholars (such as Cambridge) say the words are “a forced attempt to reconcile” the insertion of various different authors into the narrative.

The Hebrew more exactly reads, “No shall have to the priests, the Levites – all tribe of Levi – portion and inheritance with Israel.”

What Cambridge says is that the words here make no distinction between the priests and the other Levites. Because of this, the verse was supposedly inserted by someone much later.

Such a commentary makes no sense at all. If someone was to insert something later, they wouldn’t make the intent less understandable, but would instead reconcile what they were inserting to make it more understandable.

Rather, the roles of the priests and Levites have already been defined. There is no need for Moses to repeat those roles again in order to make the point he is about to make.

However, by simply turning back to the appropriate passage in Numbers, one can see that the reference to “the priests, the Levites” is speaking of them as a united body, even though they are separate entities –

“Then the LORD said to Aaron: ‘You and your sons and your father’s house with you shall bear the iniquity *related to* the sanctuary, and you and your sons with you shall bear the iniquity *associated with* your priesthood. ² Also bring with you your brethren of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, that they may be joined with you and serve you while you and your sons *are* with you before the tabernacle of witness. ³ They shall attend to your needs and all the needs of the tabernacle; but they shall not come near the articles of the sanctuary and the

altar, lest they die—they and you also. ⁴They shall be joined with you and attend to the needs of the tabernacle of meeting, for all the work of the tabernacle; but an outsider shall not come near you. ⁵And you shall attend to the duties of the sanctuary and the duties of the altar, that there *may* be no more wrath on the children of Israel. ⁶Behold, I Myself have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel; *they are a gift to you*, given by the LORD, to do the work of the tabernacle of meeting. ⁷Therefore you and your sons with you shall attend to your priesthood for everything at the altar and behind the veil; and you shall serve. I give your priesthood *to you* as a gift for service, but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death.” Numbers 18:1-7

The Lord’s words there show that the Levites are given to the priests for service of the tabernacle. For Moses now in Deuteronomy, the Levites are already joined to the priests. He is speaking from the standpoint that this is already the case. After thirty-eight years of this set up, it would make no sense for him to redefine everything all over again.

As a simple example, we could take the functioning of the White House. Each job within the White House is explained in a book. Some years later, a new idea concerning its organization is presented.

Anybody who is already aware of the various functions of the White House might just say, “The president, the cabinet secretaries – all of the White House – shall be subject to the following guidelines.

Nobody in their right mind would say, “Oh whoever said that doesn’t understand that the president and the secretaries are two different offices.” It is perfectly understood. Why would anyone recite all of the pages and pages of duties before stating the new requirement? Nothing would ever get done!

But this is what skeptical scholars do with the Bible all the time. They attempt to call into question the reliability of the Bible for whatever perverse reason goes through their heads.

Maybe they just want to appear more intellectual or informed, but they rather make themselves look foolish, and they harm the faith of others in the process. Moses is simply stating that those who serve at the tabernacle, meaning those of the tribe of Levi, shall have no inheritance (meaning a land grant) among the tribes of Israel. And there is a reason for this...

¹ (con't) **they shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and His portion.**

There is a stress in the Hebrew, an emphasis, on the word “eat”: *ishsheh Yehovah v'nakhalato yokelun* – “fire offerings Yehovah and (“and” meaning “even”) His inheritance, they shall (certainly) eat.”

In other words, the offerings made by fire are to the Lord. They are called “fire offerings” because a part of the animal was burnt on the altar of sacrifice to the Lord.

After that, and depending on what type of offerings they are, parts of them are given to the priests. Those parts are the Lord’s portion, but as representatives of the Lord, those sacred parts are (certainly) eaten by them. The emphasis is given to highlight this fact.

In essence, the tribe of Levi has no inheritance among Israel because the inheritance of the Lord is their inheritance. That is then explicitly stated in the next words...

² **Therefore they shall have no inheritance among their brethren;**

As a point of clarification, Deuteronomy 10:9 said, “Therefore Levi has no portion nor inheritance with his brethren; the Lord *is* his inheritance, just as the Lord your God promised him.)” As this verse is speaking of “all the tribe of Levi” just as it was in 10:9, it should be translated in the singular as well – “**he** shall have no inheritance among **his** brethren.”

Also, the words are emphatic: *v'nakhalah lo yihyeh lo b'qerev ekhav* – “and inheritance **no** shall be in midst his brothers.” This thought from verse 1 is stated again to provide emphasis. Levi is set apart and there is to be a set distinction between him and his brothers. The division of the land is to exclude a portion for Levi. This is because...

² (con't) **the LORD is their inheritance, as He said to them.**

There is again an emphasis which is missing in the translation: *Yehovah, hu, nakhalato* – “Yehovah, **He**, *is* their inheritance.” As it is so, a land grant would be meaningless in comparison to this honor. The people of Israel were to find their sustenance from their land, but Levi was to find it from what belonged to the Lord from that same land – the Lord’s portion. That portion is...

³ **“And this shall be the priest’s due from the people,**

It has already been established that the priest is to receive a portion of each sacrifice that is made by the people. Moses will now restate this and expand upon it. It is to be...

3 (con't) from those who offer a sacrifice,

meet zobekhe ha'zebakh – “from sacrifice the sacrifice.” It is a comprehensive statement where every animal that is sacrificed is included. However, as this is the priest’s due from the people, what is that speaking of? The parts of the animal that were for the expiatory sacrifices and peace offerings have already been defined in Leviticus.

What this is surely referring to is the portion of those things that are eaten by the offeror as defined in Deuteronomy concerning the freewill offerings, tithes, heave offerings, and so on which are brought during the pilgrim feasts. The reason this must be so is seen in the next words...

3 (con't) whether *it is* bull or sheep: they shall give to the priest the shoulder, the cheeks, and the stomach.

As noted, the sacred portion for the priests was already defined for the expiatory sacrifices and peace offerings in Leviticus and Numbers. For example –

“The breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering you shall eat in a clean place, you, your sons, and your daughters with you; for *they are* your due and your sons’ due, *which* are given from the sacrifices of peace offerings of the children of Israel.” Leviticus 10:14

“This shall be yours of the most holy things *reserved* from the fire: every offering of theirs, every grain offering and every sin offering and every trespass offering which they render to Me, *shall be* most holy for you and your sons.”

-Numbers 18:9

However, Deuteronomy refers to offerings other than the peace offerings –

“You may not eat within your gates the tithe of your grain or your new wine or your oil, of the firstborn of your herd or your flock, of any of your offerings which you vow, of your freewill offerings, or of the heave offering of your hand.”

-Deuteronomy 12:17

“Only the holy things which you have, and your vowed offerings, you shall take and go to the place which the LORD chooses. ²⁷ And you shall offer your burnt offerings, the meat and the blood, on the altar of the LORD your God; and the blood of your sacrifices shall be poured out on the altar of the LORD your God, and you shall eat the meat.” Deuteronomy 12:26, 27

These were mentioned in Numbers 18:11, but no detail was given at that time. The detail is now being explained by Moses. The reason why it is important to make the distinction between the parts of the animal from the various sacrifices and offerings defined in Leviticus and these things in Deuteronomy is that different parts are mentioned. Without making this distinction, one would find a contradiction in what Moses is saying. And, in fact, this is what is claimed by some.

The parts of these particular sacrifices include the shoulder, the cheeks, and the stomach. The first is the *zeroa*. This signifies arm, shoulder, or strength. The word comes from *zara*, to scatter seed.

The next is the *lekhi*. It is the jaw or cheek, coming from an unused root meaning to be soft, like the fleshiness of the cheek.

The third is a word found only here in all of Scripture, the *qevah*. It is not entirely sure what it is, but it is believed to be the stomach. The word comes from *qevav*, meaning a curse because such a curse is as if you scoop out (hollow out) the one you are cursing. As the stomach is a cavity, this is where the connection lies.

These three parts come from the three principal parts of the animal – the head, the limbs, and the body. Thus, they represent the consecration of the whole. But these parts anticipate the dedication of aspects of a person to God. The shoulder, or arm, represents the limbs and thus the acts of a person –

“And do not present your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God.” Romans 6:13

The jaw or cheek represents the words of the person –

“If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.” 1 Timothy 4:6

And the stomach represents the expression of the innermost being of the person –

“The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being [stomach] will flow rivers of living water.’” John 7:38 (NASB)

These are the parts of the animal that belonged to the priest from these particular sacrifices now mentioned in Deuteronomy. Along with them, the people were also instructed...

⁴The firstfruits of your grain and your new wine and your oil,

reshit deganekha tiroshékha v’yitsharekha – “First of your grain, your new wine, and your oil.” This was previously mentioned in Numbers 18:12, 13 –

“All the best of the oil, all the best of the new wine and the grain, their firstfruits which they offer to the LORD, I have given them to you. ¹³ Whatever first ripe fruit is in their land, which they bring to the LORD, shall be yours. Everyone who is clean in your house may eat it.”

The amount is not stated, but if everyone brought a meal-sized amount of each, the cumulative amount would be immense.

The root of these three words gives us insight into the work of Christ. The grain comes from a word meaning “increase.” The new wine comes from a word signifying “to inherit” or “to disinherit” depending on the context. The oil comes from the same root as the word *tsohar*, signifying midday or noon. In Psalm 37, that is then equated to purity of justice –

“He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light,
And your justice as the noonday.” Psalm 37:6

Together these first offerings to the priest form a picture of the Lord. He is the first and thus emblematic of the harvest to come. He is the One through Whom God provides the increase. He both is the Inheritor of the nations while at the same time disinheriting the devil. And He is the purity of God’s justice as His light shines forth.

When these firsts are gathered up, a special ritual concerning them was to be conducted. That is found in Chapter 26 –

“And it shall be, when you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you *as* an inheritance, and you possess it and dwell in it, ² that you shall take some of the first of all the produce of the ground, which you shall bring from your land that the LORD your God is giving you, and put *it* in a basket and go to the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide. ³ And you shall go to the one who is priest in those days, and say to him, ‘I declare today to the LORD your God that I have come to the country which the LORD swore to our fathers to give us.’

⁴ “Then the priest shall take the basket out of your hand and set it down before the altar of the LORD your God. ⁵ And you shall answer and say before the LORD your God: ‘My father *was* a Syrian, about to perish, and he went down to Egypt and dwelt there, few in number; and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. ⁶ But the Egyptians mistreated us, afflicted us, and laid hard bondage on us. ⁷ Then we cried out to the LORD God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and looked on our affliction and our labor and our oppression. ⁸ So the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders. ⁹ He has brought us to this place and has given us this land, “a land flowing with milk and honey”; ¹⁰ and now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land which you, O LORD, have given me.’

“Then you shall set it before the LORD your God, and worship before the LORD your God. ¹¹ So you shall rejoice in every good *thing* which the LORD your God has given to you and your house, you and the Levite and the stranger who *is* among you.

-Deuteronomy 26:1-11

Along with the grain, new wine, and oil, something not previously mentioned is set aside for the priests by Moses –

⁴ (con’t) **and the first of the fleece of your sheep, you shall give him.**

v’reshit gez sonekha titen lo – “and first fleece *of* your sheep you shall give him.” This requirement is only stated here. Nothing else concerning it is even referred to elsewhere. As it is an offering to the priest, it must have a typological significance.

The Hebrew word for fleece is *gez*. That is derived from the verb *gazaz*, meaning to shear. But it is also used figuratively in regard to destroying (cutting down) an enemy –

“Thus says the LORD:

‘Though *they are* safe, and likewise many,

Yet in this manner they will be cut down
When he passes through.” Nahum 1:12

With this, it can be assumed that the fleece being brought to the priest is a picture of Christ being the one to cut down the enemies of God. Just as the fleece of a sheep is cut off and presented to the priest, the mediator before the Lord, so will the enemies of the Lord be cut off by the Messiah, God’s true High Priest.

⁵ For the LORD your God has chosen him out of all your tribes

Aaron was chosen as the high priest. His sons ministered as priests with him. After him, his sons were designated to continue in the priesthood. Only they were set apart for this out of all of the tribes. As this is so, then any change in priesthood would indicate a changing of the law. This is referred to in Hebrews 7.

The point of what is being said, though, isn’t just for the sake of the priests, but of the Levites who are joined to the priest. It is the members of this tribe who have been chosen...

^{5 (con’t)} to stand to minister in the name of the LORD,

Again, Hebrews refers to this, specifically Hebrews 10 that speaks of the priest standing and ministering daily before the Lord. Their duties were ongoing and without end. This is clearly stated in the next words...

^{5 (con’t)} him and his sons forever.

hu u-banav kal ha’yammim – “him and his sons all the days.” The idea of a priesthood is that of mediation before God. A person needs mediation with God because there is a dispute between the two parties. What these words are telling us is that the dispute between the people and God is not resolved by the mediation of Aaron. If it was, they would no longer be needed to mediate.

However, this says that they continue to minister “all the days.” The process would never end through their ministrations. But the word does not mean “forever” in the absolute sense. It simply means that as long as the people require mediation under the Covenant, the priests would continue to provide that mediation. Throughout those days, it may be that a Levite from one of the Levitical cities wanted to assist the priests in the duties. Moses now makes provision for this...

⁶“So if a Levite comes from any of your gates,

v’ki yabo ha’Levi me-ekhad shearekha – “And if comes the Levite from one of your gates.” The meaning is that this is a Levite who has lived in one of the Levitical cities, or it also may refer to one who resides within one of the towns of Israel, performing the duties of a judge or minister for the people.

⁶ (con’t) from where he dwells among all Israel,

mikal yisrael asher hu gar sham – “from all Israel which he sojourns there.” The words “from all Israel” are emphatic, and the word *gur* signifies to sojourn, being normally applied to someone who has turned aside from the road, as in a stranger or alien.

The idea is that the Levite is such a sojourner among Israel because he, as a Levite, has no land inheritance among the tribes. Even if he lives in a Levitical city, it is not a place of inheritance. Rather, the inheritance of Levi is the Lord, as was stated in verse 2. In this state, he feels impelled to join himself to the place of his inheritance...

⁶ (con’t) and comes with all the desire of his mind to the place which the LORD chooses,

The Hebrew reads, “with all *the* desire of his soul.” Unlike the mind, which is the seat of reasoning, the soul is what animates the person. It is as if he has an inner urge pulling at him to join to the service of the Lord at the tabernacle. This is the idea conveyed.

The wording is perfectly described in the 84th psalm, our text verse, a psalm written by the sons of Korah, meaning Levites who had this same inner urge to dwell at the tabernacle in the presence of the Lord. If such a Levite has this inner impulse...

⁷ then he may serve in the name of the LORD his God as all his brethren the Levites do,

This means that he is not to be turned away from this privilege. He is to be accepted into the Lord’s service at the tabernacle. This would seemingly be a rather rare occurrence. The Levites would grow up in their cities, and like anyone, they would feel at home there.

They would have their family around them, the comforts of the security of the home environment, and surely a certain amount of prestige in the areas they ministered. To leave all that behind to maybe be a doorkeeper at the sanctuary of the Lord would be a true calling. And this is highlighted by the next words...

⁷ (con't) **who stand there before the LORD.**

ha'omedim sham liphne Yehovah – “the standers there before Yehovah.” The idea is that of service. To stand means to be ready, to be prepared, and to be engaged. It thus means service. In this case, it is the service of the Lord –

Behold, bless the LORD,
All *you* servants of the LORD,
Who by night stand in the house of the LORD!
² Lift up your hands *in* the sanctuary,
And bless the LORD.
³ The LORD who made heaven and earth
Bless you from Zion! Psalm 134

Such a Levite, with such an inward desire pressed upon his soul, was to be taken in, and he was to be given exactly what the others at the sanctuary were given. This is codified into law so that it was understood. He had given up much to come to be among the others, and whatever benefit he received from selling his inheritance was not to be required of him. As Moses says...

⁸ **They shall have equal portions to eat,**

kheleq k'kheleq yokelu – “portion for portion they shall eat.” Just as anyone else who previously served at the sanctuary, so this Levite was to be welcomed in and given an equal portion to that of all the others. This is probably the verse on Paul's mind when giving instruction concerning those who preach –

“Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat *of the things* of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of *the offerings of* the altar? ¹⁴ Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.” 1 Corinthians 9:13, 14

The person had left his home to serve, and he was to be given his portion like all others...

^{*8} (fin) **besides what comes from the sale of his inheritance.**

l'bad mimkarav al ha'avot – “to separate sale of the fathers.” In other words, the sale of that which was inherited from his fathers was to remain his. It was not to be exacted

from him to pay for his keep. This would be a protection for him should he ever decide to return to his home, if there was a need in his family, and so on. What was his when he came was to remain his after his coming.

*This is the priest's portion of each offering
But what does it really mean?
Time and again, one brings forth his proffering
Time and again, the same person is seen*

*Why does this cycle never come to an end?
We minister to the same people time and again
Haven't I seen you here before my friend?
Will this job ever finish? If so, when?*

*If returning to Eden requires no sin
And if people keep coming back time and again
It appears that we are all done in
So, it seems. Can I get an "Amen?"*

*Something is lacking that I just can't see
Surely, someday Messiah will explain it to me*

II. A Better Priesthood

The abrupt nature of the ending of the passage calls for us to venture into the New Testament in order to obtain a few points of doctrine mentioned in passing as we looked at the verses today. While looking at verse 5, I said that any change in priesthood from Levi would necessarily indicate a changing of the law. This is one of the main points of Hebrews 7. There, the author says –

“Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need *was there* that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? ¹² For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. ¹³ For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar.

For *it is* evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. ¹⁵ And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest ¹⁶ who has come, not according to the

law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. ¹⁷ For He testifies:

‘You *are* a priest forever

According to the order of Melchizedek.’

¹⁸ For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, ¹⁹ for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, *there is the* bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.” Hebrews 7:14-19

The author of Hebrews cited the 110th Psalm to demonstrate that the Messiah would not only be a priest, but He would be a priest completely different than that found in the Levitical priesthood. He is basing his argument under the assumption that the Psalms are inspired by God. If not, then his argument has no basis.

But because he takes it as an axiom that what they say is inspired, then it means that the term “all the days” referring to the Levitical priesthood in verse 5 does not mean “forever.” This is because the psalmist, David in this case, spoke of a coming priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Melchizedek came long before Aaron, and his priesthood had nothing to do with the service of the Law of Moses. Therefore, if David speaks of a future priest who is of a different order, meaning a different priesthood, then it necessarily follows that there will be a change from the Law of Moses, which was ministered to by Levi.

The author then states that this priest is Jesus, a Descendant of Judah, not Levi. Not only does Moses say nothing of Judah in this regard, the Mosaic law forbid anyone but Levi from ministering as a priest under that law.

As this is so, he directly states – without any ambiguity at all – that the “former commandment,” meaning the Law of Moses, is annulled. He then explains the reason it is so, saying it was both weak and unprofitable. In its place he says a “better hope” is brought in, referring to the New Covenant in Christ.

That was seen in our verses today. It was weak because it could not perfect anyone. To understand a part of its weakness, Hebrews 10 says –

“For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. ² For then would they not have

ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. ³ But in those *sacrifices there is* a reminder of sins every year. ⁴ For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.” Hebrews 10:1-4

His logic is impeccable. What the Law of Moses did was to provide shadows, or representations, of what Christ would do. But those shadows actually did nothing. Bulls and goats are in a different category than humans. Thus, their blood is unable to cleanse.

If it could, those who came to be cleansed would be purified and restoration with God would be complete. But the fact that they had to be observed constantly, year by year, demonstrates that they had no efficacy at all. As this was so, there was no profit in continuing in this law forever. Rather, something better was needed.

That something better was introduced already by him in Chapter 8 when he quoted the prophet Jeremiah, saying, “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah” (Hebrews 8:8).

He continues explaining what this means through the rest of the chapter, finishing Chapter 8 with the words, “In that He says, ‘A new *covenant*,’ He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away” (Hebrews 8:13).

Again, the author of Hebrews is clear and unambiguous. The Law of Moses is obsolete. It no longer serves any purpose in the effectiveness of bringing man to restoration with God.

To finish the thought off for today, we can look to the supremacy of what Christ did as is recorded in the words of our passage from verse 7, where it said, *ha’omedim sham liphne Yehovah* – “the standers there before Yehovah.”

The work of the priest was never finished. Each course of the Levites involved them standing before the Lord, ready to minister at all times. In contrast to that, Hebrews says –

“And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But this Man, after He had offered

one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.”

-Hebrews 10:11-12

Christ Jesus performed His work, fulfilling all of the types and shadows of the Mosaic covenant, and in His fulfillment of it, it says He sat down. The work is complete. The mediation has served its purpose, and reconciliation between God and man has been realized.

The “something better” that was needed was the coming of Christ. Hebrews 10:10, says that through the offering of the body of Christ we are sanctified once for all. The duties of our Great High priest were fully effectual in doing what the Law of Moses could never do. Thus, the Law of Moses was taken away, and with it, the New Covenant, the Christ Covenant, was established (Hebrews 10:9).

If you wonder why there is so much focus on these seemingly tedious aspects of the Law of Moses, it is because it is showing us the greatness of what God would do in Christ. The few verses we cited from Hebrews just now probably fill thirty or more pages of evaluation in my Hebrews commentary. And these were just a few select verses out of chapters 7-10.

The Hebrews commentary is right online for you to copy and read anytime you wish. Or, if you’d rather, we’ll be getting to the book of Hebrews in our Thursday Bible class shortly. When we get there, we will go through its verses one by one and in minute detail.

Don’t get bogged down by the detail in Deuteronomy. Rather, look at it as a great part of the marvelous unfolding story of God’s love for you as is revealed in the coming of Christ. Without it, we would have a tremendous void in our understanding of all that He has done for us.

Theology is hard work. Proper theology is even harder. Go slow, meticulously follow the thread of glory, and be excited with each new passage. God has placed them here for us as a gift of love and blessing. Accept the gift, open it up, and be blessed in its marvelous contents.

Closing Verse: *“Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, ² a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.” Hebrews 8:1, 2*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 18:9-14 *Such things as He finds distasteful are recorded in His word...* (An Abomination to the Lord) (55th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Lord is His Inheritance

“The priests, the Levites—all the tribe of Levi—
Shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel
They shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire
And His portion – it is theirs as well

Therefore they shall have no inheritance among their brethren
The LORD is their inheritance, as He said to them

“And this shall be the priest’s due from the people
From those who offer a sacrifice; when they do
Whether it is bull or sheep
They shall give to the priest the shoulder, the cheeks
-----and the stomach too

The firstfruits of your grain
And your new wine and your oil as well
And the first of the fleece of your sheep
You shall give him, so to you I tell

For the LORD your God has chosen him
Out of all your tribes to stand
To minister in the name of the LORD
Him and his sons forever; such is what I planned

“So if a Levite comes from any of your gates
From where he dwells among all Israel
And comes with all the desire of his mind
To the place which the LORD chooses; where the Lord does dwell

Then he may serve
In the name of the LORD his God according to this word
As all his brethren the Levites do
Who stand there before the LORD

They shall have equal portions to eat, with the other gents
Besides what comes from the sale of his inheritance

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen.

Deuteronomy 18:9-14 **(An Abomination to the LORD)**

You've heard the verses read, you surely have an idea of what most of the categories Moses spoke forth mean, and we will go through them methodically so that you have all the relevant details as well. But, in a general sense, would you agree that any or all of the following would fall into the overall list of what Moses said –

Chiromancy, or hand (palm) reading.
Tarot card reading.
Tasseography, or tea leaves (or coffee) reading.
Sorcery.
Divination (Fortune telling).
Astrology (Horoscope).
Witches and witchcraft.
Mysticism.
Numerology to predict the future.
Interpreting omens.

Obviously, several of these are right out of the passage we read. Others certainly fall into the same categories but are simply given a different name than that found in the NKJV.

This is just a list of ten various things that most of you seemed to agree are exactly the type of thing that Moses is referring to. And the list is not all-inclusive of the variety of such things to be found in... anyone? In Israel today.

Although some of these are not legal there, one can find any and all of them through a general search on the internet. It only took me a couple minutes to do so. There are websites, Facebook pages, and even articles on news sites such as the Jerusalem Post to be found.

And more, just a couple weeks after typing this sermon, a video came online via an Israel publisher with the title, 'WITCH HARLOTS' HOLD RALLY IN JERUSALEM.' The identification of the participants with witchcraft was, ostensibly, in name only, but that is only because being a witch is a punishable offense in Israel.

And the list of them conducted by Jews here in the US and around the world is even greater in both scope and type. If one wants a confirmation of Ezekiel 36:22, all he needs

to do is to compare what the book of Deuteronomy says, and what continues on in both the Jews and in the nation of Israel...

Text Verse: *“Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name’s sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went.” Ezekiel 36:22*

This is not intended as a slam on the Jews. It just makes the point more relevant to see that even Jews participate in such things. They are the ones who bear the name of the Lord – His holy name. And yet, they have gone out into the world and done all of those things forbidden by the law, thus profaning the name of the Lord.

If one picks up and reads the Law of Moses, he can come to no other conclusion than that Israel was exiled because of these things. And more, the calamities they have suffered are a result of this as well. What this means for them, meaning those who practice such things, is that they either don’t know what the word says, they don’t believe the word is true, or they simply just don’t care.

Either way, it is a scary place to be because that same word continues to tell of many great woes to come upon them for continuing on in this same walk.

But we have to also remember that the passage we just read said that the Lord was going to dispossess the inhabitants of the land for exactly the same things. If that is true, and it is, then no nation today should feel any more smug at the thought of Israel’s continued judgment.

America is so filled with the crimes against the Lord mentioned here that it is hard to believe we are still operating as a nation. And the worst part of it of all is that churches actively participate in many of these practices. Is there hope? Well, one thing is for sure – with the Lord, there is abundant mercy for those who will simply humble themselves.

But that is the hard part for stubborn humans, isn’t it? Bad times lay ahead before things get better. Such truths as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. You Shall Be Blameless (verses 9-14)

⁹“When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you,

Words similar to this have been repeated again and again throughout Deuteronomy. The most recent time was in verse 17:14 where the words are almost identical.

And this is not the last time Moses will say this. He is speaking to the people who are right on the banks of the Jordan, just about to enter into the land of promise. And yet, the words are referring to a possibility that may be years away, or that – ostensibly – may never come to pass.

But they are spoken out with the assumption that what will be discussed is something the people will face. This is because of several reasons. The first is that the inhabitants in the land already do these things.

A second, and more important reason, is that the Lord knows the human heart. He knows the kind of people He is dealing with, and He knows the propensities of them.

And then, based on those failings and weaknesses, He knows that once one person follows this path, unless it is handled according to the set law now being spoken forth, it will blossom into a fashion where disobedience to the precept becomes an accepted and established norm.

This is absolutely evident in the world today. Even if the world doesn't have the law as its guide, the practices to be referred to in the verses ahead enter into a society, and they become so ingrained in it that they become a standard means of pursuing spirituality, that anyone who speaks against them is thought of as a spiritual prude or unenlightened.

Instead, it is those who practice these things that are supposedly the true connection to the divine. They are the trendsetters, they are the ones to be sought after, and simple faith without demonstrative predictions and explanations of the future is thought to be a ridiculous waste of time.

Right now, at the beginning of the thought, Moses reminds them that it is the Lord who is giving them the land, and that they will, in fact, go in to possess it. As this is so, and if they can remember this, then it is He to whom their allegiance is due.

And more, it is He to whom they are to look to for their spiritual life, thus demonstrating that they have faith in the word that has been given, and in the promises and warnings that are set forth in it. Despite the law being of works, it does not negate that faith in

the Source of the law is still necessary – even before one can work out the requirements of the law.

With this understood, the immediate context of these next few verses needs to be considered. Verses 1-8 (our last passage) dealt with the priests and Levites – the tribe who ministers to the people on behalf of the Lord.

It spoke of what was due to them from the sacrifices. As it is due to them, and because that is a requirement of the law, it is as if what is rendered is being given to the Lord. They are the intermediaries representing the Lord.

But under the law, there are others who will act in an intermediary manner as well, the prophets. They, and one in particular, will be referred to in verses 15-22. With this in mind, Moses' words now – being placed between these two thoughts – will deal with those who are not to be considered as intermediaries for spiritual matters.

The placement of these six verses is purposeful and orderly. The people are to go to those who serve in the name of the Lord, but...

^{9 (con't)} **you shall not learn to follow**

lo tilmad laasot – “No you shall learn to follow.” It is the word *lamad* that was introduced in verse 4:1 and is now being given for the twelfth time, showing it is a favorite of Moses. It comes from a root signifying “to goad.”

Moses is saying that the people are not to be goaded into conduct that is inappropriate for them as a people. There is the sanctuary, there are those who serve the Lord there, and there is to be adherence to the law of which they are the ministers. That is where their spiritual guidance is to be sought out, rather than...

^{9 (con't)} **the abominations of those nations.**

k'toavot ha'goyim ha'hem – “according to abominations the nations the those.” The word *toevah*, or abomination, is something deplorable to the Lord. It has been used quite a few times already from Genesis through Deuteronomy.

One of those instances was in Deuteronomy when referring to the dietary laws set forth before the people. It then went on to name the clean and unclean animals for the people.

As seen there, and as is understood throughout Scripture apart from the Law of Moses, those things that are an abomination under the law are not an abomination for those not under law. This is because the animals anticipated Christ and believers' conduct in Christ. Those considered unclean were typical of inappropriate conduct for believers.

The unclean animals were only unclean because of this, not because of some inherent uncleanness in them. The issue comes back to what is typical of life in Christ. In Christ, those distinctions between the animals are now no longer considered.

On the other hand, that cannot be said of what will be presented in the next few verses. The reason, in relation to the clean or unclean animals, is explained by Paul –

“But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.” 1 Corinthians 8:8

As seen from after the flood of Noah, and as is seen in the words of Jesus (Matthew 15:17 & Mark 7:19) and elsewhere in the New Testament epistles, foods are neutral.

It is the law (because the dietary laws anticipated Christ) that makes the foods acceptable or not. As “every creature of God *is* good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving” (1 Timothy 4:4), then those precepts of the law only applied while the law was in effect.

On the other hand, the precepts Moses will next speak out will still apply even after the law is set aside. They are not commandments which if disobeyed will bring about the imputation of sin, but they are matters which are inherently abominable to the Lord.

Why is this so? It is because unlike foods which do not commend us to God nor draw us away from Him, these precepts will – in fact – draw us away from God. They directly pertain to a right relationship with the Lord, or its lack thereof. That type of precept is found again in the words of Paul –

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said:
'I will dwell in them
And walk among *them*.

I will be their God,
And they shall be My people.'

¹⁷ Therefore

'Come out from among them
And be separate, says the Lord.
Do not touch what is unclean,
And I will receive you.'

¹⁸ 'I will be a Father to you,
And you shall be My sons and daughters,
Says the LORD Almighty.'" 1 Corinthians 6:14-18

The type of people to be presented in the coming verses practice that which belongs to unbelievers. Further, they present that which is contrary to the message of God in Christ. God has appointed Christ as the one and only mediator between God and men.

As this is so, those who follow after the type of people to next be presented are abandoning that which is right and proper. Again, simply looking at the context of what is presented shows us this. Moses spoke of the priests and Levites, and then after this, he will speak of the prophets of the Lord.

As has been seen of the priests and Levites, and as will be seen of the prophet, these all anticipate Christ in His various roles. He is our High Priest. He is the Firstborn among the church. He is our Prophet like Moses.

These people now to be presented, whether under law or under grace, only separate us from intimacy with the Lord. They are to be rejected.

The reason for all of this explanation is so that when someone comes to you and asks about going to a palm reader, you can feel secure in the notion that even though you tell them "No, you should not go," you are at the same time not somehow reintroducing the Law of Moses.

Rather, you are properly instructing them that at any time, and in any circumstance, we are to come to the Lord solely through Christ. Foods do not commend us to God, but Jesus does.

If something inhibits, or interferes with, our connection to God because it is not of Christ, then we are to refrain from joining ourselves to it. It is not a matter of law, but it is rather a matter of relationship.

¹⁰ **There shall not be found among you *anyone* who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire,**

In Leviticus 18:21, it said –

“And of thy seed thou dost not give to pass over to the Molech; nor dost thou pollute the name of thy God; I am Jehovah.” Leviticus 18:21 (YLT)

Again, in Leviticus 20:2 it says –

“And unto the sons of Israel thou dost say, Any man of the sons of Israel, and of the sojourners who is sojourning in Israel, who giveth of his seed to the Molech, is certainly put to death; the people of the land do stone him with stones;”
-Leviticus 20:2 (YLT)

What Moses is referring to now, may or may not be the same thing spoken of in those verses. There, it referred to the seed of the person. Therefore, that may have been speaking of something sexual in nature, or “seed” could have referred to children.

Either way, here, it is definitely referring to children – “his son or his daughter.” Further, where those verses in Leviticus said nothing of fire, here that is explicit. It may or it may not be referring to the same thing in both accounts, but Moses’ words now are something understood by the people.

As all of the other offenses listed in these verses are referring to accessing spiritual insights from another realm, it is certain that this is the intent of this practice as well. A literal translation would be, “No shall be found in you who makes pass through his son and his daughter in the fire.”

It is something that actually came into practice during the time of the kings. It is noted in 2 Kings 16 at the time of Ahaz. Again, it says this of Manasseh in 2 Kings 21 –

“Also he made his son pass through the fire, practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft, and consulted spiritists and mediums. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke *Him* to anger.” 2 Kings 21:6

In whatever manner the practice of burning the children was accomplished, it wasn’t just done in order to appease the god, but it was accomplished in order to obtain revelation from this supposed god.

And more, this wasn't only performed to Molech, but to Adrammelech, Anammelech, and Baal, and maybe others. This is what the nations did before Israel entered the land, and it is a practice that, unfortunately, was picked up by Israel.

¹⁰ (con't) **or one who practices witchcraft,**

qosem qesamim – “divining divinations.” It is a verb followed by its cognate noun, coming from a primitive root meaning “to distribute. In other words, it is a means of determining the future by lot or by a magical scroll.

While emailing Sergio about a technical issue in the Hebrew, he came back with his own paraphrases –

Magicifying magics

Witchcrafting witchcrafts

His are more sensational and fun than my “divining divinations,” but his videos are more sensational and fun than my sermons, so that is not at all surprising.

Along with the previous sin of making children pass through the fire, this was one of the sins of Israel –

“And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and soothsaying, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. ¹⁸ Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight; there was none left but the tribe of Judah alone.”

-2 Kings 17:17, 18

It is also what King Saul asked for of the witch of En Dor –

“Please **conduct a séance** for me, and bring up for me the one I shall name to you.” 1 Samuel 28:8

What the law forbid, Israel was willing to participate in. This includes the next offense...

¹⁰ (con't) **or a soothsayer,**

The *anan*, or soothsayer, comes from a primitive root meaning “to cover.” It is the verb form of *anan*, meaning “a cloud.” The idea then is that person acts covertly, searching

out dark and hidden things. It is used in the same verse cited earlier concerning Manasseh –

“Also he made his son pass through the fire, **practiced soothsaying**, used witchcraft, and consulted spiritists and mediums. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke *Him* to anger.” 2 Kings 21:6

10 (con’t) **or one who interprets omens,**

The word is *nakhash*. It comes from a primitive root meaning to hiss. Thus, it signifies to whisper a spell, observe signs, or prognosticate.

Adam Clarke ties it to the word *nikhish*, meaning to view attentively. Thus, it would be one who inspects the entrails of animals, determines signs from the flight of birds or the movement of snakes, and so on. This is what the king of Babylon did when deciding which city he would wage war against –

“For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the road, at the fork of the two roads, to use divination: he shakes the arrows, he consults the images, he looks at the liver. ²² In his right hand is the divination for Jerusalem: to set up battering rams, to call for a slaughter, to lift the voice with shouting, to set battering rams against the gates, to heap up a *siege* mound, and to build a wall. ²³ And it will be to them like a false divination in the eyes of those who have sworn oaths with them; but he will bring their iniquity to remembrance, that they may be taken.”
-Ezekiel 21:21-23

This sort of interpretation was also sought out by Manasseh as noted in the same verse just mentioned where it said he “consulted spiritists.” Moses next says...

10 (con’t) **or a sorcerer,**

It is the verb *kashaph*, coming from the noun *kesheph*. The root signifies “to whisper a spell,” and so it means to enchant or practice magic. In a comparable verse to those in 2 Kings 21, this word is used of Manasseh as well –

“Also he caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom; he practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft and **sorcery**, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger.” 2 Chronicles 33:6

Manasseh was a very bad person. He seemed to revel in his disobedience of the law and in his complete defiance of the Lord. And yet, the list for him is not exhausted yet. Moses continues...

¹¹ or one who conjures spells,

v'khover khaver – “and enchanter of enchantment.” It is the verb and noun form of the same root. The root of the words means “to join.” In Exodus 26:3, it is used when referring to the coupling together of the curtains in the tabernacle.

A paraphrase of this, then, might be a “knot-tier who ties knots.” One can see that in calling forth with a spell, one is then attempting to join to the entity being called forth.

If you ever saw the movie *Blackbeard's Ghost*, this is what the wife of Blackbeard, Aldetha Teach, was. She wrote out spells to call forth whatever spirit was adjoined to it. Steve Walker (played by Dean Jones) read her spell and Blackbeard, played by Peter Ustinov, came forth. In this, the knot between them was tied.

Like here in Deuteronomy, both words are used together in Psalm 58 as well –

“The wicked are estranged from the womb;
They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.
⁴ Their poison *is* like the poison of a serpent;
They are like the deaf cobra *that* stops its ear,
⁵ Which will not heed the voice of charmers,
Charming ever so skillfully.” Psalm 58:3-5

David, being a king familiar with the law, may have used this verse in Deuteronomy to weave together his words of the Psalm. Next...

¹¹ (con't) or a medium,

v'shoel ov – “and inquirer wineskins.” That would be a literal translation, but it requires explanation. The first word is the noun *shaal*. It means to inquire or ask for. Thus, one can think of “to consult.” The second word, *ov*, literally means wineskin.

But when one blows into something hollow like a wineskin or a bottle, it makes that ooky spooky sound – whooooo. From that, one can then imagine a ghost, familiar spirit, or the like.

With that understood, you can then think of the medium who calls forth spirits with long hollow utterances – “whoooooooooo, we caaaaalllll youuuuuu to coooooomme....” In Blackbeard’s Ghost, this would be comparable to the woman in the tent who pretended to be a medium at the fundraiser.

The word *ov* is used five times in the account of the witch at En Dor in 1 Samuel 28. She is expressly called this in verse 7 –

“Then Saul said to his servants, ‘Find me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her.’

And his servants said to him, ‘In fact, *there is* a woman who is a medium at En Dor.’” 2 Samuel 28:7

In an ironic twist, she literally let out a loud cry when Samuel actually came forth. It appears from the account that she wasn’t actually expecting him to appear. For now, Moses says...

11 (con’t) or a spiritist,

The word is *yideoni*. It is derived from *yada*, “to know.” Thus, it signifies a spiritist or a wizard. It is someone who is in the know concerning matters of the spirit world. As before, Manasseh sought out these as is recorded in both 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles.

11 (con’t) or one who calls up the dead.

v’doresh el ha’methim – “And seeker unto the dead.” The words are self-explanatory. Any attempt to call to the dead for counsel, guidance, comfort, and so on would be a violation of this. The KJV uses the term necromancer. That can mean either a person who calls to the dead or one who raises the dead. This is only referring to the former, calling the dead.

If one thinks this through to its logical end, the Roman Catholic doctrine of praying to Mary or the saints is exactly this. There is nothing in the Bible to justify the idea that they are anything but dead. Therefore, to call to them for prayer or protection would qualify as doing exactly this. Thus...

12 For all who do these things *are* an abomination to the LORD,

ki toavath Yehovah – “For abomination of Yehovah.” In other words, the people make themselves an abomination by doing these things.

As noted earlier, there are abominations and then there are abominations. Those things of the law that were only anticipatory of Christ, meaning the conduct of His people, such as the dietary laws, cannot be considered as truly abominable to the Lord. Only what they typify, such as perverse conduct, is.

The law was being used as a tutor to reveal spiritual truths in those things. However, because the things in the passage we are looking at now will detract a person’s thoughts, actions, and attention away from the Lord, they must be considered abominable in any dispensation of time.

Telling someone to stay away from witchcraft or necromancy isn’t placing a person back under the law of Moses. Rather, it is conveying a timeless truth. Our mediation is to be through those whom the Lord has appointed. For Israel, it was the priest and prophet. For the church, it is Christ Jesus. Anything else is an abomination before Him.

¹² (con’t) **and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you.**

u-biglal ha’toevoth he’elleh – “and on account of the abominations the these.” The word is *galal*, it signifies to roll around. In other words, their actions will cause the consequences which then roll around, right back to them.

The note of driving them out because of their conduct was actually first stated to Abraham over four hundred years earlier –

“Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land *that is* not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. ¹⁴ And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet complete.” Genesis 15:13-16

The iniquity of the Amorites included these detestable practices. Eventually, the cup of their iniquity, came to measure with the cup of God’s wrath. In this, there could be no remedy for them. Because of this, Israel was to become the rod of God’s judgment upon them.

As this is so, Israel could expect no less should they act in the same manner. That is implicitly understood from the next words...

¹³ You shall be blameless before the LORD your God.

It does not say “before.” Rather, it reads: *tamim tihyeh im Yehovah elohekha* – “Perfect you shall be with Yehovah your God.” The words certainly must be considered based on the context. If Moses had said this in a talk about sexual purity, then it would mean, “You shall not commit sexual acts which defile you, but you shall accept the constraints of the Lord.”

If he had said this in matters of sacrifices and offerings, then it would mean, “The sacrifices that you make and the offerings you give shall be perfect, without spot or blemish. Rather, you shall offer according to His glory.”

Because Moses is speaking about matters related to the forbidden spiritual realm, it then means, “You shall not attempt to pry into either matters of fortune or future that belong to the Lord alone. You shall walk in this life as it comes to you, and you shall be content with how it unfolds before you, because it is the Lord who has ordained your portion, your state, and your days.”

Understanding this, it makes supposed “prophets” in the church today all the more abominable. They claim to be speaking for the Lord and giving insights into the future of their parishioners when they are either making it up out of their heads, or they are actually under the influence of demons.

Not pursuing such things is what it means to be perfect “with” the Lord God. With this understood, Moses will finish with a contrast between those not of Israel, and those of Israel...

¹⁴ For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners;

It is the same implied warning that Moses has made elsewhere. In other words, and without directly saying it, “These nations are being dispossessed by you because they are doing these things. They listen to soothsayers, and they listen to diviners. If you do such things, you too will be dispossessed.”

And again, without saying it directly, Moses emphasizes the notion in the final words of the passage...

*14 (fin) **but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you.**

v'atah lo ken nathan lekha Yehovah elohekha – “And you not so has given for you Yehovah your God.” The beginning word, *v'atah*, is placed there as a nominative absolute. Thus, it forms a strong emphasis – “but you, concerning you, not so!”

Without directly saying it, as he will later, he could not be firmer in his warning. You have no authorization to go outside of the lines of spiritual authority granted for Israel.

*What will you gain by calling up the dead?
Or what good can a witch be to you?
Will you accept everything they have said?
Or will you to the Lord and His word stay true?*

*There is no profit in searching out a soothsayer
The one who will surely get scammed is you
Such a person is a loose and fast player
Nothing he presents is honest or true*

*But the Lord is always faithful through His word
And He has a marvelous future mapped out for you
If you accept the message of Christ, you have heard
For You, great things the Lord God will do*

*Put away your abominations from before Lord
And hold fast to the truth of His magnificent word*

II. A Lesson in Mercy

Although many of the kings of Israel, from Saul on, involved themselves in these forbidden things, King Manasseh was especially highlighted for having done so. The word used in verse 11, *darash*, is often translated as to search or seek after.

At times, the word is used when seeking after the Lord – either in exhortation to do so, or in someone (or some group) who did so. In Deuteronomy 4, when referring to Israel in exile, Moses uses the word –

“But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find *Him* if **you seek Him** with all your heart and with all your soul.” Deuteronomy 4:29

There were kings that sought after the Lord, like David, Josiah, and others, but there were kings who either partly sought after the Lord, or who completely rejected that avenue. Manasseh pretty much sought after every wicked entity, and every false god, he could find.

As the king, and as the representative of Israel, his actions in not seeking after the Lord, but instead seeking after all of these abominations, brought judgment on the land. A summary of this is found in 2 Chronicles 33 –

“Manasseh *was* twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. ² But he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. ³ For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down; he raised up altars for the Baals, and made wooden images; and he worshiped all the host of heaven and served them. ⁴ He also built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, “In Jerusalem shall My name be forever.” ⁵ And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. ⁶ Also he caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom; he practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft and sorcery, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. ⁷ He even set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, “In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever; ⁸ and I will not again remove the foot of Israel from the land which I have appointed for your fathers—only if they are careful to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses.” ⁹ So Manasseh seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.” 2 Chronicles 33:1-9

Because of his actions, we read the Lord’s decided judgment upon the people –

“And the LORD spoke by His servants the prophets, saying, ¹¹ ‘Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations (he has acted more wickedly than all the Amorites who *were* before him, and has also made Judah sin with his idols), ¹² therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘Behold, *I* am bringing *such* calamity upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whoever hears of it, both his ears will tingle. ¹³ And I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab; I will wipe Jerusalem as *one* wipes a dish, wiping

it and turning *it* upside down. ¹⁴ So I will forsake the remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become victims of plunder to all their enemies, ¹⁵ because they have done evil in My sight, and have provoked Me to anger since the day their fathers came out of Egypt, even to this day.” 1 Kings 21:10-15

Several kings, and many years later, while the land was facing its final destruction before exile, the word again says –

“Surely at the commandment of the LORD *this* came upon Judah, to remove *them* from His sight because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, ⁴ and also because of the innocent blood that he had shed; for he had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the LORD would not pardon.” 2 Kings 24:3, 4

Israel was the rod of the Lord’s judgment against the Amorites. Eventually, the Lord brought Babylon against Israel as His rod of judgment against them. But in their exile, He remembered them and had mercy on them, according to the covenant He made with them.

The Lord had to judge Israel because of the actions of this most wicked king. Under his leadership, the people also turned to the same vile conduct. But in the same chapter of 2 Chronicles where the Lord said he would judge the king, we also learn there of the mercy of the Lord –

“And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen. ¹¹ Therefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze *fetters*, and carried him off to Babylon. ¹² Now when he was in affliction, he implored the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, ¹³ and prayed to Him; and He received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD *was* God.” 2 Chronicles 33:10-13

Though the Lord remembered the sins of Manasseh as the principal cause of the eventual exile of Judah, he also faithfully forgave Manasseh of his own personal sins. This is a true demonstration of the greatness of the Lord.

As we saw at the beginning of the sermon, the things that have been forbidden here are commonly practiced in some measure, whether in Israel, in societies in general, and

even within the church at times. Because of this, societies will be judged, and people will be condemned.

But, as we just saw with Manasseh, the Lord is willing to forgive even the worst of offenders. What would be good for any who hear and care about the matter, is to forego reliance on such things, forget tuning into the nonsense that can't profit anything, and hold fast to the Lord instead.

There is nothing that we need to know about tomorrow, about our futures or our fortunes, or about anything else around us, that won't be made known in due time. The Lord has made sure promises to us, and what happens in the meantime is really not that important.

Get up, live out your day while accepting it as being exactly what the Lord intended for you, while at the same time striving to do your best at it. The day will end as it will end, and there is no need to pry into those things that the Lord has told us to leave alone.

This isn't a matter of law versus grace. Rather, it is a matter of allowing the Lord to be the Lord while living in His glorious presence as such.

Closing Verse: *"For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim. ⁵Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days." Hosea 3:4, 5*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 18:15-22 *What is it about him that the word shows us?* (A Prophet Like Moses) (56th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

An Abomination to the LORD

"When you come into the land
Which the LORD your God is giving you
You shall not learn to follow
The abominations of those nations, such you shall not do

There shall not be found among you
Anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire
Or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer
Or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer – raising the Lord's ire

Or one who conjures spells, or a medium, just as I have said
Or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead

For all who do these things
Are an abomination to the LORD for what they do
And because of these abominations
The LORD your God drives them out from before you

You shall be blameless before the LORD your God
For these nations which you will dispossess, as you shall do
Listened to soothsayers and diviners
But as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen.

Deuteronomy 18:15-22 (A Prophet Like Moses)

The words of the previous verses of Deuteronomy 18 dealt first with the priests, the Levites, who minister in the name of the Lord, and the responsibility of tending to those who would officiate in this capacity at the place the Lord chose for His name to dwell.

After that, came the warning against allowing any who would employ means of seeking out spiritual revelation in any other way than that authorized by the Lord. There were to be none who made their children pass through the fire, none who practiced witchcraft, no soothsayers, and so on.

From this point, Moses next turns to the office of the prophet. It is this office which will actually build upon the word of God. Although priests or Levites might be prophets, they might not be as well. The priest or Levite who was not a prophet was to get his evaluation of the word of the Lord solely from the recorded word of the Lord or those who were known to be true prophets.

However, the prophet (if a true prophet) – whether from Levi or from another tribe – would continue to speak forth the word of the Lord. From there, the record of his words was – at times – to be added to Israel’s canon of Scripture and evaluated as such.

In other words, what they spoke forth was to carry the same weight and authority as the Law of Moses because their words are derived from the same Source – the True and Living God.

Text Verse: *“And when they say to you, ‘Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,’ should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? ²⁰ To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:19, 20*

Isaiah looked back to the words of Moses and referred to them. Instead of going to what the law had forbidden, they were to seek God as He had authorized – to the law and to the testimony! God had given them the words of life (see Leviticus 18:5) and in rejecting them, they would find only darkness.

Among these words of life is the idea of the Lord raising up for the people a prophet like Moses. That verse will open our passage today. Of that idea, the scholar Keil states the following. Is he right, or is he wrong in his analysis? Listen and decide –

“A prophet out of the midst of thee, out of thy brethren, as I am, will Jehovah thy God raise up to thee; to him shall ye hearken.’ When Moses thus attaches to the prohibition against hearkening to soothsayers and practising soothsaying, the promise that Jehovah would raise up a prophet, etc., and contrasts what the Lord would do for His people with what He did not allow, it is perfectly evident from this simple connection alone, apart from the further context of the passage, in which Moses treats of the temporal and spiritual rulers of Israel (ch. 17 and 18), that the promise neither relates to one particular prophet, nor directly and exclusively to the Messiah, but treats of the sending of prophets generally. And this is also confirmed by what follows with reference to true and false prophets, which presupposes the rise of a plurality of prophets, and shows most incontrovertibly that it is not one prophet only, nor the Messiah exclusively, who is promised here. It by no means follows from the use of the singular, ‘a prophet,’ that Moses is speaking of one particular prophet only; but the idea expressed is this, that at any time when the people stood in need of a mediator with God like Moses, God would invariably send a prophet.” Keil

Is this correct? When Moses refers to “A Prophet like me,” is he merely referring to the line of prophets who would come under the Mosaic covenant to speak forth the word of the Lord? Or is he referring first to a single Prophet, who will come in a special class and category, and then only later is he speaking in a secondary sense of Mosaic Covenant prophets in general?

Can we know? If so, how? It can be done, and it is the way we should determine all such things – by taking in the whole counsel of God, meaning the entire canon of Scripture. Keil is wrong as we will see in our evaluation of Moses’ words.

But more, it is wholly unreasonable to assume (as Keil does) that God would “invariably send a prophet” when they “stood in need of a mediator with God like Moses.” In fact, that would be considered the exception and not the rule.

This was the purpose of Moses – to lay out the law for the people to live by. God was under no obligation to send them even a single prophet. They had the law, they had the Levitical priesthood to mediate the law, and anything beyond that should be considered as a completely unexpected mark of grace.

The fact that a Prophet like Moses is prophesied demonstrates an unusual occurrence, not something to be expected in times of need. Rather, it is the false prophet that should, unfortunately, be the expected and inevitable outcome of having a theocracy formed under the true God.

The Lord did send prophets among His people, and they carried on in the steps of Moses, but they were not prophets like Moses. This will be seen as we review the passage today.

Great things, such as a Prophet like Moses, are revealed in God's superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Him You Shall Hear (verses 15 & 16)

¹⁵ “The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren.

There is an emphatic structure to the words that is entirely missed in this and many other translations. It reads: *navi miqirbekha meakhekha kamoni* – “Prophet, from your midst, from your brothers, like me.” The stress is placed on each thought concerning this Prophet.

Like Keil who was cited in the introduction, other scholars claim this is referring to a collective group, not an individual. Cambridge says –

“A prophet—not individual but collective¹[143], i.e. a succession of prophets, for the whole spirit of the passage is that God shall never fail to speak directly to His people—is placed at the head of the sentence in forcible contrast to the diviners and necromancers just described.”

They say the singular *navi*, or “prophet,” refers to a collective whole that would henceforth come to speak to the people on behalf of the Lord. But this is incorrect for several reasons.

Though it is true that Moses is a prophet, it is untrue that those who followed would be like him. They would simply be prophets continuing on what he had established, meaning the Law of Moses.

No other prophet was like Moses in that his words formed the basis of the law. He was the one who initiated the covenant –

“So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, ‘All the words

which the LORD has said we will do.’⁴ And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel.⁵ Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD.⁶ And Moses took half the blood and put *it* in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar.⁷ Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, ‘All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient.’⁸ And Moses took the blood, sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, ‘This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words.’” Exodus 24:3-8

But from these words, a second aspect of what made Moses unique is that not only did he initiate the covenant, but he also performed the priestly role in its initiation, serving at the altar and ministering the blood. Though he was not to continue in the role of priest, he did serve in this function initially.

And further, not only did he serve in these ways, but he also served as the legislator of the covenant. That is seen, for example, in his service recorded in Exodus 18 –

“And so it was, on the next day, that Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood before Moses from morning until evening.¹⁴ So when Moses’ father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, ‘What *is* this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?’

¹⁵ And Moses said to his father-in-law, ‘Because the people come to me to inquire of God.¹⁶ When they have a difficulty, they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make known the statutes of God and His laws.’”

-Exodus 18:13-16

No other prophet would be like Moses in all of these ways. Indeed, in various ways, Moses has already referred to prophets, such as in Numbers 12:6 and Deuteronomy 13. Here, he is not merely adding to that thought, but he is now defining a particular Prophet.

As I said in the introduction, we can know this is absolutely certain because this is how the verse is taken by both the leaders of Israel, and also by the apostles who spoke under inspiration of the Lord in the New Testament.

In John 1, the leaders of Israel (called “the Jews”) sent designated representatives to John the Baptist to find out who he was, they specifically asked about this verse Moses is now dealing with –

“Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’

²⁰ He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, ‘I am not the Christ.’

²¹ And they asked him, ‘What then? Are you Elijah?’

He said, ‘I am not.’

“Are you the Prophet?”

And he answered, ‘No.’

²² Then they said to him, ‘Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?’

²³ He said: “*I am*

‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

“Make straight the way of the LORD,”

as the prophet Isaiah said.” John 1:19-23

Whether the Jews fully understood what was meant by “a Prophet like me” or not, they understood that one Prophet was coming who would be different than all the others. This was a set and known principle that defined the One Prophet to come like Moses.

This was fully understood by Philip. It is implied that he, along with Andrew, was with John the Baptist at that time. He said, certainly in reference to this passage concerning the Prophet –

“We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote— Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” John 1:45

The words, “Moses in the law,” may be vague, but they certainly point back to the question put forth two days earlier by the Jews to John, and that was in direct reference to Moses’ words of the Prophet to come.

Later, after the coming of Christ Jesus, the Jews tried to obscure this obvious fact among their people. Ibn Ezra (1089-1164) claimed this prophet was Joshua. Baal Haturim aka Jacob Ben Asher (1269-1343) claimed it was Jeremiah. Others said it was David. Rashi, like Keil and others, said it refers to a succession of prophets.

But these all ignore the testimony of the Jews recorded at Jesus' time and by that of the apostles who followed in their writings. In fact, all of the prophets continually spoke – explicitly – of One who was coming in a completely different capacity than any of them, with Jeremiah going so far as to explicitly state that a New Covenant would be introduced by the Lord –

“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— ³² not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD.” Jeremiah 31:31, 32

Therefore, it could not be Jeremiah, as Baal Haturim knew very well. From the time of Moses, right until the coming of Christ, it was always assumed by the Jewish people that this Prophet to come would be a single person. The fact that He was still anticipated at the time of Jesus proves that it was none of the previous prophets of Israel.

This will continue to be seen in the next four verses. It is true that a succession of prophets was coming, but only in looking back on Moses' words now could someone come to the conclusion that this is what he is referring to.

Rather, it is evident from his words as looking forward, and of the words of the leaders of Israel at the time of John the Baptist (as looking from that same perspective), that a single Prophet is to be understood. With this in mind, there could be no excuse for the rejection of this Prophet when He came. Of this coming Prophet...

¹⁵ (con't) **Him you shall hear,**

There is an added stress in the word translated as “you shall hear,” indicated by the structure,” saying: *elav tishmaun* – “Him you shall *certainly* hear.” As I said, there will be no excuse for the rejecting of this Prophet.

Looking back now, and in knowing what we know concerning these words as being fulfilled in Christ Jesus, it shows us the deserved punishment of Israel who rejected Him.

To fail to hear (meaning hearken unto the words of) this Prophet is to reject Moses who spoke of this Prophet. And to reject Moses is to reject the word of the Lord transmitted through Moses which established the covenant in the first place.

In other words, no person of Israel – to whom the Law of Moses was given – can say they are being obedient to Moses if they reject this Prophet that he now refers to. To reject Jesus is to reject Moses. Jesus said this explicitly to them –

“Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is *one* who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. ⁴⁶ For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. ⁴⁷ But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?” John 5:45-47

In rejecting Moses, the people thus rejected the Lord who commissioned Moses. The logical progression of thought is that only condemnation results from a rejection of Jesus. To ensure this is understood, Moses next brings in the giving of the law itself as a basis for this...

¹⁶ according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly,

Moses reminds the people of what occurred after hearing the speaking out of the Ten Commandants at Horeb (which is Sinai). They saw the terrifying display, they heard the sounds, and they were terrified. In this, the people came as one to Moses...

^{16 (con't)} saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.’

Moses now cites in the singular what the people together said to him, “You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die” (Exodus 10:19).

This is what the people desired, and so Moses became the one to receive the word of the Lord and to then communicate it to the people. This then forms a second way that the Prophet would be like Moses. Not only was Moses the one to establish the covenant, but he was the mediator of it as it was received –

“Hear now My words:
If there is a prophet among you,
I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision;
I speak to him in a dream.

⁷ Not so with My servant Moses;
He *is* faithful in all My house.

⁸ I speak with him face to face,

Even plainly, and not in dark sayings;
And he sees the form of the LORD.
Why then were you not afraid
To speak against My servant Moses?" Numbers 12:6-8

All other prophets would receive the word of the Lord in an obscure and deliberately dark way. But Moses received the word with an intimacy not otherwise seen. Only at the coming of the Prophet now referred to by Moses would this again occur. Jeremiah prophesied of this coming One –

“And it shall be their Majestic One from among them,
And their Governor from their midst shall come,
And I will cause Him to draw near,
And He shall approach Me.
For who *is* He, this *who* pledged His heart to approach Me?
Says Yehovah.” Jeremiah 30:21 (my translation)

In fact, the author of Hebrews uses the words of Numbers 12 and builds upon them to show that Christ Jesus is the fulfillment of what is spoken of now.

*Let me not hear the voice of the Lord
Lest I die when He speaks His words to me
There is terror in every uttered word
I will perish if I hear more; I know this with certainty*

*But if He speaks His word through you, as I have heard
Isn't it the same word as if He spoke it to me?
Surely there is terror in every uttered word
This is a law of death; I know this with certainty*

*Who will speak forth a New Word from the Lord?
One that will not surely condemn any who hear
Who will bring grace and not a sword?
Who will take away the death and remove all fear?*

II. I Will Require It of Him (verses 17-19)

¹⁷ “And the LORD said to me: ‘What they have spoken is good.

These words are a general repeat of Deuteronomy 5:28 –

“Then the LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me: ‘I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They are right *in* all that they have spoken.’”

With that, Moses now continues with words already known to him, but not yet introduced into the narrative. The word is being slowly and progressively revealed to us so that we can more fully appreciate the plan as it has been developed by the Lord...

¹⁸ I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren,

navi aqim lahem miqerev akhikhem kamokha – “Prophet I will raise up to them from midst their brothers like you.” If the Lord had meant any given prophet at any given time, he would have said, “I will raise up for them prophets.” This is especially so because there were times where more than one prophet of the Lord spoke forth His word.

Further, there would be no reason at all to say, “a prophet like you.” As seen earlier, the Lord has referred to the prophet already in Numbers 12:6, acknowledging the office. Therefore, a distinction is made between the prophetic office of Moses and that of other prophets.

It is this precept that Peter also used when addressing the people of Israel, showing that this was a universally known precept among them, to demonstrate that Moses is now referring to a single Prophet who would come in the same capacity as him –

“For Moses truly said to the fathers, ‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. ²³ And it shall be *that* every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’ ²⁴ Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. ²⁵ You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ ²⁶ To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one *of you* from your iniquities.” Acts 3:22-26

And more, this is then repeated by Stephen in Acts 7:37 where Stephen directly quotes Deuteronomy 18:15 to the high priest and leaders of Israel. But more than this is what is

stated in John 6. When Jesus fed the five thousand with five barley loaves and two small fish, it says –

“Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, ‘This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.’” John 6:14

In other words, the people clearly associated this Prophet to come with more than just verbal prophesying. They anticipated that He would do those things that Moses did, such as giving them manna. The people certainly understood this and another crowd, on the next day came to Him –

“Therefore they said to Him, ‘What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?’³¹ Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’

³² Then Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven.³³ For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.’” John 6:30-33

Knowing these things, it would be otherwise incomprehensible for the Lord to use the singular here. Therefore, the following words say...

18 (con’t) and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.

Although this statement is true of other prophets, it is also just what Christ said of Himself. In fact, but without saying it directly, Jesus is clearly referring to this verse in Deuteronomy, saying –

“For I have not spoken on My own *authority*; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.” John 12:49

He again repeats the same basic thought in John 14:10 and John 14:24. The case is being built, in advance by the Lord through Moses, so that when the One spoken of now was to come, there would be eternity changing consequences for not listening to Him...

19 And it shall be *that* whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require *it* of him.

The Hebrew is personal, saying, *ha'ish* – “the man’ who will not hear My words, which He speaks.” Whatever individual will not listen to the Prophet will face the judgment of the Lord because of it. There is no exception to this.

It should be a sobering lesson for the false teachers in the Roman Catholic Church, John Hagee, and others who teach the doctrine of Dual Covenant theology. Any person, including (and especially) the Jew, who rejects the words of Jesus will be cast into hell. The author of Hebrews, referring to his own brethren, says –

“See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven.” Hebrews 12:25 (NASB 1995)

The words “him who warned them on earth” refer to Moses. As Moses spoke of the coming Christ in his own warning, then there is a double terror waiting for those Jews who have rejected Him. There is the terror of having ignored Moses, and there is the terror of having ignored the words of the Son of God, the coming Prophet, spoken of by Moses.

And this is true collectively as well. As a nation, this was understood all along. In the 1600s, Matthew Poole said –

“The sad effect of this threatening the Jews have felt for above sixteen hundred years together.” Matthew Poole

Two hundred years later, Jamieson-Fausset-Brown continued to acknowledge this –

“The direful consequences of unbelief in Christ, and disregard of His mission, the Jewish people have been experiencing during eighteen hundred years.” Jamieson-Fausset-Brown

Here we are, now almost two thousand years later, and the same thought continues today. Though returned to the land in preparation for the end times, the nation of Israel will suffer two-thirds extermination for failing to hearken to the word of the Lord spoken by Christ Jesus.

With the thought of the Prophet to come stated, the Lord – through Moses – now speaks of the false prophet...

*This is truly the Prophet of whom Moses foretold
He is the Prophet to come into the world
His words are purer than the finest gold
Through them, the mysteries are unfurled*

*This is He of whom Moses spoke
It is He who has lifted the burden from us
No more is the pall dark like smoke
Since the coming of this Man, Jesus*

*A Prophet is He like none other
One who even is greater than Moses, so we see
This One rose among us, He is our brother
And yet He is higher than Moses – even infinitely*

III. You Shall Not Be Afraid of Him (verses 20-22)

²⁰ But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.'

Of the words here, Cambridge says, "These special cases prove that throughout this passage no single prophet but a succession of prophets is meant." This is incorrect.

Unlike the previous verses where no definite article was used in the Hebrew before the word "prophet," the Lord includes an article before the word in all four instances between now and the end of the chapter.

In essence, "The prophet, whoever he may be, is who I am referring to now." Such a person is being set in contrast to the Prophet like Moses, not the prophet in general. This is certainly being presented in this manner because not everything a prophet spoke was in the name of the Lord.

And some who prophesied at one time (such as Saul), would be out of favor with the Lord at another time. Hence, the false prophet now being mentioned is set in contrast to the Prophet like Moses, because the Prophet like Moses *is* the Lord. Thus, everything Christ said was of the Lord.

The Lord is, for this reason, now only dealing with the prophet who spoke presumptuously, or who spoke in the name of other gods.

Though this is a part of the Law of Moses, the words must be considered from this standpoint even for those today. In other words, regardless as to whether this is a precept of the law or not, it must still apply today.

It is obvious that those who speak in the name of other gods are acting in defiance of the Lord. But because the contrast is to the Prophet like Moses, meaning the Lord, anyone who speaks presumptuously in the name of the Lord today must still bear the same guilt.

The word is *zud*. It means to boil or seethe, and thus to act rebelliously or presumptuously. It is an onomatopoeic expression where the word represents the sound. In this case, it is the sound of boiling. Just as a pot boils, so a false prophet boils up with his false words.

And how common this is in the church today where people flippantly prophesy from the pulpit and from the pew, speaking falsely in the name of the Lord, and boiling over with arrogance as they do.

The Lord will require it of them. As we are not under the law, there is no provision for us to take them out and stone them, but we should be well versed enough in the word to turn from them and ignore what they falsely claim.

Hebrews 1 tells us that since the coming of Christ, there are no more prophets, meaning that the only prophets there are today are false prophets. Be warned, be wise, and ignore all who claim such a word from the Lord. We have the Bible as the full and complete canon of Scripture from God. What more do we need? As for the false prophet of Israel...

²⁰ (con't) **that prophet shall die.'**

The words are emphatic: *u-met ha'navi hahu* – “and shall die the prophet the he.” This certainly means that the people should stone him as is indicated in Chapter 13, but there is instance in the Bible where the Lord would speak to a false prophet by a true prophet concerning his impending doom –

“Then the prophet Jeremiah said to Hananiah the prophet, ‘Hear now, Hananiah, the LORD has not sent you, but you make this people trust in a lie. ¹⁶ Therefore thus says the LORD: “Behold, I will cast you from the face of the earth. This year you shall die, because you have taught rebellion against the LORD.””

¹⁷ So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh month.”

-Jeremiah 28:15-17

²¹ And if you say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?’—

The words now go from those of the Lord directly to those of Moses. It is an obvious statement to make, and it is one which is necessary to determine if the Lord’s word is truly in the prophet or not.

But the question is not phrased by Moses in the positive – “How shall we know the word which the Lord has spoken?” Rather, it is in the negative, “How shall we know the word which the Lord has NOT spoken?”

In Chapter 13, it noted that a false prophet may produce a sign or wonder and then try to lead the people away from the Lord. Thus, signs and wonders were not to be the only proof that a person was a true prophet.

Further, a person could speak in the name of the Lord, and what he says may be for a time in the future, be it near or distant. In whatever timeframe is involved, the way to know if it is the word the Lord has not spoken is...

²² when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that *is* the thing which the LORD has not spoken;

As noted, it has already been seen in Chapter 13 that a false prophet may prophesy a sign or wonder that does come to pass. Thus, that cannot be the sole criteria for determining if the words of the prophet are from the Lord.

However, the opposite is stated here. If something does not come to pass that was prophesied in the name of the Lord, it is 100% sure that the thing was not given to him by the Lord. When the true prophet of the Lord speaks, that something will happen, it will come to pass, or a reason for it being withheld will be given.

As for future prophecy, the words of those considered true prophets still rely on the actions of the Lord for them to be fulfilled. In other words, it is already accepted that Isaiah, Daniel, Zechariah, and etc., are true prophets. But some of their prophecies extend even beyond our time now.

For Israel, and for us, even though some of their prophecies have not yet been fulfilled, they have been established as true prophets, and so it is assumed, and we are assured, that their words will come to pass.

However, Israel denied that Jesus is the Prophet like Moses even though He met all of the requirements of the law in order to prove that He is, in fact, the Messiah. Despite this, He spoke out numerous future prophecies as well.

And so, I would suggest that this verse, as much as any other in Scripture, will be a determining factor for collective Israel to use in order to definitively establish that Jesus is the Messiah.

When those future prophecies come to pass, just as the future prophecies of the other prophets will eventually come to pass, Israel will no longer be able to deny the evident nature of who He is. For now, they will be held to account for rejecting Him, but eventually this will no longer be the case.

As a nation, they will no longer be able to use the negative tone of this verse to deny Him. The Lord has spoken, and the prophecies will be fulfilled in their appropriate time. As for the prophet who speaks, and his words do not come to pass...

***22 (fin) the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.**

Moses uses the noun form of the verb, *zud*, that he just used. It reads, “the prophet has spoken arrogance; you shall not be afraid of him.” For the living, this obviously requires a short span of time for the prophecy to fail. In such a case, the other requirements of proving whether a prophet is true or not must be applied.

In the end, any word that is spoken by a prophet must be in accord with the rest of Scripture and in accord with the nature of the Lord. This is because, at times, prophecies were made that did not come to pass. Jonah called out, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” And yet, that did not happen.

The moral nature of the Lord towards repentant Nineveh overrode the prophecy of Jonah. Despite his supposedly failed utterance (which was actually a success in Scripture) Jonah was and is considered a true prophet of the Lord.

Therefore, all prophecy must be in accord with Scripture, in accord with the character of the Lord, and ultimately bring glory to Him. As far as the Prophet like Moses, meaning Christ Jesus, He meets the qualifications in all ways:

He is a prophet who speaks forth the word of the Lord. He is a prophet in intimate communion with the Lord. He, like Moses, is faithful in His house. In His humanity, He is the Initiator of the New Covenant. In this New Covenant, He fulfills the priestly (sacrificial) role, just as Moses temporarily did.

He is, like Moses was, the Mediator of the covenant. He is the Legislator of the covenant, speaking forth the stipulations of it in the name of the Lord. He is the Leader of His people just as Moses led those under him. And He, like Moses on behalf of the Lord, performed signs and wonders to validate His position.

But more than Moses, He is the One to bring the Law of Moses to an end, and then it is He who bestowed upon His people the grace of God. As John says –

“And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*.” John 1:16-18

Not only is Jesus Christ a Prophet like Moses, but He also infinitely exceeds Moses in all ways. He is Moses’ Creator, He is the One who spoke forth the law to and through Moses, He is the Subject of Moses’ words, He is the Object of Moses’ affection, and He is the Finisher of all that Moses began.

In Christ Jesus, we find the embodiment of every type, picture, shadow, and word that issued forth in the giving of the law. Whereas Moses died east of Jordan because he could not lead his people to the promise, Christ Jesus rose again to do just that. Nothing is lacking in Him, and all goodness and blessing flow from Him.

The eternal God set His seal of approval on the Son, and it is He who has restored us to our heavenly Father. A Prophet like Moses? Yes, but a Prophet far above and beyond Moses. He is JESUS.

Closing Verse: *“For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest,¹⁹ and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore.²⁰ (For they could not endure what was commanded: ‘And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow.’²¹ And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, ‘I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.’)*

²² But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels,²³ to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect,²⁴ to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.” Hebrews 12:18-24

Next Week: Deuteronomy 19:1-13 *Which way should we go? What do you say? (You Shall Prepare to You the Way) (57th Deuteronomy Sermon)*

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

A Prophet Like Moses

“The LORD your God will raise up for you
A Prophet like me from your midst, so He shall appear
From your brethren
Him you shall hear

According to all you desired of the LORD your God
In Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying
‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God
Nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die
-----as you were relaying

“And the LORD said to me, and so I understood:
‘What they have spoken is good

I will raise up for them a Prophet like you
From among their brethren He will arise and stand

And will put My words in His mouth
And He shall speak to them all that I Him command

And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words
Which He speaks in My name
I will require it of him
So to you I vow; so to you I exclaim

But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name
Which I have not commanded him to speak
Or who speaks in the name of other gods
That prophet shall die; his future looks grim and bleak

And if you say in your heart
'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?'
When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD
If the thing does not happen or come to pass; such will be the token

That is the thing which the LORD has not spoken
The prophet has spoken it presumptuously
You shall not be afraid of him
You are to ignore him; so shall it be

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 19:1-13 **(You Shall Prepare to You the Way)**

With the completion of the previous chapters which have dealt greatly with the unity of worship within the land, Chapters 19-21 will put forth legislations that are predominantly intended to reveal the sanctity of human life, and how it is to be protected.

For the passage today, what we have here is a supplemental thought to what was especially presented in Numbers 35 concerning the Cities of Refuge.

However, this is much less of a repetition of those verses than it is a call to carry out what was mandated there concerning those cities – both in their establishment and in what was to occur in them regarding manslayers.

If we were to look for a close parallel in our society in relation to what they were intended to do in Israel, I would suggest the Witness Protection Program provided by the US Marshalls. Obviously, the parallel doesn't go very far, and there is certainly nothing Christological in nature about the US Marshalls, but they do protect people from harm in a unique way.

The problem with the Witness Protection Program is that it doesn't just protect the innocent who have gotten caught up in something beyond their control, but they also protect really greasy people who are willing to roll over and give up information in order to save their own skin.

As far as the innocent of Israel who accidentally kills someone, and who thus became a target for the avenger, there is protection for them behind the walls of the City of Refuge.

For the innocent in modern America who is inadvertently caught up in some type of crime to which they could be hunted down for, they are hidden behind the walls of a new identity in a new place by the US Marshalls.

For sure, we don't want to stretch that analogy too far, but you get the point. Someone has had time and circumstance negatively affect his life, and a provision is made to bring about safety for that person. In the end, I'd much rather be hidden in Christ than hidden by the bungling US Government.

Text Verse: *“Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath,¹⁸ that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.”*

-Hebrews 6:17, 18

The Christological significance of the City of Refuge has already been seen in Numbers 35. The words today are intended to build upon that passage, but it doesn't introduce a great deal of typology. Rather, as I said, it is given as a call to action by Moses for that which was already presented by the Lord.

It is hoped that the words will bless you, be instructional to you, and build you up in your knowledge of the word. One of the key verses to consider when we get there contains the words of admonition to Israel to “love the Lord your God and to walk always in His ways.”

The law has been given, Christ fulfilled that for us. But the precept remains true for us today. The highest precept for us to consider in our daily life is that of loving the Lord God. Consider this. What good is it to cross every t and dot every i if we don't have a deep and yearning love for the Lord?

As Christ is the fulfillment and embodiment of this body of law, let us remember to love Him with all of our hearts and souls. With this, we will always remain in the sweet spot. Great truths such as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. You Shall Separate Three Cities for Yourself (verses 1-3)

¹“When the LORD your God has cut off the nations whose land the LORD your God is giving you, and you dispossess them and dwell in their cities and in their houses,

There are a couple of points concerning these words that immediately take prominence. The first is, once again, the surety of them. The verse begins with *ki yakhrut* – “For has cut off.” Translating it as “when” is fine, but it is to be taken as an absolute surety, and already accomplished in the mind of the Lord.

The second concerns the words *asher Yehovah elohekha noten lekha*, or “which Yehovah your God is giving to you.” It is the fulfillment of the ancient promise, and it is

from the Lord to the people. There is nothing deserving in this generation. They are simply the ones alive when the promise comes into effect.

The third point is one also seen many times. Moses says, *virishtam*, “and you dispossess them.” The Lord is giving Israel the land. They could not otherwise possess it, and yet, Israel has a synchronistic part in acquiring the land. They must actually get up and act, working together with the Lord to possess the inheritance.

And finally, it says they will “dwell in their cities and in their houses.” This goes back to Moses’ words of Chapter 6 –

“So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, ¹¹ houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant—when you have eaten and are full— ¹² *then* beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.” Deuteronomy 6:10-12

Israel will benefit from the labor of others. The Lord has made every accommodation for them prior to, and during, their taking of the land. When this is accomplished...

²you shall separate three cities for yourself

Moses’ words now are reminding the people of the command of the Lord from Numbers 35. At that time, it said –

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁰ ‘Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, ¹¹ then you shall appoint cities to be cities of refuge for you, that the manslayer who kills any person accidentally may flee there.’” Numbers 35:9-11

Further, Moses has already designated the first three cities of refuge by name in Deuteronomy 4 –

“Then Moses set apart three cities on this side of the Jordan, toward the rising of the sun, ⁴² that the manslayer might flee there, who kills his neighbor unintentionally, without having hated him in time past, and that by fleeing to one of these cities he might live: ⁴³ Bezer in the wilderness on the plateau for the

Reubenites, Ramoth in Gilead for the Gadites, and Golan in Bashan for the Manassites.” Deuteronomy 4:41-43

Those cities named in Chapter 4 are the cities of refuge east of the Jordan in the land already taken by Israel. Moses is now giving further instruction for the land west of the Jordan. The actual naming of them will occur in Joshua 20. These cities are to be...

² (con't) **in the midst of your land**

The prominence of the words is given to ensure that, due to the highly important nature of their designation, the cities are to be chosen specifically for their accessibility from all directions. And again, Moses notes that it is a land...

² (con't) **which the LORD your God is giving you to possess.**

The constant repetition of these words may seem mentally tedious to read as one goes through Deuteronomy, but when the law was given, it was referred to in bite-sized nuggets as a tool of instruction for the people.

They would have a matter to deal with, and they would proceed to whatever section dealt with that matter. In doing so, the words would be a constant reminder that the land was given to them. Thus, it is also a warning: The land can be taken from them. Hence, the law in all its detail was to be strictly tended to...

³ **You shall prepare roads for yourself,**

The words are singular for a strong effect: *takin lekha ha'derek* – “You shall prepare to you the way.” Israel is the subject. The way is the means of travel, and the city is the intended destination. It is to be readily available for the one who needs to reach it.

Herxheimer says, “According to tradition, the way must be level, thirty-two cubits broad, and marked by fingerposts, bearing the words Refuge, Refuge.” Other traditions say that the roads were inspected annually in the month of Adar, that any obstructions were removed, and any bridges would be repaired for quick access over rivers and brooks.

If these precepts of the Torah were adhered to by Israel as unfaithfully as the rest of them, it is doubtful if this tradition was, for most of their history, anything but on paper. There is nothing in Scripture to support any such traditions.

As far as the words of this clause, however, they are reminiscent of Jesus' words, "I am the way." There is a place of safety, and there is the Way prepared to reach that place. For Israel in Canaan, Moses next says...

3 (con't) and divide into three parts the territory of your land

The cities were to be strategically situated so that they were prominent, easily accessible, and placed as much as possible at equal distances from one another and from the exterior borders of the land.

In this, no matter what direction one would travel to such a city, it would be at the closest possible point from even the furthest distance. The precept is to be exactly adhered to because it is in the land...

3 (con't) which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit,

The word *nakhal*, or inherit, is used. One inherits an inheritance. In this, the inheritance is being equally divided for the benefit of all. As this is land given by "the Lord your God," one can see the same fairness as in concepts such as the *shemithah* (remission) or of the Hebrew slave.

The Lord, through Moses and through the law, has made provisions for all in order to bring all to a state of equality. This is no different now. There is an overarching fairness in all that is presented so that when time and circumstance work against a person, restoration is always made available. In this case, it is so...

3 (con't) that any manslayer may flee there.

v'hayah lanus shamah kal rotseakh – "And shall be to flee there all manslayer." The word *ratsakh* needs to be reexplained. It signifies unsanctioned killing. It does not cover capital punishment, sanctioned killing in battle, and so on. Rather, it covers any killing – accidental or purposeful – that is unsanctioned.

From there, and only from that standpoint, is there a difference made between accidental killing and murder. But both are on the same level until the determination is made. This then, is the purpose of the *are miqlat*, or cities of refuge.

Though the term *miqlat*, or asylum, is not used in Deuteronomy, this is the precept that is being conveyed here. The cities to be appointed are for exactly that reason. As Moses will next say, in what is a parenthetical thought...

*Where can I go to save my life?
How can I get free from what I have done?
I killed a man, but not by strife
In innocence have I slain this one*

*But the avenger of blood waits for me
To take my life for what I have done
Is there a place to where I can flee?
Is there a place to where I can run?*

*Who will save me from what has come about?
Who can rescue me from what I have done?
Is there a chance for me? How will it come about?
Lord, my only hope is that to You I run*

II. Since He has Not Hated the Victim (verses 4-7)

⁴“And this is the case of the manslayer

v’zeh debar ha’rotseakh – “And this word the manslayer.” It is the specific instruction, the word, to be issued concerning someone who kills another in an unsanctioned manner – regardless as to the circumstances. His life is in jeopardy, and he must take action...

^{4 (con’t)} who flees there, that he may live:

The word here is very clearly explained in verse 11. The city of refuge was for “the manslayer” to run to. Any manslayer could do so, but there are different provisions for how the killing occurred which will be reexplained by Moses following after what has already been spoken forth in Numbers 35. As Moses next says...

^{4 (con’t)} Whoever kills his neighbor unintentionally,

asher yakeh eth reehu bivli daath – “Which strikes his neighbor lacking knowledge.” In Numbers 35, it used a different term, “in his inadvertence.” Here, the meaning is the same even if the terminology is different.

The person accidentally, or without knowledge, has killed another person. There was nothing premeditated about it. As it says...

⁴ (con’t) **not having hated him in time past—**

Despite the English translation, it is an exact repeat of Deuteronomy 4:42, which said, “without having hated him in time past.” The two phrases are identical with but two unusual exceptions.

In verse 4:42, the Hebrew words *mitemol shilshom* are spelled differently than they are here. In both, the letter *vav* is included in 4:42, but it is missing now. It could be as simple as us spelling the word worshiped with one or two p’s. Or there may be a reason that the Lord purposefully dropped the additional letter out now.

If the latter, I can only provide a speculative suggestion. *Vav* is the sixth letter. Six is the number of man, especially fallen man. It is five plus one, or grace plus man’s addition to it. It is seven minus one, or coming short of spiritual perfection.

The cities are given as a haven for such. They are a place of grace for those who fall short but who seek refuge. The cities themselves do not save; they only protect. And they only do so by the voluntary act of the man staying in them.

At the time of Deuteronomy 4, only three cities were mentioned, thus the addition of the *vav*, the sixth letter of the aleph-bet, was included to show the fallen state of this otherwise innocent man.

In this passage, there is no need for that because the cities now total six, implying that there is a need for them for all in Israel because all fall short of perfection.

That is a highly speculative analysis, but it is the only logical thing I could think up. I would suggest you not add a permanent squiggle to your brain over this.

⁵ **as when a man goes to the woods with his neighbor to cut timber,**

Moses gives a common example of something that could occur that would make a person a manslayer, but not guilty of murder. The example is that of two people, friendly with one another (not having hated in the past), and going out to do what neighbors do in a place where it is expected that they would go.

In this clause is a new word to Scripture, *khatav*, meaning to cut down, hew, or polish. It can even mean gather, as in Ezekiel 39:10. The men are simply going out to cut timber...

^{5 (con't)} **and his hand swings a stroke with the ax to cut down the tree,**

Again, Moses is simply giving out thoughts as they would occur on any given day and between any friends as they are out working together. It is during the daily affairs of life that suddenly something unexpected happens...

^{5 (con't)} **and the head slips from the handle and strikes his neighbor so that he dies—**

The verb is used intransitively, and the Hebrew is more expressive, saying: *v'nashal ha'barzel min ha'ets* – “and slips the iron from the wood.” The intent of hitting with an ax is that you will cut the wood. The iron part slipping off the wood is purely accidental, but the effects of it are catastrophic, killing the neighbor.

What is interesting about this verse is that, like in Numbers 35 and even before entering the land, Moses speaks of the use of iron implements as if it is an everyday thing. Common teaching says that the Egyptians began their iron age about 1200 BC. The same is the case with Canaan, which would have been during the time of the judges.

And yet, Moses speaks of things being this way in the year 1405 BC. Even if iron implements were rare at this time, it is obvious that they were the preferred instruments for cutting wood at this early date. Also, throughout Joshua and the early Judges, iron is explicitly mentioned as being in use.

Despite the matter, it is certain, as it always becomes, that Moses is – indeed – the one who penned these words. Deuteronomy was written at the time indicated, as will be seen once again in a few verses.

In the comparable verses to this clause in Numbers 35, the Lord gave different examples of what might cause unintentional, but unsanctioned death, saying –

“However, if he pushes him suddenly without enmity, or throws anything at him without lying in wait, ²³ or uses a stone, by which a man could die, throwing *it* at him without seeing *him*, so that he dies, while he was not his enemy or seeking his harm.” Numbers 35:22, 23

It is of note that Moses chose a different example, showing that the judges were to carefully heed the details of whatever matter was brought forth. It is a way of saying, “The Lord has given you several examples, I have given you another. Be wise and discerning and judge the matters according to their circumstances.”

In the meantime, and until a judgment is rendered...

⁵ (con’t) **he shall flee to one of these cities and live;**

This is the purpose of the city – refuge. But without knowing the details of Numbers 35, it doesn’t really make sense to us now. Instead, what Moses says is simply taken as an axiom that the man needs to flee to one of the designated cities. This is because of a particular relationship that existed in the society ...

⁶ **lest the avenger of blood,**

The parenthetical thought is ended, and the narrative picks up here. One can see this by putting verse 3 before verse 6 –

“You shall prepare roads for yourself, and divide into three parts the territory of your land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, that any manslayer may flee there. ... lest the avenger of blood, while his anger is hot, pursue the manslayer and overtake him, because the way is long, and kill him, though he *was* not deserving of death, since he had not hated the victim in time past.”

The *goel ha’dam*, or “avenger the blood,” is a near or nearest kinsman. The same word is used to speak of a redeemer, an avenger, and a kinsman. In this case, it refers to a kinsman who is the redeemer of blood through avenging the death of his close relative.

If this *goel* was to catch the slayer and kill him, no guilt of blood could be imputed to him, even if the slaying was by accident. He possessed the full right to avenge the blood that was shed without sanction. This is the entire purpose of having these sanctuary cities. It is a means of protection for the slayer until he could get a fair trial. As it next says, and speaking of the *goel*...

⁶ (con't) **while his anger is hot, pursue the manslayer and overtake him,**

The law understands the passion of such matters. A person has a right to take the life of the slayer, and he has a right to do so at any time or place except as forbidden by the law. His anger may subside, and he may (though not necessarily) forego his right as a *goel*, but when his anger is up, it is not likely.

Even if presented with a convincing argument, the chances are he will still take vengeance. As this is so, the cities of refuge have been provided, with a special note of their centrality within the land. Otherwise...

⁶ (con't) **because the way is long, and kill him,**

ki yirbeh ha'derek v'hikahu naphesh – “For great the way and strike him – soul.” It is a descriptive way of saying that he has avenged the blood. As the blood is the soul (Deuteronomy 12:23), the avenger has struck the person and his soul is poured out.

If the only place of refuge was where the tabernacle/temple was located, it might be a long and tiring journey. The longer the distance, the more likely the avenger could catch up to the slayer. In such a case, his life could legally be taken...

⁶ (con't) **though he *was* not deserving of death, since he had not hated the victim in time past.**

The matter of avenging blood is one that covers any shedding of blood of a near kinsman. This is a right that will not be denied apart from the exception of being in a city of refuge, or at anytime and anywhere after the death of the high priest. Other than those two instances, the right exists.

However, there is the truth that the killing was unintentional. There was no enmity, and it was unavoidable. In this, the Hebrew essentially reads, “though he is without a judgment of death.” There is nothing in him that calls out for capital punishment.

It is for this reason that the cities of refuge were given. It is a merciful exception provided for the manslayer. As Moses says...

⁷ **Therefore I command you, saying,**

The Hebrew reads, “Upon thus I command you.” It is the same phrase that was used in Deuteronomy 15:11. There is a state that exists, whether it is right or not. It is simply something that is a part of the human condition. It is upon such a matter that an act of mercy is to be extended.

In Deuteronomy 15, it referred to attending to the needy, meaning the poor in the land. Here, it refers to taking care of the needy, meaning those desperate of life itself. Because this condition exists, and because it can be remedied through an act of mercy...

⁷ (con’t) **‘You shall separate three cities for yourself.’**

Moses repeats the original precept from verse 2. It is for the sake of those who are under the culturally accepted sentence of the avenger’s hand, despite having no judgment of death hanging over them, that Moses instructs them to accomplish the words of this command.

*Do not defile the land in which you live
For among the midst of you, there I dwell
To you the blessings of heaven, I will give
Or, from Me will come the tortures of eternal hell*

*For I dwell among you; even I, the Lord
Therefore, be holy as I am holy – this you must be
In this, you will receive my promised reward
And there shall be peace between you and Me*

*Do not profane the land, but keep it pure and undefiled
And between us there will be a state of harmony
In this, upon you I shall have smiled
And together we shall dwell for all eternity*

III. Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed (Verses 8-13)

⁸“Now if the LORD your God enlarges your territory, as He swore to your fathers, and gives you the land which He promised to give to your fathers,

The words here now refer to neither Canaan, nor to the land already possessed east of the Jordan. Rather, they refer to the extension of land promised before to Abraham –

“To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates— ¹⁹the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, ²⁰the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, ²¹the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.” Genesis 15:18-20

It was a command repeated to the people before leaving Sinai (Exodus 23:31) and also repeated to them when they left Egypt –

“Turn and take your journey, and go to the mountains of the Amorites, to all the neighboring *places* in the plain, in the mountains and in the lowland, in the South and on the seacoast, to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the River Euphrates. ⁸See, I have set the land before you; go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to your fathers—to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—to give to them and their descendants after them.” Deuteronomy 1:7-8

Of these words, the Bible Commentary (via John Lange) states –

“It is obvious that such a passage as this could not have been penned in the times to which rationalist critics assign Deut. No one living in those times would think of treating as a future contingency (“If the Lord thy God enlarge, sq.) an extension of territory which at the date in question had in fact taken place long ago, and been subsequently forfeited.”

The analysis is correct. As has been seen numerous times, those who argue for various reasons that Deuteronomy must have been penned many, many centuries later fail to consider how ridiculous their claims actually are.

For now, the word “if” is a conditional one. The promise was made to the fathers, but it is conditional towards the people. This conditional aspect is again seen in the next verse...

⁹ and if you keep all these commandments and do them, which I command you today,

Following hard after the errors of the KJV, the words here are incorrectly translated. The previous verse began with, “And if.” Here, it begins with “For,” or “When.” Secondly, the word “commandment” is singular. The clause should read, “When you keep all the commandment and do it.” It is time conditional. Until that day, the event will not come about. And that is...

⁹ (con't) **to love the LORD your God and to walk always in His ways,**

The clause is close in thought to 10:12 and 11:22. Moses ties in the love of the Lord and walking in His ways as being obedient to the commandment. These words define what it means to be obedient. It goes beyond rote observance to the very heart of the man.

David loved the Lord and strove to walk in His ways, even if – at times – he failed in observing a statute or precept of the law. The Pharisees meticulously kept every explicit precept of the law, but they failed in the greater and more important precepts implicitly laid down here. David found joy in the presence of the Lord; the Pharisees will find eternal condemnation.

It is only if Israel is united to the Lord in heartfelt love, and in obedience to the command, that the next words would take effect...

⁹ (con't) **then you shall add three more cities for yourself besides these three,**

Scholars err when they say this was fulfilled in Joshua 21 when the six cities of refuge are named. This is not referring to those east of the Jordan that were already assigned, and which are repeated in Joshua.

Rather, this is a reference to three additional cities in borders extending to the Euphrates. It is a hopeful and conditional event that was never realized in Israel's history. However, if it was needed due to expansion of the borders, the reason is obvious...

¹⁰ **lest innocent blood be shed in the midst of your land which the LORD your God is giving you *as* an inheritance, and *thus* guilt of bloodshed be upon you.**

The words here have to be considered with care. It has already been seen in Numbers 35:27 that the *goel* had the right (and, indeed, the responsibility) to kill the manslayer if he left the city of refuge. As this is so, it cannot be that he would be guilty of bloodshed for taking the life of the manslayer in this passage.

Further, in that verse, it speaks in the singular: *en lo dam* – “without to him blood,” meaning the guilt of blood. However, it says here while speaking to Israel the people *v'hayah alekha damim* – “and it shall be upon you bloods.”

The blood guilt is not because the avenger avenged his kin, but because Israel failed to build a city to protect the manslayer who killed unintentionally. The failure is one that incurs collective guilt upon the people.

It is their responsibility to protect innocent blood, even if it is the individual avenger's responsibility to avenge the blood of his kin. This is why the plural "bloods" is used. It goes beyond a single incident to any and every incident that would arise.

This is why Joshua 11 ends with the note that the land rested from war. After that, an accounting of the kings conquered in battle is noted in Chapter 12 and then a short note of what still needed to be conquered is seen in the opening of Chapter 13.

From there, the land is divided among the tribes, comprising all of the next passages until Joshua 20 where the very first thing recorded is the designation of the cities of refuge. In other words, the designation of these cities is of paramount importance to the overall narrative.

However, this bloodguilt only applies to those who are innocent...

¹¹ "But if anyone hates his neighbor, lies in wait for him, rises against him and strikes him mortally, so that he dies,

The words here correspond to Numbers 35:16-21. This person's *ratsakh*, or unsanctioned killing, is intentional. The obvious verdict then is that he is a murderer. The tenor of these words anticipates the words of John, "Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him."

The hatred leads to the act, but it is actually the hatred that God sees and judges. The act is simply an outgrowth of what is already in the heart. If such a person followed through with his hatred and committed the act...

¹¹ (con't) and he flees to one of these cities,

The city of refuge is to protect the innocent manslayer. If the manslayer is deemed to be a murderer, then it is a completely different situation, and it calls for a completely different outcome...

¹² then the elders of his city shall send and bring him from there, and deliver him over to the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die.

The words here further refine what is said about such a person in Numbers 35. There, it simply notes that the person shall be put to death when the avenger meets him.

Here, it is assumed that the person made it to a city of refuge, made a false claim, and is now being returned for his trip to the afterlife which is to be at the hand of the avenger. Not only is this the right of the avenger, but it is also the responsibility of the people. No murderer was to be allowed to live. Rather...

¹³ Your eye shall not pity him, but you shall put away *the guilt of innocent blood from Israel,*

There was to be no leniency. Rather, the word translated as “put away” comes from a root meaning “to kindle.” It is as if he is to be purged away in fire. And there is a reason for this...

***¹³ (fin) that it may go well with you.**

The implication is that if this is not done, it will not go well with them. The innocent is to be protected, and the guilty is to be purged from the land. Otherwise, guilt would be imputed to the nation for failing to uphold the precepts of the law.

The passage that has been looked at today actually has incredible Christological significance which is explained, in detail, in the three sermons from Numbers 35. The words are amazing to consider and moving, even to the stirring of the soul.

If you haven't seen or heard those sermons, it is well worth your time to go back and take them in. Everything about what is stated there is reflective of the work of Christ, all of which is summed up in the third sermon where it discusses the role of the high priest in relation to those who remain within the city of refuge.

In short, Christ is our place of refuge. In Him is found protection from the guilt we bear. And, in His death, we have been set free from that guilt. It can never be recalled to us again, if we simply reach out to Him in faith, believing that He is God's offer of pardon and peace for the things we have done wrong.

It is this wonderful offer of peace, meaning our Lord Jesus Christ –the gift of God for those who will believe – who ushers in that state of pardon. And that, in turn, results in the peace – even the peace of God which surpasses all understanding.

I would pray that you would be wise, call out to God through Christ the Lord, and be cleansed of your life of sin. In this, you will move from a state of enmity with God, to one of eternal felicity. The place of refuge is offered, and the sentence is – if you will receive it – not guilty. Christ has paid the price for you to be set free. Enter into the City of Refuge. Christ awaits.

Closing Verse: *“The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed,
A refuge in times of trouble.*

*¹⁰ And those who know Your name will put their trust in You;
For You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.” Psalm 9:9, 10*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 19:14-21 *This guy really is a mess...* (The False Witness) (58th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

You Shall Prepare to You the Way

“When the LORD your God has cut off
The nations whose land the LORD your God is giving you
And you dispossess them and dwell in their cities
And in their houses, as you will do

You shall separate three cities for yourself
In the midst of your land, as to you I now address
Which the LORD your God
Is giving you to possess

You shall prepare roads for yourself
And divide into three parts the territory of your land
Which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit
That any manslayer may flee there, from the avenger’s hand

“And this is the case of the manslayer who flees there
That he may live and not be harassed
Whoever kills his neighbor unintentionally

Not having hated him in time past

As when a man goes to the woods
With his neighbor to cut timber, not just to sightsee
And his hand swings a stroke with the ax
To cut down the tree

And the head slips from the handle
And strikes his neighbor so that he dies
He shall flee to one of these cities and live
As to you I apprise

Lest the avenger of blood, while his anger is hot
Pursue the manslayer and overtake him as he is tasked
Because the way is long, and kill him
Though he was not deserving of death, since he had not hated
-----the victim in time past

Therefore I command you, saying for these cities
'You shall separate for yourself three cities

"Now if the LORD your God enlarges your territory
As to your fathers He swore
And gives you the land which He promised
To give to your fathers, this and more

And if you keep all these commandments and do them
Which I command you today
To love the LORD your God and to walk always in His ways
Then you shall add three more cities for yourself
-----besides these three, as to you I now say

Lest innocent blood be shed in the midst of your land
Which the LORD your God, just as He said
Is giving you as an inheritance
And thus upon you be guilt of bloodshed

"But if anyone hates his neighbor
Lies in wait for him, rises against him and strikes him mortally

So that he dies
And he flees to one of these cities, if such should be...

Then the elders of his city shall send and bring him from there
And deliver him over to the hand
Of the avenger of blood, that he may die
That guy shall be purged from the land

Your eye shall not pity him
But you shall put away the guilt
Of innocent blood from Israel
That it may go well with you – because of the blood that was spilt

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 19:14-21 (The False Witness)

When we get to verse 16, we will come across a word used only once before, and one which will only be seen eight times in total in the Bible. It is translated as “wrongdoing,” but it signifies a turning aside or an apostasy.

We will go over that verse in detail when we get there, and so there’s no need to rush into all of the detail of it now. But because we are New Testament believers who accept the words of the New Testament as inspired, and because almost everyone who accepts the New Testament is inspired is at least aware of the doctrine of the rapture, this is a good time to consider a portion of that particular doctrine.

This is especially so because the rapture – whether you accept the premise of it or not – is an exciting doctrine to debate. Those who dismiss it, love to debate why they do. Those who accept it, love to debate why they do.

And, unlike most other doctrines in the Bible, the rapture is one of the rare doctrines where almost every person is a specialist on it. People may not have a single thought to express on soteriology, hamartiology, anthropology, ecclesiology, and so on, but it seems like everyone is an expert on eschatology – especially that related to the rapture.

But... not everyone is right. One point of the rapture which is mangled and abused by people who want to justify their position on a pre-tribulation rapture will use the words of Paul from 2 Thessalonians 2 to justify their position. That is found in our text verse today...

Text Verse: *“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4*

In his words, Paul uses the term “falling away.” That is from the Greek word *apostasia*, meaning a defection, apostasy, revolt, etc. It is used only twice. Once it is found in Acts 21:21 and then again in 2 Thessalonians 2:3. In order to justify a pretribulation rapture, “scholars” abuse the word *apostasia* out of its intended context.

In doing so, they can then say, “See, this proves a pre-tribulation rapture.” First, no – no it doesn’t. Secondly, there is no need to use this to prove a pre-tribulation rapture. The doctrine stands on its own from the exact same chapter of 2 Thessalonians.

Paul was not speaking of a rapture. He was speaking of exactly what the word means, a departure from sound doctrine. As noted, the word is elsewhere found in Acts 21 –

“And they said to him, ‘You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; ²¹ but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children nor to walk according to the customs.’” Acts 21:20, 21

The word translated there as “forsake” is the same word, *apostasia*. This is a word that finds its roots in the passage we are looking at today in Deuteronomy. It is not an etymological root, but a root based on the idea of apostasy.

It is based on the word I mentioned earlier from verse 16, translated as “wrongdoing.” It is the Hebrew word *sarah*. It signifies the same thing as the Greek *apostasia* – apostasy. It is derived from the Hebrew word *sur* – to turn aside.

It is found in Deuteronomy 13:5 & 19:16; Isaiah 1:5, 14:6, 31:6, and 59:13; and in Jeremiah 28:16 and 29:32. With the exception of Isaiah 14:6, each of these refers to a turning away from the law or a turning away from the Lord. Even in Isaiah 14, it gives the sense of non-withdrawal.

Paul, a trained Pharisee, certainly had this idea on his mind when he wrote of the turning away from, or departure from, the truth of the word, and what is to be considered proper doctrine in established religion.

Like Acts 21, it is turning from set doctrine that is being referred to by Paul in 2 Thessalonians. Although this seemingly has nothing to do with the subject matter for the passage today, the passage today has something to do with the subject matter Paul was speaking of.

Let us not attempt to twist words to fit our theology. Rather, let us allow proper theology to mold us into sound, reasonable, and responsible believers who apply the word in its intended way. In this, we will remain in the theological sweet spot at all times.

Such truths as properly evaluating words in Scripture are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Neighbor's Border (verse 14)

¹⁴ "You shall not remove your neighbor's landmark,

The Hebrew conveys the same idea, but is less definite, saying, "You shall not remove the border of your neighbor." Obviously, it means "landmark," but it signifies a change in the border. In this, a new verb is introduced, *nasag*, meaning to depart away, remove, take hold, etc. Five of its nine uses will be in relation to this precept now, the removing of a border.

Before going on, the context of the previous passage should be remembered. In the previous thirteen verses, it spoke of the cities of refuge, set up to protect the life of the manslayer who killed in innocence.

At first, it's hard to think of why Moses would suddenly jump to an entirely different and unrelated subject, but such isn't the case. The general consensus of scholars is reflected in the words of Albert Barnes. He says –

"As a man's life is to be held sacred, so are his means of livelihood; and in this connection a prohibition is inserted against removing a neighbor's landmark." Albert Barnes

The idea here is that of theft, as is defined in the eighth commandment. However, that obviously occurs because of a violation of the tenth commandment, that of coveting. Someone sees something that is not his, he covets it, and then he takes action to steal it.

In this, he then deprives the livelihood of the person. One thing follows after another. Thus, there is no unexplained leap from murder to the removing of a boundary. It is a logical progression of thought.

So serious of an infraction is this, that it calls for a direct curse upon the person who would do it –

“Cursed is the one who moves his neighbor’s landmark.
And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’” Deuteronomy 27:17

However, this is not merely a precept of the Mosaic Law that has no sense of moral importance outside of the law. Rather, Job 24 refers to this exact precept, placing it alongside theft as well –

*“Some remove landmarks;
They seize flocks violently and feed on them;
³They drive away the donkey of the fatherless;
They take the widow’s ox as a pledge.”* Job 24:2

Job was referring to those people who do not know the ways of the Almighty. In other words, even though he lived outside of the covenant people, he took it as an axiom that doing such a thing was an offense to the all-powerful Creator. Understanding this, Matthew Henry rightly states –

“It is the will of God that every one should know his own; and that means should be used to hinder the doing and suffering of wrong. This, without doubt, is a moral precept, and still binding. Let every man be content with his own lot, and be just to his neighbours in all things.” Matthew Henry

The precept is referred to twice by Solomon in the proverbs. In Proverbs 22:28 and 23:10, the words are closely repeated –

“Do not remove the ancient landmark
Which your fathers have set.” Proverbs 22:28

“Do not remove the ancient landmark,
Nor enter the fields of the fatherless;” Proverbs 23:10

Further, the sin of moving one’s border is so reprehensible to the Lord, that it is used as a comparative form of wickedness, meaning it is a seriously grave sin, when speaking of His coming wrath upon the land of Judah –

“The princes of Judah are like those who remove a landmark;
I will pour out My wrath on them like water.” Hosea 5:10

In this broad brushstroke of the precept, we can see that Matthew Henry is right. This is not simply a law of the Mosaic covenant, but it is a moral precept that the Lord will find deplorable in any time or place. The rights to property are, to Him, inviolable. Such a border is next said to be...

¹⁴ (con't) **which the men of old have set,**

asher gebelu rishonim – “which have bordered the firsts.” Here Moses uses the verb form of the noun of the previous clause. He also uses the word *rishon*, meaning “former,” “first,” or “chief.” It generally speaks of an ancestor, elder, and so on.

In this case, it is surely speaking of the chief leaders who will originally set and define the borders of the land upon its acquisition. In a paraphrase, we could say, “your neighbor’s border that the leaders have bordered.”

The reason for giving this detail is because the people are not yet in the land. Moses is speaking of what will be, not what is. In saying, the first’s, or (as the NKJV translates it) the men of old, one might get the impression that it is referring to something already accomplished.

In their ever-ridiculous effort to appear scholarly, and to tear apart the word of God, the scholars at Cambridge do exactly this –

“For while the law betrays its date as subsequent to Israel’s settlement in the land—and with this agree the facts that there is no parallel in the earlier codes and that protests against removing boundary-stones appear in the prophets and later books.” Dolts at Cambridge

These incomprehensibly stupid comments demonstrate and explain why we have words to describe people lacking any brains at all. First, we have already cited Job, a man outside of the covenant people and who was – as most scholars agree – contemporary with the time of the patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob.

Therefore, it is untrue that “there is no parallel in the earlier codes.” It is just not in the earlier codes of the books of Moses. Secondly, every code of the Law of Moses has to be introduced at some point. This code is now introduced.

It could not be in the earlier codes of Moses, because the earlier codes of Moses did not include them. It is an unreasonable argument to say that something is not original

because it wasn't referred to before. Using that logic, nothing could ever be considered original.

Thirdly, saying that such "protests against removing boundary-stones appear in the prophets and later books" is irrelevant to whether it is original here or not. There are things in the prophets and later books not mentioned in the laws set down by Moses, and there are things set down by Moses that are never again mentioned in Scripture, such as having a blue thread included in the tassel of a garment.

And so, fourthly, this precept does not betray "its date as subsequent to Israel's settlement in the land." Only in assuming that a later scribe is using the term *rishon* to mean "an ancestor" rather than a "chief leader" could they come to this erroneous conclusion.

But a later scribe, inserting this precept into the law, would have been careful to not make Moses appear as brainless as the scholars at Cambridge.

The words are original, they clearly mean that the people are to protect the future borders as defined by the leaders of Israel, and the legislation builds upon the moral precepts of the unseen God that were already understood by people of the world prior to the time of Moses, such as Job.

14 (con't) in your inheritance which you will inherit in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.

The words speak both of surety and of warning. The land is Israel's inheritance (the words of the passage are in the singular), and they will inherit the land. However, it is the land that Yehovah is giving them to possess.

In other words, in violating the precepts laid down here, they can expect to be removed from the land of their inheritance. This is why the use of moving the borders as a comparative sin in Hosea 5 is so striking. The Lord doesn't say that they did this thing, but that their actions in other areas were as if they had done that thing.

Because of committing sins "like" removing the borders of one's neighbor, Judah would be uprooted from the land of their inheritance. The curse of Deuteronomy 27 was imputed to them for their actions.

*Hey buddy... why are you plowing on my land?
What makes you think you can do this?
What part of the borders do you not understand?
Exactly what are you thinking? What did I miss?*

*Your land? Ha. This land belongs to me!
This is mine and I am plowing my own field
Look at the landmark, and then let me be
You'd better push off. You had better yield*

** Hey, that stone belongs way over there!
You're no better than a murderer. Now beat it
* Ha! I'll dispatch you without a care
Your life means nothing to me. That I admit*

*One sin leads inevitably to another
The border mover has now killed a brother*

II. Those Who Remain Shall Hear and Fear (verses 15-21)

¹⁵ “One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits;

lo yaqum ed ekhad – “no shall rise witness one.” The word *qum* signifies to rise or stand. But the intent will be fully expressed in the next clause. For now, the same theme is again brought forth concerning the protection and sanctity of livelihood and life. This now implicitly deals with a violation of the ninth commandment, that of bearing false witness.

One witness is not sufficient to convict a person of a supposed crime. If it was, a single false witness could deprive another of either livelihood or life. Again, the violation of one command can, and often does, lead to the violation of another. And so, rather...

¹⁵ (con't) by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.

Here, Moses uses the same word, *yaqum*, that he did in the previous clause which is translated as “shall be established.”

One shall not stand (to establish).

By the mouth of two or three it shall be established.

The precept was already laid down for capital crimes. First, it was laid down for murder-

Whoever kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the testimony of witnesses; but one witness is not *sufficient* testimony against a person for the death *penalty*.” Numbers 35:30

It was next laid down for any other capital crime –

“Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness.”
-Deuteronomy 17:6

Now, it is made a general principle. Any accusation against another was only to be entertained by two or three witnesses. One is insufficient.

The reason is obviously because, as has been seen twice since we started, that a lesser infraction can – and often does – lead to a greater one. Therefore, the general precept is given for all infractions. As this is so, Moses continues with the proper way of handling a matter of false testimony...

¹⁶ If a false witness rises against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing,

The words here are understandable in almost any translation, and yet translations are so varied it’s amazing to see the diversity of them. The word translated as false comes from a word signifying violence or wrong. It is translated as malicious, false, unrighteous, unjust, violent, and so on.

The word translated as wrongdoing signifies turning aside, defection, apostasy, and so on. It is variously translated as a crime, wrongdoing, evil, iniquity, lying, transgression, false accusation, perverted witness, apostasy, and so on.

The main idea is understandable in every translation. One person (Hebrew: *ed khamas* – a “witness of violence”) rises to establish something negative in another which is untrue, and which could then bring harm to that person who is obviously innocent of the charge being made. If such is the case...

¹⁷ then both men in the controversy shall stand before the LORD,

The precept here follows logically after that stated in Chapter 17 –

“If a matter arises which is too hard for you to judge, between degrees of guilt for bloodshed, between one judgment or another, or between one punishment or another, matters of controversy within your gates, then you shall arise and go up to the place which the LORD your God chooses. ⁹ And you shall come to the priests, the Levites, and to the judge *there* in those days, and inquire *of them*; they shall pronounce upon you the sentence of judgment.” Deuteronomy 17:8, 9

In other words, the words, “stand before the Lord,” are then explained in the next words...

¹⁷ (con’t) **before the priests and the judges who serve in those days.**

These are the Lord’s representatives. To stand before the priests and judges is to stand before the Lord. It appears, then, that any and all cases involving assumed false testimony were to go to these officials to have the case decided.

The serious nature of such an infraction means that the judgment is not to be informally decided. Rather, it is considered of such great weight and importance that it requires their ruling. It is a ruling that occurs at the place where the Lord’s name is, meaning the tabernacle or temple, or where the civil ruler is.

From there, their ruling is considered that of the Lord. As such, it is then to be adhered to accordingly once it is rendered. First, in order for that judgment to come about...

¹⁸ **And the judges shall make careful inquiry,**

The meaning is that the matter requires evidence, testimony, and contemplation. It is not a matter that will be established by simply listening to the false accuser and then the one accused. But it is a matter that requires a full investigation by people competently appointed to determine what has actually transpired.

This is not something that could be lightly decided upon because the two standing there before them would ostensibly know enough of, or be advised concerning, the law to understand they had a right to these measures.

Although the lawyer is only mentioned in the New Testament, the uses are almost all in the gospels, meaning someone who is learned in the law and under the dispensation of

the law. Thus, it can be assumed that a group of people existed who were proficient enough in the law to understand and defend the rights of those under the law. When this came about isn't stated in Scripture, but it is the law that sets the boundaries of the matter set forth now by Moses. As such, the investigation mandated here is to be conducted according to that same law. Once that is complete...

¹⁸ (con't) **and indeed, if the witness is a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother,**

v'hineh! ed sheqer ha'ed sheqer anah b'akhiv – “And behold! Witness false the witness false answers in his brother.” The matter is brought into a close and personal relationship by saying “in his brother.”

It is no longer just two people who are unrelated, but it is two people who are joined in Israel as brothers, making the crime most egregious in nature.

¹⁹ **then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother;**

Here a change takes place. The Hebrew goes from the singular to the only use of the plural in the entire passage with the words “you shall do.”

Moses has been speaking to Israel collectively throughout the entire chapter. But then he switches to each and every individual in the nation to highlight the importance of the matter. Each member is jointly responsible for upholding the word of the Lord as determined by the priests and judges.

The change to the plural is supported by both the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Greek translation, and yet – incredibly – Cambridge says, it is “either a clerical error or an instance of the possibility of a writer slipping from one form of address into the other. Read shalt thou.”

In other words, “The text is wrong, so it should be changed to the singular.” The arrogance of such a notion is beyond comprehension. Rather, the change is purposeful. It has a specific intent, and it is accentuated through this change. The witness is established by them to be false, and the people are to jointly treat him as such.

Here, the word translated as “thought” is *zamam*. It signifies to devise, purpose, plot, and so on. It is more than a passing thought, but a purposeful, intentional plan to harm another. He has done so, and his intent has been exposed – he is a false witness.

That is the decision to be rendered, not the sentence. The sentence is already given by Moses. Whatever the penalty would have been for the person who was falsely accused will be the punishment levied upon the false accuser.

If it was a fine, the fine would be levied upon him. If it was incarceration, that is what the false accuser would receive. And if it would have resulted in death, the false accuser was to be terminated.

Here is the irony of the matter. If only one witness came forward and spoke the truth concerning an offense against another, his testimony could not be used to convict the man who had actually done wrong.

However, if that one witness came forward and spoke a lie concerning an offense against another, that single false witness was considered sufficient to condemn the false witness.

Depending on the circumstances, the testimony of a false witness was thus capable of bearing a heavier penalty than that of a true witness. But that was for a good and valid purpose...

¹⁹ (con't) **so you shall put away the evil from among you.**

u-biarta ha'ra miqirbekha – “and you shall consume the evil from your midst.” The word *ba'ar* comes from a root signifying “to burn.” Thus, it is as if Israel is being smelted through the process, burning off and purging away any impurities, and thus purifying the people of any evil.

And this purification process isn't just the removal of the offender. Not by a longshot. There is a greater purpose in dealing with the offender in this manner...

²⁰ **And those who remain shall hear and fear,**

This is one major purpose of punishment in society. When a person is punished, those who hear of it, if they are wise, will say, “I don't want that.” In this, they will fear the law, they will fear the consequences of breaking the law, and they will fear those who administer the law.

In this, society is kept in check, and the people will then have no fear of those who would otherwise have no fear of the law. In this, the result is...

²⁰ (con't) **and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you.**

This is the same general idea of what was said in Chapter 13. There, the person thought to draw the people away from the Lord to serve other gods. In that, they were to be taken out and stoned by all. The accuser first, and then by all the people –

“So all Israel shall hear and fear, and not again do such wickedness as this among you.” Deuteronomy 13:11

The idea is that of having all the people come to an appreciation for what is right and just. The books of wisdom, in particular, reflect the importance of maintaining righteousness through upholding the law – whatever law that may be – that regulates the conduct of a nation’s citizens. Solomon uses the same precept twice in Proverbs 28 to convey this notion –

“When the righteous rejoice, *there is* great glory;
But when the wicked arise, men hide themselves.” Proverbs 28:12

“When the wicked arise, men hide themselves;
But when they perish, the righteous increase.” Proverbs 28:28

The sense is that something has caused the wicked to arise. That is, invariably, a failure to maintain social order. This is the purpose of law. It is a developed structure in which people will properly conduct their affairs.

When the law is not upheld, then the wicked will arise. But when the wicked are taken out of the picture, the righteous remain and even increase. Solomon uses a similar precept in Ecclesiastes, showing that even if a sentence is handed down, it must be carried out with alacrity. If not, only more evil will result –

“Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.” Ecclesiastes 8:11

With such precepts clearly understood, and with the need for them to be upheld, Moses next says of such an offender...

²¹ **Your eye shall not pity:**

This is certainly directed in two ways. The first is to the priests and judges who knew what a guilty sentence required. They were not to consider that when making such a sentence.

The second is to the people who would be called forward to assist in executing the matter, especially if it was a sentence of death. If called to stone the person, they were to accept it as the Lord's judgment and to participate in the judgment of the Lord.

The law had spoken, the matter was established, and the sentence was to be carried out. Whatever the intended harm, that was to be the set forth sentence...

***21 (fin) life shall be for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.**

This is known as the *lex talionis*, or "law of like-for-like." It was first mentioned in Exodus 21 in regard to harming the baby in a mother's womb –

"If men fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman's husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges *determine*.²³ But if *any* harm follows, then you shall give life for life,²⁴ eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,²⁵ burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe."

-Exodus 21:22-25

The precept was again brought forth in Leviticus 24 –

"If a man causes disfigurement of his neighbor, as he has done, so shall it be done to him—²⁰ fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has caused disfigurement of a man, so shall it be done to him." Leviticus 24:19, 20

The *lex talionis* was later incorporated into other societies. Though seemingly harsh, this law is actually as much a curb on retribution as it is a means of punishing an offender.

No greater punishment was to be meted out than that which had been inflicted. Thus, the punisher was not unduly or overly punished. Of this precept, Adam Clarke rightly states –

"The operation of such a law as this must have been very salutary: if a man prized his own members, he would naturally avoid injuring those of others. It is a pity that this law were not still in force: it would certainly prevent many of those savage acts which now both

disgrace and injure society. I speak this in reference to law generally, and the provision that should be made to prevent and punish ferocious and malevolent offenses. A Christian may always act on the plan of forgiving injuries; and where the public peace and safety may not be affected, he should do so; but if law did not make a provision for the safety of the community by enactment against the profligate, civil society would soon be destroyed.” Adam Clarke

It is a demonstrable fact that when a society does not fully punish offenders, they tend to come back even more violently than before. It is said that capital punishment is not an effective means of curbing violence. That is untrue. When a person is executed for his crime, he will never commit that, or any other, crime again.

When laws are not enforced, there will only be lawlessness. And when a society removes those who are sworn to uphold the law, that lawlessness will grow exponentially.

This has been validated time and again in the past year as those on the left have removed laws against criminals, removed the imposition of the penalty for violating standing laws – either in part or entirely – and who have removed those who are intended to enforce those laws.

In each and every one of these instances, the incidents of crime increase, the people who are affected by those crimes become more and more afraid for their own lives, and the general breakdown in society increases.

It is not uncompassionate to show no compassion in the right judgment of an offense and in the imposition of the penalty for that offense. The opposite is true.

Where justice is to be blind, and where punishment is to be meted out according to that justice, those responsible for such matters are demonstrating the greatest form of compassion for the society they serve. This is certain because the model is given in the laws for Israel as directed by the Lord.

As for the offender, especially for one condemned to death, it is the right and the responsibility of the judge in particular – and the society in general – to ensure the sentence is carried out. And yet, it should be the compassionate desire of both to ensure that the gospel of salvation is presented before it is. Even the person condemned to death can be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

Unfortunately, one society after another has made, or is steadily making, it almost as much of a crime to preach the good news of redemption as it is to commit the most horrendous of crimes.

In fact, in the increasingly liberal west, crimes that were once considered intolerable are openly applauded, and the simple, pure preaching of salvation through faith in Christ is now almost a damnable offense unless it is secreted away in a closed building where the general public doesn't have to be burdened by its proclamation.

I am not a proponent of the term "Judeo Christian values." It is a remarkably inept way of speaking about the state of a society, and it elevates the moral state of unsaved Jews, and the teachings they profess, to the same level as that of Christianity.

Further, the term "Christianity" is so heavily abused by left-leaning churches, that it often rests on the same moral plane as that of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The only appropriate way of exalting proper morals in a society is in relation to that of the state of believers – true believers. Thus, one could say, "biblical Christian values," and hope that those who adhere to those values are doing so in the proper context.

Those Jews who have the proper values are those Jews who have found their Messiah who was prophesied of in their own Scriptures. Those Christians who have proper values are those who have come to a saving knowledge of the Christ of the nations – Jesus.

They accept His word, they proclaim it in the proper context, and they understand that in Him alone is the full and final answer to the issues dealt with in Chapter 19 of Deuteronomy.

He is the place of refuge for the lost soul. He is the border which cannot be moved, and He is the One in whom there was nothing false, and yet who bore the penalty as if He were a presenter of false testimony or a murderer of men.

The very law He gave to Israel, through Moses, was brought to bear against Him. As it says in Mark –

Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. ⁵⁶ For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree.

⁵⁷ Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, ⁵⁸ “We heard Him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.’” ⁵⁹ But not even then did their testimony agree.

-Mark 14:55-59

Those who brought false testimony against Him, by the law they were trying Him under, should have then been given the penalty that they tried to bring upon Him. Instead, those who stood judging the Lord’s case ignored that and found a supposed reason to convict Him which was actually the truth –

Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, “Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?”

⁶² Jesus said, “I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.”

⁶³ Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “What further need do we have of witnesses? ⁶⁴ You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?”

And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death. Mark 14:61-64

The Christ, the Son of the Blessed, stood before them and proclaimed who He was, not denying the truth. And yet, for this, they found Him guilty and worthy of death. Christ Jesus died under this law that He gave to Israel in order to redeem them from it, if they would just believe.

The record shows that most did not. But among them some did. For them, salvation is found. For the others, they have gone off to the place where they await the final sentence of condemnation.

The offer is given now to all people – to the Jew first and then the Gentile. There is salvation to be found in the Person of Jesus Christ, if we will just believe. The laws of nations are often not perfect, and even when they are perfectly just and fitting – as was Israel’s law given through Moses – the law could not save the people.

However, the problem is not in the law, but in the people. It is their failure to uphold it that makes the work of Christ all the more glorious. He did, and then He died in fulfillment of it. Let us remember this, be grateful to God for what He has done, and reach out to Him for the grace that is now offered.

Closing Verse: *“Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? ⁴⁷ He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.” John 8:46, 47*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 20:1-9 *To avoid blood and guts galore, this is to be done*
(Conduct for War, Part I) (59th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The False Witness

“You shall not remove your neighbor’s landmark
Which the men of old have set, so to you I address
In your inheritance which you will inherit
In the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess

“One witness shall not rise against a man
Concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits
By the mouth of two or three witnesses
The matter shall be established, as the situation fits

If a false witness rises against any man
To testify against him of wrongdoing, such are his ways
Then both men in the controversy shall stand before the LORD
Before the priests and the judges who serve in those days

And the judges shall make careful inquiry
And indeed, if the witness is a false witness, who has testified
-----falsely against his brother
Then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother
So you shall put away the evil from among you
-----him and not another

And those who remain shall hear and fear
And hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you
Your eye shall not pity: life shall be for life, eye for eye
Tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot – so you shall do

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 20:1-9 (Conduct for War, Part I)

Beginning in Chapter 19, legislations are put forth that are predominantly intended to reveal the sanctity of human life and how it is to be protected. This continues on in Chapter 20 which is, surprisingly, one concerning warfare.

This particular set of verses deals with those of the soldiers of Israel. It refers to those who are to be excluded from the battle, and it speaks of those who will remain in the battle. The primary concern here, though not explicitly stated at first, is the strengthening of the soldiers in order to bring about victory.

And there cannot be victory in battle if all of the soldiers are either killed or flee from the engagement. As for the Christian, however, there is a marked difference. The very thing that gives us the courage to not only enter the battle, but to continue on in it, is not what other armies rely on at all.

Instead, the thought of death is that thing which prompts us on to even greater things. First, we follow a crucified Christ. It is His death that even makes our engagement in the battle possible. But more, we follow a risen Victor. It is this that tells us that absolutely nothing can prevail over us.

Text Verse: *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:1, 2*

Understanding what Christ has done gives us all of the motive we need to go forward in our battle. But there is another type of death that should spur us on as well. That is the death of those not in Christ. The devil is fighting hard in that battle, and he is gaining the victory over countless souls because of it.

The only thing – literally – the only thing that stands in the way of that is what the Lord has provided for us as we engage in this war. How important is it to you to know that people are dying apart from Christ and that you could stop that? He has equipped us, He has given us the mandate, and we should be expending ourselves in order to complete the task He has set before us.

Someday, our time of labor will end. What will we say when it comes? How are we using our time, our resources, our abilities, and our place – wherever that may be at the moment – to further the cause of Christ?

Deuteronomy 20 gives us the Conduct for War guidelines that Israel used in their physical battles. The entire Bible gives us the Conduct for War guidelines that we are to use in this spiritual battle. Let us live by them and let us employ every weapon of war provided to us to effect victories on our own path to glory.

Such great lessons as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Today You Are on the Verge of Battle (verses 1-3)

¹“When you go out to battle against your enemies,

The words of this chapter deal with *milkhamah*, or warfare. The inevitable course of nations is that of warfare. In the case of Israel, they are pre-commissioned as a force that will enter into war, simply because of the land to which they are entering. It was promised to Abraham generations earlier with the expectation that eventually his descendants would occupy it.

However, there were already inhabitants in Canaan. In order to be the Lord’s people in the land promised to them by the Lord, and free from the practices of the nations already there, they were under obligation to clear them out.

Because of this, and because of other wars which would surely follow after they had possession of the land, Moses will now provide instructions concerning how to handle such matters.

Though it appears to be a passage condoning the brutal slaughter of others, the sanctity of life is actually at the forefront of what is conveyed. Only when the circumstances called for destruction of those they faced was it to be brought to bear. Otherwise, the care of the Lord for people is highlighted.

As far as the protection of Israel, the details of that are first conveyed...

¹ (con’t) **and see horses and chariots *and* people more numerous than you,**

Moses conveys it as a certainty that these things will occur. There will be times when Israel will face armies that are greater in size, that are more fully equipped for battle, and that are in better positions for engaging in warfare. In the event of such a scenario, Israel is now being instructed.

And, indeed, the writings that follow – from Joshua through Chronicles – are filled with such instances. Early on in the conquest of Canaan, Israel had defeated Jericho. That was followed by the destruction of Ai.

When this occurred, the inhabitants of Gibeon realized that they were doomed for destruction and sent emissaries to Joshua to make a covenant of peace through deception. The covenant was made, and thus Gibeon fell under the protection of Israel. This is found in Joshua 9.

In response to this, and knowing that Gibeon was a great city and that it had simply capitulated to Israel without even raising a single sword in battle, a coalition of five kings came together in Joshua 10 to engage Gibeon. Being under covenant with Israel, they petitioned Joshua for assistance.

In this, Israel responded and destroyed those five kings and subdued all the land over which they ruled. This is recorded in Joshua 10. The chapter ended with –

“So Joshua conquered all the land: the mountain country and the South and the lowland and the wilderness slopes, and all their kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded. ⁴¹ And Joshua conquered them from Kadesh Barnea as far as Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even as far as Gibeon. ⁴² All these kings and their land Joshua took at one time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel. ⁴³ Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.”

-Joshua 10:40-43

Because of this, the events of Joshua 11 came about. That chapter opens with a thought perfectly in line with Moses’ words now –

“And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor heard *these things*, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, to the king of Shimron, to the king of Achshaph, ² and to the kings who *were* from the north, in the mountains, in the plain south of Chinneroth, in the lowland, and in the heights of Dor on the west, ³ to the Canaanites in the east and in the west, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the

Jebusite in the mountains, and the Hivite below Hermon in the land of Mizpah. ⁴ So they went out, they and all their armies with them, *as* many people *as* the sand that *is* on the seashore in multitude, with very many horses and chariots. ⁵ And when all these kings had met together, they came and camped together at the waters of Merom to fight against Israel.” Joshua 11:1-5

With such a massive and formidable foe, one would think that Israel would shrink in fear. Despite their success against the five kings, this coalition was enormous, and it was fitted with both horses and chariots. To an army ready to engage such a force in battle, it would appear to be a hopeless challenge. But Moses now tells them...

¹ (con't) **do not be afraid of them;**

Moses has already spoken to the people concerning this. In Chapter 7, he said to them –

“If you should say in your heart, ‘These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?’ — ¹⁸ you shall not be afraid of them, *but* you shall remember well what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt:”

-Deuteronomy 7:17, 18

There, he spoke in general terms about what lay ahead. Now, he is speaking in specific terms about facing an actual foe that is undoubtedly numerically superior to them. But he exactly repeats the sentiment, *lo tira mehem* – “Do not be afraid of them.”

Because of his words to the people, and because Joshua both trusted the Lord and the admonition of Moses, he repeated to the people of Israel the same sentiment now given—

“But the LORD said to Joshua, ‘Do not be afraid because of them, for tomorrow about this time I will deliver all of them slain before Israel. You shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire.’” Joshua 11:6

Several times in Deuteronomy, Moses uses the same word, translated as “fear,” when speaking about the people’s relationship with the Lord.

In essence, “Do not fear the people of Canaan, and do not fear large armies that are well-equipped. Rather, it is the Lord your God that you are to fear, clinging to Him and relying on Him in all you do.” It is in this that Israel will find success, as Moses next says...

¹ (con't) **for the LORD your God *is* with you,**

If the Lord is with Israel, and if Israel both understands this and demonstrates a reverent fear of the Lord, then why should they have any reason to fear the multitudes? They had already faced such a force, and that force was utterly swept away. Again, as Moses continues. It is He, *Yehovah elohekha* – Yehovah your God...

¹ (con't) **who brought you up from the land of Egypt.**

Here, in reference to the Lord the verb is used as a noun: *ha'maalkha me-erets mitsrayim* – “the Bringer up from Egypt.” He had brought them out, He had conducted them along the way, and He was still bringing them up as they prepared to enter the promise.

The words are similar to those already spoken to the people. As the words of Deuteronomy 7 (cited above) continue –

“the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs and the wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm, by which the LORD your God brought you out. So shall the LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid.”

-Deuteronomy 7:19

It is the Lord who brought Israel out from under the yoke of one of the greatest nations on earth. They were without any means of resistance, they were sorely outnumbered in fighting force and capability, and yet the Lord had defeated the armies of Egypt.

As this was so, and as He brought them out of there, then they were to have every confidence that He would also deliver the land He promised to them into their hands. And He did, time and time again. Great multitudes are recorded as being arrayed against Israel not only in Joshua, but in Judges, 1 Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles.

Israel was able to defeat these armies when they trusted the Lord and relied on Him. However, when the people turned from Him, Israel's own defeat was inevitable.

Concerning this verse, and the words from Moses now, Cambridge almost flippantly asks, “Was it on the strength of this verse that Josiah adventured on his fatal encounter with Pharaoh-Necoh in 612 b.c.?”

In other words, their statement implies that Josiah falsely trusted in the words of Moses and thus died in battle. At least, that is what they are hinting at.

First, half the time, Cambridge argues that Deuteronomy is a work pieced together long after the time of Moses, meaning they are arguing against their own analysis of the dating of the book by making such a stupid comment.

Secondly, Josiah was told – in advance – that he would be taken by the Lord so that he would not see the great calamities that would come against the land –

“Surely I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; and your eyes shall not see all the calamity which I will bring on this place and its inhabitants.” 2 Chronicles 34:28

Whatever was going on in the mind of Josiah when he went out to face the king of Egypt in battle, the Lord had already told him that he would die before the time He brought His destruction upon the land –

“Nevertheless the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath, with which His anger was aroused against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him. ²⁷ And the LORD said, ‘I will also remove Judah from My sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, “My name shall be there.”’”

-2 Kings 23:26, 27

The people had failed to fear the Lord. Because of this, the Lord would turn His wrath against them. What happened to Josiah was not a failure of the promises of Moses. Rather, it was a merciful act bestowed on him because of the failure of the people.

We can hope that the folks at Cambridge will also face the Lord’s mercy despite their constant failure to uphold the sanctity of the word of God. As for Josiah and what happened to him, that is all for later in Israel’s history. For now, Moses continues with his words to the people, saying...

²So it shall be, when you are on the verge of battle,

The words of Deuteronomy have been in the singular for an extended period now – you Israel. Suddenly, it changes to the plural – you all. This is both expected and appropriate.

Moses is speaking to the people with the understanding that each is an individual and together they form a whole. Because the sanctity of life is the main focus of the passage, each life is precious in relation to the whole. Thus, it switches to the plural to acknowledge this.

² (con't) **that the priest shall approach and speak to the people.**

This is not referring to the high priest. Rather, a priest (or priests) other than the high priest would accompany the army to the engagement. This was seen first in Numbers 31–

“Then Moses sent them to the war, one thousand from *each* tribe; he sent them to the war with Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, with the holy articles and the signal trumpets in his hand.” Numbers 31:6

During a battle in 1 Samuel 4, the Israelites were being defeated by the Philistines. At that time, they called for the ark to be brought to them as if was a talisman that could secure the battle for them. Along with the ark came the sons of Eli the priest. That is not what is being referred to in this passage. That is at a point of disobedience in Israel and cannot be used to correspond to Moses’ words now.

What is probably closer to Moses’ command, though not specifically in accord with what is said here, is recorded in 2 Chronicles –

“Now look, God Himself is with us as *our* head, and His priests with sounding trumpets to sound the alarm against you. O children of Israel, do not fight against the LORD God of your fathers, for you shall not prosper!” 2 Chronicles 13:12

The priests had accompanied the armies, and probably conducted the ceremony Moses refers to now before the battle was engaged. Moses’ specific words concerning the priest are...

³ **And he shall say to them, ‘Hear, O Israel:**

Here, the priest is given the words to speak. He is to first acknowledge that his addressees are Israel, or He who strives with God. They were to thus understand that a battle was about to ensue, that the Lord would be with them, and they were to strive with Him in the accomplishment of their task.

³ (con't) **Today you are on the verge of battle**

Moses uses a masculine plural verbal adjective to express the matter: *atem qerevim hayom lamilkhamah* – “You (all) approachings the day to war.” As it is in the plural, the priest is speaking to all of the people as individuals. “Each of you is a part of what is drawing near to this engagement.” And it is to be...

³ (con't) **with your enemies.**

The word “with” is a poor choice of translation. It reads: *al oyevekhem* – “upon your enemies.” One could say “against,” but the word gives the sense of a downward aspect. It is, in itself, a word of encouragement. Israel is said to be coming down upon the enemy, even though the battle has not yet engaged.

Using the word “with” implies an equal footing, but this is not the intent of what is said. Just as the Lord is above them, so Israel will swoop down upon them. Therefore...

³ (con't) **Do not let your heart faint, do not be afraid, and do not tremble or be terrified because of them;**

Moses’ words that are to be repeated to the people by the priest are full of lively encouragement. Two of them are brand new in Scripture. The first is *rakak* – to be fainthearted, make soft, and so on. The second is *khaphaz* – to be in trepidation, hurry, or alarm.

Taken together, they are words of inspiration – “no do let soften to your heart, no you shall fear, and no you shall panic, and no you shall be terrified from their faces.” The priest is to speak these words confidently, knowing that Moses is the one who first spoke them, and that he was led by the Spirit of God as they came forth. As he says in the coming verse...

*The Lord your God is the GOER with you
He will be with you each step of the way
The Lord your God; Faithful and True
Will be with you through the bloody fray*

*He is the Bringer up of you from where you were
As this is so, He has a plan for you
He will never leave you, this is for sure*

The Lord your God; Faithful and True

*Have no fear as you enter the battle; it is already won
Press into it without any fear; you shall prevail
God sent before you His beloved Son
And together you shall the enemy assail*

II. Let Him Go and Return (verses 4-9)

⁴ for the LORD your God is He who goes with you,

As in verse 1, Moses uses a verb as a noun to describe the Lord. He is “the Goer with you.” It wasn’t that the Lord was watching over the battle as a coach on the sideline, but He is actively with Israel, stepping onto the field of battle with them in order to secure the victory for them. As Moses next says...

^{4 (con’t)} to fight for you against your enemies,

Again, the NKJV misses the translation and thus misses the unity of what is occurring. Instead of “to fight for you against your enemies,” it says, “to fight to [with regard to] you with your enemies.” It is the synergistic (working together) idea that Moses has put forth so many times already in Deuteronomy.

Israel has its part in the battle, but the Lord has His part. He will fight against the enemies of Israel as Israel comes down upon them. And this is then noted to have a purpose, which is...

^{4 (con’t)} to save you.’

Here, the word is *yasha*. It comes from a primitive root signifying to be open, wide, or free. Thus, it means to deliver. Here it is delivered in the form of victory. Israel is already the Lord’s people, but they have battles to face in this capacity. When they rely on the Lord, they will be delivered in the battle, triumphing over the enemy.

One should, hopefully, see the intended connection to the church in this. We are the Lord’s people. We have battles to face in this capacity. But we have been given the ability to overcome them and to be delivered in the battle, gaining victory over the enemy.

This is not speaking of salvation, which is already accomplished, but of deliverance in war. Just as Israel faced physical enemies in battle, so we face spiritual enemies –

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” Ephesians 6:10-13

And just as the Lord promised to be with Israel in battle, we have the same assurance as well –

“Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—” Ephesians 6:14-18

Israel had its part in what was expected, but the Lord also had a part in its outcome. The same is true with us. If not, Paul would not have written these words to us.

A part of preparing Israel for the battle was to remove from the engagement anyone who was not suited to participate in it at that time...

⁵ “Then the officers shall speak to the people, saying:

Here, Moses’ direction goes from the attending priest to the *shoterim*, or officers. The word comes from a root probably signifying “to write.” Thus, they are superintending magistrates who are likely responsible for the genealogical records.

Whether they were fighters or not, and probably not, it is they who would account for those who would go forth to engage the battle. And, to ensure that all who would go were both capable and qualified to do so, they would first call out any qualified exemptions, saying...

⁵ (con't) **What man *is there* who has built a new house and has not dedicated it?**

It is a personal question: *mi ha'ish asher banah bayit khadash v'lo khanako* – “Who the man who built house new and no dedicated it.” The magistrate is speaking to each and every person. “Does this apply to you?”

This is the same for each question that follows. Instead of “What man is there,” it should read, “Who *is* the man.” Each instance is personal and is directed to the life and conscience of the men.

The word *khanak*, or dedicate, is introduced here. It is used when referring to the dedication of the temple in 1 Kings 8. The noun form of the word is found in the introduction of Psalm 30 as well –

“A Psalm. A Song at the dedication of the house of David.”

It appears that new homes were dedicated to the Lord, just as we dedicate houses or churches to the Lord today. Along with this would have been singing, a party, food, friends, and the like. If you have ever watched, “It’s a Wonderful Life,” a short ceremony like that was conducted at one of the new houses in the town.

Dedicating a house in this way would be as much of an appeal to the Lord for its protection and blessing as anything else. One can see how the word *khanak* is the verbal root for the word Hanukah, or dedication. If someone had not so dedicated his house...

⁵ (con't) **Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man dedicate it.**

Of this, John Lange says that such a person “if he had made efforts for life, should first rejoice in the result of his efforts. It was as humane as prudent.” We always look at such occurrences as tragic.

If a person wrote a great novel and died before it was published and it sold 10 million books, we would say, “How sad.” Such an instance, then, would not only be detrimental to the memory of the person, but it would also be detrimental to those soldiers who were aware of the event.

In this, they too would be disheartened, and it would then further affect the morale of those engaged in battle. The important point here is that though the battle is fought with the Lord, it is anticipated that the Lord will allow deaths within the ranks.

In other words, the synergistic (working together) concept of the battle is once again revealed. Soldiers could not just walk out onto the field of battle and assume they would prevail and come out unscathed. The lesson here tells us that we can expect no less in our own Ephesians 6 battles.

We must prepare as soldiers who are actually engaging the enemy. To fail to do so is an imprudent choice leading to an ineffective Christian in the ongoing war.

⁶ Also what man *is there* who has planted a vineyard and has not eaten of it?

The word *khalal* is used. It gives the sense of boring or piercing, and thus to open. The idea here is not of merely eating the fruit, but of bringing it into common use – whether for eating, selling, and so on. This is based on the precept stated in Leviticus 19 –

“When you come into the land, and have planted all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as uncircumcised. Three years it shall be as uncircumcised to you. *It* shall not be eaten. ²⁴ But in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy, a praise to the LORD. ²⁵ And in the fifth year you may eat its fruit, that it may yield to you its increase: I *am* the LORD your God.” Leviticus 19:23-25

The person has planted the vineyard, he has cultivated it and brought it to maturity, and he has even brought it forth as a praise to the Lord, and yet he has not brought it into its common use, meaning he has not profited off its labors in eating, selling, giving to the neighbors, or whatever else he could do with it. If so...

^{6 (con't)} Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man eat of it.

Again, the irony of the tragedy would be heartbreaking to friend, family, and any other who heard of it. And further, the other soldiers would become disheartened over it as well, knowing that he had died before receiving the blessing of his efforts.

Along with the first two tragedies, comes one more...

⁷ And what man *is there* who is betrothed to a woman and has not married her?

It is another humane act bestowed upon the people. Just as a person should be the one to benefit from dedicating a house or seeing a vineyard through to its maturity, so a person should be allowed to bring forth his intent to marry in like manner.

Nothing is said here of either a virgin or otherwise. The man is betrothed, and he is entitled to the blessing of that betrothal. Later in Deuteronomy, an explicit timeframe is given by Moses concerning this –

“When a man has taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, and bring happiness to his wife whom he has taken.” Deuteronomy 24:5

Although it isn't always the case, apparently a good round number for man to no longer bring that special happiness to his wife seems to be at the one-year point. After that, the old saying, “Distance makes the heart grow fonder,” will hopefully help bring things back to that once delightful state.

All kidding aside, the word for a man so betrothed is...

^{7 (con't)} **Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man marry her.'**

Again, the ironic tragedy of dying in battle without having been blessed with the fruit of the action is what is conveyed here. To see a man die in such a state would not only be harmful to the betrothed woman, but to all who saw it – including the other soldiers. Hence, the wisdom of Moses' words is clearly seen.

In these three aspects of the soldier's life, a hint of the work of Christ can also be seen. The Lord is building a house which is not yet dedicated (1 Peter 2:5). The Lord has a vineyard which is not yet complete (Luke 20:16, 22:18). And the Lord has a betrothed whom He has not yet married (1 Corinthians 11:2).

Despite this, He died in the battle before all three were realized. And yet, the victory remains His because He prevailed over death. Thus, the ironic tragedy of the soldier of Israel is overcome by the victorious Lord.

It should also be noted that the opposite of these humane blessings is stated as a curse to the people who fail to obey the terms of the covenant. In Deuteronomy 28, in the blessings and curses upon the people, it says in the curses –

“You shall betroth a wife, but another man shall lie with her; you shall build a house, but you shall not dwell in it; you shall plant a vineyard, but shall not gather its grapes.” Deuteronomy 28:30

With these things understood so far, Moses next continues with...

⁸“The officers shall speak further to the people, and say, ‘What man *is there who is fearful and fainthearted?*’

The words are personal and specific, saying – “Who *is* the man, the fearful, and soft to heart.” Here, the adjective form, *rak*, of the word *rakak* seen in verse 3 is used.

This cannot be speaking of the normal sense of fear that any soldier would feel at the outset of a battle. Other than someone who is not quite right in the head, it is almost unimaginable to consider a person not being in some sort of mental anguish at the prospect of engaging in a battle.

This person, however, demonstrates an unhealthy fear that has abandoned trust in the Lord’s ability to win the battle. It is a hopeless fear that has no place in the man prepared to serve according to the prospects that all responsible soldiers must face.

The reason I say this is because the Lord Himself demonstrated His own internal conflict in the battle that was set before Him. However, His trust in the Lord’s ability to bring Him through the battle was stronger than the desire to run from it –

“And He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and prayed, ⁴²saying, ‘Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.’” Luke 22:41, 42

The Lord understood that His mission was to accomplish the Father’s will. He sought that first and foremost, and He prevailed through the battle. He brought forth the victory because of this. And in His victory, we now have the same Source of strength open to us. This would not have been possible otherwise. As Moses says concerning the soft-hearted soldier...

^{8 (con’)} Let him go and return to his house, lest the heart of his brethren faint like his heart.’

v'lo yimas eth l'vav ekhav kilvavo – “And no melt to heart his brothers as his heart.” A cowardly heart cannot bring about victory. And in the face of defeat, the rest of the people will also flee from the battle. This is seen, for example, in Joshua 7:5 –

“And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them *from* before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water.”

-Joshua 7:5

It is again seen in Judges 7 where the Lord whittled the soldiers down to an impossibly low number, many through this exact allowance by Moses –

“And the LORD said to Gideon, ‘The people who *are* with you *are* too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, “My own hand has saved me.”³ Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, “Whoever *is* fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.” And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained.” Judges 7:2, 3

Despite the people of Ai being a much smaller force, the soldiers of Israel smelled defeat and their hearts melted. And despite being a much, much smaller force than the Midianites, Gideon and his three hundred men remained strong-hearted, and they prevailed.

Fear is contagious. What the people in a battle need is not the cowardly at their sides, but the heroic at their head. This is seen in the example of David when Israel faced Goliath and the Philistine army, and it is seen in the church today.

We know that we can prevail because we know the Lord already has prevailed. And more, we know He is with us in this battle, and He will deliver us safely to the victory. Our conduct will be based on who we fix our eyes on, and so, let us fix our eyes on Jesus. With that, we will have all the strength we need to endure the battle we are in, and to prevail.

***9 (fin) And so it shall be, when the officers have finished speaking to the people, that they shall make captains of the armies to lead the people.**

This translation of this last verse is almost wholly conveyed in this manner – “When the officers are done, they shall make captains.” In other words, the action of appointing

captains comes after the dismissal of the various exemptions, and it is conducted by these same officers.

However, there is a second possibility for the Hebrew. It reads, *u-paqedu sare tsevaoth b'rosh ha'am* – “and shall muster them captains armies in head the people.” In other words, the action of the second clause is not that of the officers, but of the army captains. This is reflected in the Aramaic Bible –

“And when the Scribes have finished speaking to the people, the Commanders of the armies shall stand at the front of the people.”

In this, the *sare*, or military leaders, already have their positions, and it is now their turn to accomplish the mustering of the troops that remain. This would actually be more in accord with the military designations made later in Scripture.

There are set military leaders who go before the soldiers. But for each battle, the officers would come forward, call out for exemptions, probably record those exemptions, and then cease their work to allow the military leaders to then muster their troops and prepare to engage the enemy.

Either way, the army is initially prepared for battle, those who are not to serve for the various reasons set down are then removed from the ranks, and then the final preparedness for the battle is made. It is with this thought in mind that the passage ends.

In the next eleven verses, the actual rules for conducting the battle will be laid out. And so, for now, we will close with the thought that even though this is not a heavily Christological passage, it still bears the mark of precepts that are actually fulfilled by the Lord.

Though His battle was not a physical battle on an open field, it was an actual battle, nonetheless. And with the continued war that Paul refers to in which we are – even now – engaged, we have the same assurance that the Lord is with us that Israel had.

Yes, it may be even scary to live out our lives in this fallen, troubling world, but we have all of the implements that being a soldier of Christ calls for. It is, however, up to us to use them. The very fact that Paul implores us to make use of them means that it is up to us to do so.

If we fail in this, it is we who will be ineffective in the battle. There is the same synergistic (working together) idea now that there was for Israel. But, like Israel should have done, I will clue you into this... the more that we rely on the Lord, the more we set our eyes on Him, and the more we employ the implements He has provided us, the better off we will be.

Israel would often go it alone, and they would fail. But great leaders like David would acknowledge that the Lord was at their head, and they would prevail. Let us act in like manner, and in this, we will be effective in the battles we face – to the glory of the Lord who has and who does go before us.

Closing Verse: *“You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ² And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. ³ You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. ⁴ No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.”*

-2 Timothy 2:1-4

Next Week: Deuteronomy 20:10-20 *What things are soldiers of the Lord required to do...?* (Conduct for War, Part II) (60th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Conduct for War

“When you go out to battle against your enemies
And see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you
Do not be afraid of them; for the LORD your God is with you
Who brought you up from the land of Egypt; He is faithful and true

So it shall be, when you are on the verge of battle that day
That the priest shall approach and speak to the people
-----with words to convey

And he shall say to them, ‘Hear, O Israel:
Today you are with your enemies on the verge of battle

Do not let your heart faint, do not be afraid
And do not tremble or be terrified because of them
-----or because of their prattle

For the LORD your God is He who goes with you
To fight for you against your enemies, to save you – so He shall do

“Then the officers shall speak to the people, saying:
‘What man is there who has built a new house
-----and has not dedicated it?
Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle
And another man dedicate it; a tragedy anyone would admit

Also what man is there who has planted a vineyard
And has not eaten of it? To it his tastebuds he did not it commit
Let him go and return to his house
Lest he die in the battle and another man eat of it

And what man is there who is betrothed to a woman
And has not married her? A tragedy for her
Let him go and return to his house
Lest he die in the battle and another man marry her

“The officers shall speak further to the people, and say
‘What man is there who is fearful and fainthearted from the start?
Let him go and return to his house
Lest the heart of his brethren faint like his heart

And so it shall be
When the officers have finished to the people speaking
That they shall make captains
Of the armies to lead the people, the ranks they shall be tweaking

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone

We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 20:10-20 (Conduct for War, Part II)

In today's passage, we will finish up Moses' words of this chapter concerning proper conduct for war. What is stated in the Old Testament is for Israel to conduct their affairs according to the dispensation in which they lived.

These rules for warfare, however, actually extend into our dispensation in their own way. The day before typing this sermon, Jim opened the church and mentioned messianic believers. At times, there is a difference between messianics and Hebrew Roots.

In other words, there are some good messianic congregations that completely get God's offer of grace as is revealed in Yeshua (the Hebrew name of Jesus). And then, there are messianics who are exactly who Paul was referring to in the book of Galatians. They are no different than those of the modern Hebrew Roots movement.

I got an email about Jim's comments from a nice lady, but one who was being led down the wrong path in this regard – "Dear Charlie, The gentleman who gave opening comments, yesterday, made a rather uninformed remark, re: messianic Jews. Their entire basis is to live as first century Christians did. THAT is WHY they keep G-D's seven Holy Feasts. Moses tells us these are The Lord's feasts, not "the Jews feasts".... Here is a post you might want to share with your friend. Sincerely, and with Love, XXX (a messianic Jew.)"

First, it is irrelevant if she is a messianic Jew or not. That means nothing. Adherence to Scripture is what identifies a right believer who is in Christ. Secondly, I didn't bother sending the post on to Jim. The verses were completely out of context. One of them was our text verse for today...

Text Verse: *"But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed." Galatians 1:8, 9*

My response to her was as you may expect – "There is a difference between a person observing the feasts as a cultural expression, meaning as a Jew might within the culture, and a person who is attempting to merit the Lord's favor through adherence to the Law of Moses.

The Feasts of the Lord are fulfilled in the Lord. They are no longer to be observed as a part of faith in Christ because Christ is the fulfillment of them. (Hebrews 7:18, 8:13, and 10:9). The Law – in its entirety, is annulled, obsolete, and set aside. It is nailed to the cross (Colossian 2:14).

The feasts, the Sabbath, the dietary laws – all are set aside through the work of Christ (Colossians 2:15, 16). If you are attempting to merit God's favor through Law observance, you are exactly who Paul is writing about in Galatians 1:6-8. He is not arguing for law observance, he is saying it is anathema.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7:19 – “Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God *is what matters.*”

Circumcision is a mandate of the Law of Moses (Leviticus 12:3). Therefore, Paul cannot be speaking of the Law of Moses when he refers to “keeping the commandments of God.” Christ died in fulfillment of the law. What do you intend to add to that for your righteousness?

If this is what you are trying to convey to me, I wish you well in your efforts. It is an infinite ladder to climb, and you have a very short life to attempt to get to the top. You will not make it. Rest in Christ (Hebrews 4:3) and give up on your attempts at self-righteousness. -Charlie

She came back and was very gracious, promising to watch the sermons I linked to her concerning the Feasts of the Lord. I hope she will take them to heart. She, and her doctrine, are typologically seen in our verses today. It was great that I didn't have to even think of an opening for the sermon, it came right to me in an email from someone whose email fits the typology.

Important things like keeping things in context and resting solely in the grace of Jesus Christ rather than on one's own righteousness are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Cites Which are Very Far from You (verses 10-14)

The words now assume that everyone in the army is acceptable for battle. The first nine verses were given to prepare the army for the engagement by removing any who had cause to not wage war.

Those who had built a new house and not dedicated it, those who had planted a vineyard and not eaten of it, those who were betrothed and who had not married the woman, and those who were fearful and fainthearted and who would thus discourage the other soldiers were all given exemption from service.

With that accomplished, the battle was to be engaged with those who remained and were brought forth in order to battle a city. However, instead of just arbitrarily destroying cities, the sanctity of human life – even the lives of non-Hebrew people – was to be considered first and foremost. As it now says...

¹⁰ **“When you go near a city to fight against it,**

ki tiqrav el ir l’hilakhem aleha – “When you approach unto city to wage war.” The words now will be further explained in verses 16-18 as meaning any cities not found within the borders of Canaan. This would be war for the sake of expansion, as retaliation against aggression, and so on. The Old Testament is filled with references of such instances of battles outside of Canaan.

Israel was not limited to Canaan alone, and they were given the right to wage warfare as they saw fit. In such instances where they were specifically drawn up against an enemy within a city...

¹⁰ (con’t) **then proclaim an offer of peace to it.**

Once arranged for the battle, and once the enemy was fully aware of what lay ahead, an olive branch was to be first extended to that city. As it says, *v’qarata eleha l’shalom* – “and you have called to it to [with regard to] peace.”

Such offers were not limited to the people of Israel in their waging war, but are also seen as Israel’s enemies came against them. An example of this is found in 2 Kings 18 when the Assyrians came against Jerusalem. Before attacking the city, peace was offered to the people –

“Then *the* Rabshakeh said to them, ‘Say now to Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: “What confidence *is* this in which you trust? ²⁰ You speak of *having* plans and power for war; but *they are* mere words. And in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me? ²¹ Now look! You are trusting in the staff of this broken reed, Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So *is* Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him. ²² But if you say to me, ‘We

trust in the LORD our God,' is it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away, and said to Judah and Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem'?" ' ²³ Now therefore, I urge you, give a pledge to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses—if you are able on your part to put riders on them!" 2 Kings 18:19-23

Such an offer of peace was not without conditions, though. In the case of Jerusalem, if they accepted the offer, they would be subject to the Assyrians. In that subjection, they would eventually be exiled from their land, as they are told in advance of the coming battle...

"Then *the* Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew, and spoke, saying, 'Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria! ²⁹ Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he shall not be able to deliver you from his hand; ³⁰ nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, "The LORD will surely deliver us; this city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." ' ³¹ Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: 'Make *peace* with me by a present and come out to me; and every one of you eat from his own vine and every one from his own fig tree, and every one of you drink the waters of his own cistern; ³² until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive groves and honey, that you may live and not die. But do not listen to Hezekiah, lest he persuade you, saying, "The LORD will deliver us."'

-2 Kings 18:28-32

As can be seen from this and other such instances interspersed throughout the Old Testament, it was more advantageous to all to avoid the battle if possible. There would be less chance of death to the soldiers, more plunder for the victors, and so on. Even Jesus refers this general sentiment in one of His discourses –

"Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³² Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. ³³ So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple." Luke 14:31-33

For these other nations, this offer was optional, and it was not always used. However, for Israel, it was mandatory. By their law, they were required to first offer peace to the city they were about to engage in battle. Once that offer was made and accepted, the

benefits of it would be immediate and they would be highly favorable – to both person and to property.

As I said, the first and most immediate benefit would be that the soldiers would not face any chance of death during the siege. And more, sieges were costly. Supplies would have to be brought in for extended periods of time, and during times of attack, even the weaker of the city could use the fortifications to their advantage –

“Then Abimelech went to Thebez, and he encamped against Thebez and took it. ⁵¹ But there was a strong tower in the city, and all the men and women—all the people of the city—fled there and shut themselves in; then they went up to the top of the tower. ⁵² So Abimelech came as far as the tower and fought against it; and he drew near the door of the tower to burn it with fire. ⁵³ But a certain woman dropped an upper millstone on Abimelech’s head and crushed his skull. ⁵⁴ Then he called quickly to the young man, his armorbearer, and said to him, “Draw your sword and kill me, lest men say of me, ‘A woman killed him.’” So his young man thrust him through, and he died. ⁵⁵ And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they departed, every man to his place.”

-Judges 9:50-55

In conducting warfare, death is the anticipated and accepted result. In conducting siege warfare, it could come even from the hands of someone who would not otherwise participate in a battle. Such an offer of peace, therefore, provided benefits beyond the plunder inside the city. Therefore, it is both the smart choice for any army, but it was also the precept of law for Israel...

¹¹ And it shall be that if they accept your offer of peace,

It is certainly the favored option. For Israel, it meant no extended siege, no chance of losing soldiers, and a free hand in what would come next. For those who accepted the offer, and for the Lord who created them, it meant their lives would be spared, the certain intent of the command in the first place.

^{11 (con’t)} and open to you,

Obviously, the condition of peace means free reign for the victors. The goods of the city would be under the authority and disposition of Israel. The people would be subject to them, and they would face a much different life than they faced moments before, but they would have life. The results of the choice are...

¹¹ (con't) **then all the people *who are* found in it shall be placed under tribute to you, and serve you.**

The word translated as tribute is *mas*. It does not signify a payment by one kingdom to another. It deals with subjection of the individuals. As a noun it more rightly signifies a forced slave. It is derived from *masas*, meaning “to dissolve,” or “to melt.”

In other words, an unconditional surrender has taken place. As such, the people would be under the heavy burden of forced labor because they had become slaves of Israel. Thus, it would be as if they were melting from their efforts. As the old saying says, “To the victor goes the spoils.”

The life had been spared, but it would be a difficult one. Because of this, some may opt for another avenue when offered such terms. For them, Moses gives instruction...

¹² **Now if *the city* will not make peace with you,**

When a city decided that they may prevail for whatever reason, the offer of peace would be rejected. This could be for any number of reasons. One that was innovatively brought about was by Hezekiah. When the Assyrians came to attack, the water was diverted away from the besieging army –

After these deeds of faithfulness, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and entered Judah; he encamped against the fortified cities, thinking to win them over to himself. ² And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come, and that his purpose was to make war against Jerusalem, ³ he consulted with his leaders and commanders to stop the water from the springs which *were* outside the city; and they helped him. ⁴ Thus many people gathered together who stopped all the springs and the brook that ran through the land, saying, “Why should the kings of Assyria come and find much water?” 2 Chronicles 32:1-4

However, this wasn't Hezekiah's main area of confidence. Rather, it was one way of depriving the enemy of its ability to effectively engage in siege warfare.

Another reason for declining an offer of peace was a reliance on the stronghold itself, as well as the abilities and capabilities of the defenders. In the case of Hezekiah, he not only was set in a well-fortified city with well-suited men, but he ultimately had confidence in the Defender of Israel –

“And he strengthened himself, built up all the wall that was broken, raised *it* up to the towers, and *built* another wall outside; also he repaired the Millo *in* the City of David, and made weapons and shields in abundance. ⁶ Then he set military captains over the people, gathered them together to him in the open square of the city gate, and gave them encouragement, saying, ⁷ ‘Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid nor dismayed before the king of Assyria, nor before all the multitude that *is* with him; for *there are* more with us than with him. ⁸ With him *is* an arm of flesh; but with us *is* the LORD our God, to help us and to fight our battles.’ And the people were strengthened by the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.” 2 Chronicles 32:5-8

For Hezekiah, turning down the offer of peace proved the right choice. The Lord Himself intervened and destroyed one hundred and eighty-five thousand of the Assyrians in a single night. At other times, Jerusalem was out of favor with the Lord, and they suffered at the hands of those they failed to yield to.

Likewise, those cities that failed to accept Israel’s offer of peace would have to face their own bad choice as well...

¹² (con’t) **but war against you, then you shall besiege it.**

The decision had to be weighed by those inside. It is certain what the consequences of turning down the offer of peace would be, and that would surely weigh heavily upon the people inside. But it would also further the resolve of them as well. The battle, on either side of the walls, would not be an easy one. An example of a city being besieged in this manner is found in 2 Samuel 11 –

“Then David said to the messenger, ‘Thus you shall say to Joab: “Do not let this thing displease you, for the sword devours one as well as another. Strengthen your attack against the city, and overthrow it.” So encourage him.’”

-2 Samuel 11:25

Rabbah, was east of the Jordan, and thus outside of Canaan proper. Therefore, it would not be subject to the laws coming in verses 15-18. Despite what is said by Moses in the coming verses, it appears that the law was not exactly adhered to. For now, the actions taken by David against Rabbah were –

“Now Joab fought against Rabbah of the people of Ammon, and took the royal city. ²⁷ And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, ‘I have fought against

Rabbah, and I have taken the city's water *supply*.²⁸ Now therefore, gather the rest of the people together and encamp against the city and take it, lest I take the city and it be called after my name.'²⁹ So David gathered all the people together and went to Rabbah, fought against it, and took it.³⁰ Then he took their king's crown from his head. Its weight *was* a talent of gold, with precious stones. And it *was set* on David's head. Also he brought out the spoil of the city in great abundance.³¹ And he brought out the people who *were* in it, and put *them to work* with saws and iron picks and iron axes, and made them cross over to the brick works. So he did to all the cities of the people of Ammon. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem." 2 Samuel 12:26-31

From this account, it appears that the law was not adhered to exactly, unless those who were put to work with saws, iron picks, and iron axes were women and children. This is because...

¹³ And when the LORD your God delivers it into your hands, you shall strike every male in it with the edge of the sword.

It is the Lord who ultimately brings the victory. The people refused the offer of peace, the law is written, and the penalty mandated by the law was to be upheld. Therefore, when a city refused the offer of peace, the law called for every male (ostensibly every male of age, but maybe even the young ones) to be struck down.

The Hebrew reads *l'pi kharev* – “to mouth sword.” It is the normal description used, and it signifies that the sword is a devouring instrument. As it cuts, it is as if the soul of the person is eaten up. This was the prescribed doom for the males, however...

¹⁴ But the women, the little ones, the livestock, and all that is in the city, all its spoil, you shall plunder for yourself;

The verse begins with *raq*. It is an adverb that gives a limiting sense. Thus, it signifies something like “Only.” It is a way of separating the previous group from that which is to be spared.

Despite what happens to the men, who took the challenge, lost, and thus forfeited their lives, these others were to be spared and become plunder for the people. An example of the disposition of these groups is found in Numbers 31 when Israel fought against Midian. The plunder of people and other spoil was to be divided among all of Israel as defined in that passage.

¹⁴ (con't) **and you shall eat the enemies' plunder which the LORD your God gives you.**

The spoils of war would become food for the people. And again, Moses makes a point of noting that it is plunder given to them by the Lord. The obvious implication is that without the Lord, such a victory would not be possible. Therefore, the people were to be obedient to the precept.

*The sanctity of life must be observed by you
I set the guidelines which you must live by
Do all of the things I tell you to do
If you think on the reasons for each, you will understand why*

*But even if you don't understand
You are to obey that which you are told
Things are to be done based on what I have planned
And for you, things will properly unfold*

*I am the Lord Your God and what I instruct is right
So be obedient to the word and do as you are told
In this, you will find favor in My sight
And for you, things will properly unfold*

II. Cities of Canaan and Trees for Food (verses 15-20)

¹⁵ **Thus you shall do to all the cities *which are* very far from you, *which are* not of the cities of these nations.**

The meaning of this is that such warfare, as has just been described in the previous verses, was to be conducted on any nation outside of the land of Canaan. In contrast to them are the "cities of these nations," meaning all cities within the borders of Canaan as described in Numbers 34. For them, something different was expected...

¹⁶ **"But of the cities of these peoples which the LORD your God gives you *as* an inheritance,**

Again, the word *raq* is used. Only. This is to make a complete distinction between what has been said, and what will now be said. A limitation is being imposed.

The inheritance is Canaan. Thus, all the cities within Canaan fall within the parameters of Moses' words now. And as such, all people within those cities are included in what is commanded. This is something that has already been commanded by Moses in Chapter 7. And that is...

¹⁶ (con't) **you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive,**

lo te-khayah kal neshamah – “no you shall let live all breath.”

The words here are as clear as crystal, but they do need to be qualified. The mandate is upon the people. Every man, woman, and child was to be included and no exceptions are given.

At the word of the Lord, it could include all the animals as well. Such was the case with the city of Jericho –

“So the people shouted when *the priests* blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. ²¹ And they utterly destroyed all that *was* in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.” Joshua 6:20, 21

However, exceptions for the animals were made for other cities –

“Now the LORD said to Joshua: ‘Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; take all the people of war with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land. ² And you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king. Only its spoil and its cattle you shall take as booty for yourselves. Lay an ambush for the city behind it.’” Joshua 8:1, 2

The circumstances were totally up to what the Lord determined, but the circumstances never gave exceptions for sparing the people of the cities. Despite this, Adam Clarke incorrectly states –

“After all, many plausible arguments have been brought to prove that even these seven Canaanitish nations might be received into mercy, provided they,

1. Renounced their idolatry;
2. Became subject to the Jews; and,

3. Paid annual tribute: and that it was only in case these terms were rejected, that they were not to leave alive in such a city any thing that breathed.”

It is true that Israel failed to exterminate the inhabitants, and such things came about. It is also true that Israel made agreements not allowed under the law with various people, such as Rahab the harlot, and people groups, such as the Gibeonites. However, these are instances of failing to uphold the law as it is spoken forth.

The mandate was for extermination. Despite Israel’s failure in this, good came forth, such as Rahab entering into the line of David and ultimately that of the Lord Himself. The original mandate, however, is set forth clearly and unambiguously...

¹⁷ but you shall utterly destroy them:

ki hakherem takharimem – “for accursing them, you shall make them accursed.” The word is *kharam*, and it signifies to devote to destruction as an offering to God. When *kharam* is pronounced, whatever the Lord included as *kharam* was to be utterly destroyed. It is the same words spoken in Chapter 7 –

“When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, ² and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them *and utterly destroy them*. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.” Deuteronomy 7:1, 2

¹⁷ (con’t) the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite,

Unlike Chapter 7, Moses leaves off the Girgashites, naming only six, instead of seven, nations. It is actually a sweet note of authenticity because anyone adding stuff into the word would have been careful to ensure the list was always the same. Moses felt no such constraints. This mandate is, as Moses says...

¹⁷ (con’t) just as the LORD your God has commanded you,

This takes the reader all the way back to Exodus 23 –

“For My Angel will go before you and bring you in to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites and the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off.” Exodus 23:23

The Lord said He would cut them off, but he then said just a few verses later that Israel would do so –

“For I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you. ³²You shall make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. ³³They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against Me. For *if* you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.” Exodus 23:31-33

This synergistic (working together) task of exterminating the inhabitants is seen time and again. Interestingly, the list of nations Moses gives here in Deuteronomy 20 is the same as that just noted from Exodus 23, except the order is different. Again, it is a sweet touch of authenticity that the words are original.

Another parallel to what the Lord said in Exodus 23, and which Moses now repeats in Deuteronomy 20, is seen in the next words...

¹⁸ lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods,

The Hebrew is more specific: *l'maan asher lo yelamedu etkem laasot kekol toavotam asher asu lelohehem* – “to end purpose which no they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done to [with regard to] their gods.”

The Hebrew, in this one verse of the entire passage, has gone from the second person singular (you Israel) to the second person plural (you all). The idea is that each person is liable to be infected by any person that is spared. Once that person is, he can then spread the infection to others.

Thus, the mandate is complete annihilation of all of the inhabitants. This is the great reason. Not only have they done these things, but they will then infect Israel and cause them to do these things. In such a state, Moses says...

¹⁸ (con't) and you sin against the LORD your God.

v'khatatem l'Yehovah elohekem – “And you sin to [with regard to] Yehovah your God.” The thought here is not that they would serve the gods of these people groups, but that they would incorrectly serve Yehovah. The contrast is seen in the words *lelohehem* and *l'Yehovah* – “to their gods” and “to Yehovah.”

It is true that Israel would, and did, serve the other gods of Canaan. But this is dealing with incorrectly serving the Lord. This then follows in type to proper service of Jesus. He is the same Lord, but we now have the Substance of Whom Israel's shadow only anticipated.

To improperly serve the Lord meant that they were not fulfilling the typology of Christ to come. For us to improperly serve the Lord means that we are failing to honor Christ who has come. For Israel only one means and mode of worship was acceptable. For us, only one gospel is acceptable –

“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, ⁷ which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.” Galatians 1:6, 7

Though the circumstances have changed, and though the dispensation is different, the overall message of unity of worship remains the same. There is one proper path, and there are all others. With that understood, the most complicated verse of the chapter now arrives...

¹⁹ “When you besiege a city for a long time, while making war against it to take it,

The words are plain and obvious. The passage has been speaking of warring against cities and how to conduct such warfare. In this case, Israel is besieging a city during a war for an extended period of time in order to take the city. In such a case...

^{19 (con't)} you shall not destroy its trees by wielding an ax against them;

This has to be taken in relation to what is said in the next clause concerning eating, and in verse 20 where trees for food are spoken of. Moses is not referring to all trees, but of food trees here. Israel is told they are not to destroy food trees by cutting them down in order to conduct war. That they are fruit trees is next stated...

^{19 (con't)} if you can eat of them,

ki mimenu tokel – “For of them you can eat.” There is benefit to be derived from the trees apart from building siege works. The siege is long, and these trees can serve a purpose in this extended siege. Therefore...

¹⁹ (con’t) **do not cut them down to use in the siege, for the tree of the field is man’s food.**

The difficulty of the Hebrew here has caused a multitude of possible translations. The words say, “and them no do you cut down for the man tree the field to come in from your face in the siege.”

Some suggestions are:

- “for the tree of the field is man’s food.”
- “for (the life) of man is the tree of the field.”
- “for is the tree of the field a man to come before you in the siege?”
- “for the man, the tree of the field cannot offer resistance.”
- “it is there for this, namely, your support, that it (the city) may be besieged by you.”

The interrogative seems to be the best way of looking at this: Is the tree of the field a man that it should come before you in the siege? You are benefitting from it, it will not join the enemy and fight against you, so do not cut it down.

The point is that a battle is being fought, there is an extended siege against a strong city, and the trees that are for food, meaning that which bears fruit, are to not be cut down.

Without taking the typology too far, it must be noted that trees are equated with people at times. There are those who bear fruit, and there are those who do not. An example of this is found in Psalm 1 –

“He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.” Psalm 1:3

From a New Testament perspective, one might look at this verse in relation to Paul’s words concerning warfare in 2 Corinthians 10. While we are waging war and pulling down strongholds, we shouldn’t destroy the work of those who are bearing fruit.

They are productive even if they are not actively engaged with us in our own battle. As Jesus said it succinctly, “For he who is not against us is on our side” (Mark 9:40). Moses’ words concerning trees certainly extends to this spiritual application in our Christian warfare. With this in mind...

***20 (fin) Only the trees which you know *are* not trees for food you may destroy and cut down, to build siegeworks against the city that makes war with you, until it is subdued.**

There is a strong emphasis in the words, “Only – tree which you know that not tree for food, it, you may destroy.” The tree which is not for food is set in complete contrast to those that are. Of such trees, they may be chopped down and employed in building siegeworks.

Again, the words here tend to look to the words of Jesus in the coming ministry. Though speaking under the law to Israel, the precept remains the same –

“Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as *our* father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. ⁹ And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” Luke 3:8, 9

The fact that Jesus brought up Abraham shows that He is referring to righteousness by faith, not through the law. Those who share a false gospel of works-based righteousness, such as the Hebrew Roots movement, can be – as it were – cut down and used in the siege.

In other words, they become the very instruments for defeating the enemy. Using their doctrine as an example of what is useless for man, they are to be cut down – verbally destroyed – in order to provide the proper employment of the gospel to destroy the enemy.

The lesson is that of apologetics, meaning using that which is of no value as an example to argue against in order to defend the faith and to then go on the offensive.

As we close out Deuteronomy 20, it is good to remember that what is presented here concerning warfare is not as it initially appears. Israel is not being given a pass to destroy other nations at will. They are given specific guidelines in order to conduct warfare.

As these guidelines are a part of the law, failing to uphold them brings exactly the opposite of life and prosperity. Those who were set for destruction are because the Lord determined it was to be so. Those who are not were to be treated in the manner set forth by the law.

War is a part of the human experience, and Israel was to be the Lord's executor of judgment at times. And, at times, Israel had judgment brought upon them for failing to properly conduct its affairs. Those Jews of today who use Scripture to demonstrate that they are the Lord's people, and are above His judgment, are self-deluded.

And the people of the world who look at Israel as some sort of horrible group of people because they destroyed the inhabitants of Canaan have simply failed to understand that what they did was in obedience to the Lord.

It is, therefore, not the Jews that they are reviling, but the God of the Jews, the Lord, that they bring accusation against. Everything must be taken in light of Scripture, or it will be tainted. But more, even that which is in Scripture must be taken in its proper context or it will be tainted.

I opened today by mentioning a person who was being misled by exactly the types of people that are being typologically prefigured in the cutting down of the non-fruit-bearing trees. Just because someone says they are of the Lord, it does not mean it is so. Those who are the Lords are those who bear fruit to the Lord, believing by faith. And those who bear fruit do so when they live in faith, not by works of the law.

As I said during the sermon, to improperly serve the Lord means that we are failing to honor Christ who has come. For Israel only one means and mode of worship was acceptable. For us, only one gospel is acceptable. There is no other. Be sure to wage your warfare according to the rules set down in the New Testament.

We are soldiers, we are in a war, and we must conduct ourselves with right doctrine and in the means and mode directed by the Lord for those who have been saved by the blood of Christ, to the glory of God the Father.

As an added bonus, I will go over the points of the meme that was sent to me...

CALLING ALL PASTORS

*In Galatians 2, Paul Says that there is only one gospel and those who teach a different one are under a curse. In 2 Peter 3:14-17, Peter warns that many will misinterpret Paul's difficult to understand writings, resulting in lawlessness and destruction. Are you absolutely certain that you're not misrepresenting Paul?

Heading. First point. Paul says there is only one gospel. That is found in 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4. It is based on faith, nothing else. He then goes on to minutely detail the heresy of reintroducing the law, using circumcision as a baseline for this in Galatians.

Heading. Second Point. Peter's words in 2 Peter 3 concerning Paul are exactly what Paul speaks of when he rebukes Peter in Galatians 2. It is as clear as crystal what Paul says to Peter there –

Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; ¹² for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. ¹³ And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

¹⁴ But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before *them* all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? ¹⁵ We *who are* Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, ¹⁶ knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

*1. Paul always kept the Sabbath (Acts 17:2, Acts 18:4).

1. Paul did not "always keep the Sabbath" as claimed by the meme. He went into the synagogues on the Sabbath because that is when Jews met, not because he felt it necessary to observe the Sabbath. In fact, he argues for the EXACT opposite in Romans 14:5, 6, Colossians 2:16, and elsewhere. Hebrews (certainly written by Paul) says, in the middle of several chapters of discussing the Sabbath, that in Christ we find our rest. He meticulously demonstrates that Christ is the fulfillment of the Sabbath and those Jews who have not come to Christ have not found their rest. They are still living out the shadow, of which Christ is the Substance.

*2. Paul kept the Feasts (Acts 20:6, Acts 20:16).

2. This is misleading. Paul observed this feast, and it says he did for a particular purpose. Paul is clear about why he did things in 1 Corinthians 9 –

For though I am free from all *men*, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more;²⁰ and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those *who are* under the law, as under the law, that I might win those *who are* under the law;²¹ to those *who are* without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those *who are* without law;²² to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some.²³ Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with *you*.

The context of what Paul says matters.

*3. Paul instructed us to keep the Feasts (1 Corinthians 5:7-8).

3. Paul never instructed anyone to keep the feasts. If you read what he says, he is quite clear on this. Christ is our Passover. He then refers to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, a pilgrim feast that anticipated our time in Christ. In this, we are to live out the fulfillment of the feast of Unleavened Bread in “sincerity and truth.”

*4. Paul believed all of the Torah (Acts 24:14).

4. Yes, Paul believed all of the Torah. So what? I believe all of the Torah and have taught on it for ten years now from Genesis 1:1. Anyone who doesn't believe all of the Torah and claims to be a Bible believer is a dolt. Are we supposed to build an Ark like Noah? Context matters.

*5. Paul said that we establish the Torah (Romans 3:31).

5. Yes, Paul said that we establish the Torah. He also says in the same paragraph that we do so by faith in Christ, not by deeds of the law (vss 27. 28)

*6. Paul taught from the Torah (Acts 28:23).

6. Yes, Paul taught from the Torah. The Old Testament was the only Scripture that existed at the time. Jesus is rather clear. It points to Him, and Moses wrote about Him – John 5:39 / John 5:46. This is what Paul so carefully explains.

*7. Paul obeyed the Torah (Acts 21:24, Romans 7:25).

7. This point has to be taken in context, and this meme provides no context. Paul says in Romans 6:14 that we are not under law, but under grace. He repeats that in the next

verse. He gives the same sentiment in 1 Corinthians 9:21. He also says in Galatians 3:10 that the Law brings a curse. Paul gives an example of the law in Galatians 4 using Sarah and Hagar as a teaching tool. Moses was giving insights into what God would do in Christ. It ain't law observance.

*8. Paul took delight in the Torah (Romans 7:22).

8. Paul took delight in the Torah. Of course, he did. So do I. It is the very body of law from Moses that tells us of what God would do in Christ. Anyone who doesn't delight in the Torah is lost in poor theology, or just lost.

*9. Paul told us to imitate him (1 Corinthians 4:16, 1 Corinthians 11:1).

9. Paul told us to imitate him. That is what I have been doing since I met Christ – steering people away from this heresy known as Hebrew Roots. It cannot please God because it is contrary to the message of God in Christ.

Closing Verse: *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. ⁴For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, ⁶and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.” 2 Corinthians 10:3-6*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 21:1-9 *The matter has been fully decided...* (And Atonement Shall Be Provided) (61st Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Conduct for War, Part II

“When you go near a city to fight against it
Then proclaim an offer of peace to it
And it shall be that if they accept your offer of peace
And open to you, to this they do commit...

Then all the people shall be who are found in it

Placed under tribute to you, and serve you
-----to this, they shall commit

Now if the city will not make peace with you
But war against you, then you shall besiege it
-----coming against that horde
And when the LORD your God delivers it into your hands
You shall strike every male in it with the edge of the sword

But the women, the little ones, the livestock
And all that is in the city, all its spoil – yes, it is true
You shall plunder for yourself
And you shall eat the enemies' plunder which
-----the LORD your God gives you

Thus you shall do to all the cities which are very far from you
Which are not of the cities of these nations, so you shall do

“But of the cities of these peoples
Which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance
You shall let nothing that breathes remain alive
But you shall utterly destroy them – a termination dance

The Hittite and the Amorite
And the Canaanite and the Perizzite too
And the Hivite and the Jebusite
Just as the LORD your God has commanded you

Lest they teach you to do
According to all their abominations, which they applaud
Which they have done for their gods
And you sin against the LORD your God

“When you besiege a city for a long time
While making war against it, it to take
You shall not destroy its trees by wielding an ax against them
If you can eat of them, an exemption you shall make

Do not cut them down to use in the siege; that would be rude

For the tree of the field is man's food

Only the trees which you know
Are not trees for food you may destroy and cut down
To build siegeworks against the city that makes war with you
Until it is subdued, until you have destroyed that town

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 21:1-9 (And Atonement Shall Be Provided)

Types and shadows are often how God reveals future things to us in His word. After a while, I'm sure some get jaded by hearing this. It seems to be the sentiment of a friend of mine who emailed me about a few things and mentioned that as well.

He said, "Ok so your ministry shows Christ throughout the Old Testament. I get that. As a Christian who already believes in Christ as the Messiah your like preaching to the flock....who gets it 1000 times over. Do you preach application as well?"

My answer probably disappointed Him, but it's the only one I feel is faithful to the calling – "No. If people know what the Bible says, they can form their own life applications. Jesus said in John 5 twice that the law spoke of Him. He was implying that we are to look for Him. I despise life application sermons. Line-by-line analysis is what I like. But I toss in life application at times to direct people to want to live their lives in a right manner."

The reason I love to look for Jesus in the Old Testament is because Jesus told us that the writers of the Old Testament wrote about Him. But, for the most part, they didn't say, "Jesus is going to come and do this." Instead, they wrote out words of law, and those words of law anticipate Him.

I can't think of anything more exciting than that. When we see this, over and over and over again as God intended, then the effect is obvious. We will not get pulled astray by people that attempt to misdirect us into every wrong avenue we could be led down.

Text Verse: *"I will wash my hands in innocence;
So I will go about Your altar, O LORD,
That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving,
And tell of all Your wondrous works." Psalm 26:6, 7*

The Bible is about God's redemptive narrative, and that redemptive narrative is based wholly and entirely on what God would do in and through Jesus Christ. When we get that, and when we keep getting that, we won't get sucked in false teachings, we won't get trapped into odd religious expressions, and we won't get incorrect ideas about our relationship with God.

How important is this? Well, today we will evaluate the nine verses we just read, and then – as I often do – I will attempt to show you how Christ Jesus is the fulfillment of those things.

But when I do, I will give you an object lesson, right from redemptive history, concerning a group of people who missed this. In their missing, they have gone through many woes. How important is understanding the typology of Christ from the Old Testament? Ask Israel someday when they finally come to Christ.

Someday, they will be able to wash their hands in innocence. That day is probably not far off, but until it comes, many more grievous woes are set to come upon them. This is the sad result of not paying heed to the typology.

It's not about us. Life application sermons often overemphasize **us**, or they even make it all about us. It's not. It is about God's dealings with us in redemptive history. When we know that, we don't need life application sermons. We will know exactly how to conduct our lives in Christ.

It's all to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. A Heifer Which Has Not Been Worked (verses 1-9)

The previous chapter dealt with the conduct of warfare. That detailed those rules which governed a public enemy, and one which involved the nation as a whole. This chapter now begins with a private matter, and which results in death. The scope of the matter is less, but the sanctity of life is still being considered. With that in mind, Moses begins with...

¹"If *anyone* is found slain,

ki yimatse khalal – "Regarding found slain." The word translated as "slain" is clear. It isn't just a dead body of someone who might have gotten bitten by bees and died of anaphylactic shock. Rather, it is a person who has clearly been killed.

In this case, the wrong must be righted. Either the killer must be punished, or suitable atonement for the land must be made. This is because, as the Lord has already stated in Numbers 35 –

“So you shall not pollute the land where you *are*; for blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. ³⁴Therefore do not defile the land which you inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.” Numbers 35:33, 34

There is a defilement that results from such shedding of blood. The person who shed it must pay for his crime, or another suitable remedy must be found. However, there is more involved in this case, as Moses will explain. For now, he says...

1 (con't) **lying in the field**

These words, *nophel ba'sadeh*, or “fallen in the field,” actually come later in the verse. The thought as presented is, “in the ground which Yehovah your God is giving you to possess, fallen in the field.” For now, it simply says...

1 (con't) **in the land**

ba'adamah – “in the ground.” The word is *adamah*. It usually signifies the ground, soil, or earth, rather than the land as territory. It comes from the same root as *adam*, or man. Both come from the verb *adom*, implying redness.

This wording is specific and obviously an important distinction. Instead of using *eretz*, or land – meaning the territory – it says *adamah*. What is also of interest is that the term will not be used again until the final verse of the chapter –

“If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, ²³ his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the **land [adamah]** which the LORD your God is giving you *as* an inheritance; for he who is hanged *is* accursed of God.” Deuteronomy 21:22, 23

The thought of defiling the ground (not the land) with a body curiously brackets the contents of the entire chapter.

1 (con't) **which the LORD your God is giving you to possess,**

It is the constantly repeated set of words from Moses. He continuously reminds the people that what they will inherit is because the Lord has given it to them. As such, they must comply with what is stated.

Further, the passage is consistently in the singular – “You Israel.” The Lord is giving the land to this people. If the Lord gives them the ground, He can take it from them, cause it to become unproductive, or whatever else He chooses to do with it. In this case, a body has been found slain...

¹ (con't) **and it is not known who killed him,**

lo noda mi hikaku – “no know who struck him.” It is a circumstantial clause with no connecting verb. It describes the conditions under which the situation occurs. A person has been slain, his body is a defiling influence, and the perpetrator is unknown. If such is the case...

² **then your elders and your judges shall go out**

In this, the *zaqen*, or elders, are those who represent the citizens. Generally, it is the elders who are responsible for proper conduct within the families, and for maintaining proper standards for all who issue from the tribe to which they belong. The word *zaqen* is from the same root as *zaqan*, a beard. Thus, it signifies someone who has age and experience.

The judges represent the magistrate who makes legal decisions. They are those who would sit in the gates of the city and attend to all legal matters. In this case, these elders and judges are to leave the city in order to conduct the affairs as directed by Moses. They are to go out to where the slain man is...

² (con't) **and measure *the distance* from the slain man to the surrounding cities.**

In some cases, this would be obvious. In others, it might not be. The reason for determining this is to find out which city is the closest to the slain, regardless as to whether he lived there. It would also not be an accusation that the murderer must live there. The point has already been made that it is unknown who did it.

Rather, there is another reason entirely for determining the closest city. It is that the resolution of a particular matter must be accomplished by them. This will be seen as Moses continues...

³ And it shall be *that* the elders of the city nearest to the slain man

The judges were mentioned in the previous verse. That is certainly because determining the distance between whatever town would be considered a legal matter. If three towns were involved, unless the judges of each participated, the legal distance might somehow be mis-determined.

However, now the issue is no longer just a legal matter. The distance has been determined, and so now the responsibility falls upon the elders of the town. The legal aspect has been resolved, but a moral matter exists that still must be settled. Therefore, the responsibility devolves to the elders who...

^{3 (con't)} will take a heifer

The Hebrew reads *eglat baqar* – “heifer of the herd.” The word *eglah*, or heifer, is derived from *agol*, meaning round or circular. The word herd is *baqar*, coming from the verb *baqar* meaning to inquire or seek. Being a heifer, it is emblematic of the life-bearer. It is to further be one...

^{3 (con't)} which has not been worked

This would obviously be a young heifer, implying innocence. Further, any strength it has developed would be from itself, and not from the hand of man. As man works an animal, it will grow in strength, but this one’s strength is its own.

^{3 (con't)} and which has not pulled with a yoke.

There is no connecting conjunction. The second clause, therefore, is in apposition to the first, explaining it. Together, the two clauses read, “which not worked in; which not pulled in yoke.”

The *ol*, or yoke, is from a root meaning, “to affect thoroughly.” This young heifer was not to be worked, meaning it was to have never been yoked. The idea of a yoke on an animal is subjection.

This precept, now being laid forth, is not making the assumption that the murderer is from the city in question. Again, that cannot be assumed. But, as seen earlier, Numbers 35 said that “blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it.”

Because that is not possible, there must be another source of atonement for the bloodshed, or the land will remain defiled. This would be especially true in the area of the murder. This provision here follows along with that of the cities of refuge, of which Numbers 35 carefully deals.

There, it dealt with *ratsakh*, or the unsanctioned taking of life – either purposefully or by accident. When that occurred, the life of the slayer was forfeit, even when accidental. However, provisions were made to reclaim his life.

There, it noted that the person who purposefully strikes someone and kills him is a murderer, and he – in turn – is to be put to death. His life could not be ransomed. However, provision was made for the person who slayed another unintentionally. He could flee to a city of refuge and be safe from the avenger of blood.

He was obligated to stay within the confines of that city until his death, or until the death of the high priest – whichever occurred first. If he outlived the high priest, his death was considered atoned for, and he could then leave the city of refuge.

Like the intentional murderer, though, no ransom could be paid for the person who accidentally killed another in an unsanctioned manner during the time he was held within a city of refuge. He had to stay there. Only through the death of the high priest could his actions be atoned for.

So, there you have the four provisions thus far for the atonement of the land upon which innocent blood was shed – 1) the murderer's blood is shed; 2) the accidental killer is kept until his death within the city of refuge; 3) the accidental killer is kept until the death of the high priest in the city of refuge and then is free; 4) the avenger of blood kills the accidental slayer.

In each of these instances, the blood of the innocent slain is considered atoned for. But the circumstance now does not fit into any of these categories. Without a remedy, the death would remain unatoned for, and the land would remain defiled. Thus, a fifth measure is provided. With this understood, Moses next conveys what is to be done once the selected heifer has been obtained...

⁴The elders of that city shall bring the heifer down to a valley

Again, it is the elders, those morally responsible for the actions of the younger people in the city, who are to conduct this rite. They are to take the heifer down to a *nakhal*, or

valley. The word comes from the verb *nakhal* meaning to inherit or take as a possession. It is a valley...

⁴ (con't) **with flowing water,**

The Hebrew reads *nakhal ethan* – “valley perennial.” The word *ethan* comes from an unused root meaning “to continue.” Thus, this valley is variously translated as “rough,” “barren,” “stony,” “hard,” or it is described in one way or another to indicate continuously flowing water.

The same words are used in Amos 5:4 and because of the parallelism, it is certainly speaking of flowing water there –

“But let justice run down like water,
And righteousness like a mighty stream.” Amos 5:4

What is being described is either a continuous valley that will, at times, have water flowing in it, or it is a valley that continuously has water flowing in it. Either way, it is not a stagnant valley. Further, it is a valley...

⁴ (con't) **which is neither plowed nor sown,**

It is an area where no work (the Hebrew word *abad* means to work or serve) has been accomplished. It has not been defiled by common use, and what will occur there is to be the means of atonement. Further, any ground that was cultivated would be defiled by the act. Of this, John Lange seems to be correct when he says, “To this sanctity of the victim corresponds the locality to which it is to be led.”

Some Jewish commentators say that this land was to never be tilled or sown again. That is rather unintelligent. First, it is not to be found in Scripture, and secondly, the purpose of this is atonement. It is as if they cannot understand the meaning of atonement by making such a ridiculous insertion into the text.

The land itself is not at this time being plowed or sown. That is the condition set forth. Once the land is atoned for, it is atoned for. To say that it is never to be plowed or sown again would defeat the entire purpose of atoning for the death. For now, and to effect that atonement, the elders are to bring it to such a valley...

⁴ (con't) **and they shall break the heifer's neck there in the valley.**

This is the same command as was given in Exodus 13:13 and 34:20, both of which speak of breaking the neck of a donkey –

“But every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem *it*, then you shall break its neck. And all the firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem.” Exodus 13:13

The verb for “break its neck” is *araph* which comes from the noun *oreph*, or the “back of the neck.” A donkey, an unclean animal, could be redeemed with a clean animal. In other words, the clean redeeming the unclean. If it was not, it was to have its neck broken.

This heifer is a clean animal. In this case, this clean animal was to die in this unworked valley in order to atone for the sin of murder, thus becoming unclean through the act. It would bear the guilt of the act. It is the clean atoning for the defilement that resulted from the murder.

⁵ Then the priests, the sons of Levi, shall come near,

The idea here is that this is a matter of Levitical law, not judicial law. The judges are not who would officiate in this matter. The elders were to perform the ritual, not the priests. This is because it is not a sacrifice for taking away a known sin at the altar. Rather, it is for atonement for the guilt of blood.

Despite it being conducted by the elders, the priests are the mediators of the Levitical law. Therefore, the rite is overseen by them. As Moses next says...

^{5 (con't)} for the LORD your God has chosen them to minister to Him

The Levitical priests were set apart for this very purpose. Anything dealing with matters such as this, then, was to be overseen by them. As it deals with atonement, they are to be the ones to stand and accept it on behalf of the Lord...

^{5 (con't)} and to bless in the name of the LORD;

The thought of both the previous clause, and that of this clause, is found in Deuteronomy 10 –

“At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister to Him and to bless in His name, to this day.” Deuteronomy 10:8

Calling the priests is to acknowledge that this is, in fact, a matter that deals with the Lord directly.

^{5 (con't)} **by their word every controversy and every assault shall be settled.**

v'al pihem yihyeh kal riv v'kal naga – “and upon their mouth shall be every strife and every stroke.” This is referring to what was said in Chapter 17 –

“If a matter arises which is too hard for you to judge, between degrees of guilt for bloodshed, between one judgment or another, or between one punishment or another, matters of controversy within your gates, then you shall arise and go up to the place which the LORD your God chooses. ⁹ And you shall come to the priests, the Levites, and to the judge *there* in those days, and inquire *of them*; they shall pronounce upon you the sentence of judgment.” Deuteronomy 17:8, 9

As this is a matter of Levitical law, it is right that the priest was to be in attendance. In these verses so far, we have seen the elders and judges included in measuring from any near city – a moral and judicial matter. Then the elders being involved in the moral aspect of choosing the heifer. Now the elders and priests involved in completing the rite of atonement – a moral and Levitical matter.

In this, all classes of the society are involved in the purging away of the bloodguilt which, until it is accomplished, is attached to the entire community. With the slaying of the animal by breaking its neck, another requirement is then set forth...

⁶ **And all the elders of that city nearest to the slain *man* shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley.**

The same elders who were measured to be closest, and who then provided the heifer and brought it down to the valley, and who then broke the neck of the heifer, are those who are to wash their hands over the dead heifer there in the valley. The elders stand as the moral representatives of their city, and they are proclaiming their innocence in the matter. Of this, John Lange says –

“a symbolical declaration of innocence (Ps. 26:6; 73:13; Matt. 27:24), is performed, by the elders of the nearest city, with reference to its participation in the guilt, over the heifer, which had been treated like the murdered man, and with direct reference to him.” John Lange

This is the exact opposite of what occurs. They are proclaiming their innocence while standing over the dead heifer which had been treated as the murderer in type, not the murdered man.

Further, this act is not absolving the person who committed the murder. The Lord will avenge that in His own time. This rite is conducted for atoning of the guilt of bloodshed upon the land. They are there stating that they are innocent of the particular crime in any way, shape, or form. As it next says...

⁷ Then they shall answer and say, ‘Our hands have not shed this blood,

The words, “have not shed this blood,” are not referring to the heifer. They are referring to the dead man. The heifer is the substitute, sacrificed to atone for the bloodguilt. The elders are stating that they personally, and as far as they know for the entire town, are all innocent of what occurred.

^{7 (con’t)} nor have our eyes seen it.

In saying this, they are not only claiming innocence, but they are – in essence – stating, “Not only are we innocent, but we have no idea who has done this. Therefore, we cannot punish the guilty. But innocent blood has been shed, and without atonement, the land would continue to be defiled. We are at your mercy and offer this substitute for all of Israel.”

In other words, they are the elders of their city and thus they represent the people of the city. The city is a city of Israel, and their city now stands representative of the cities of Israel. And the cities of Israel stand as representative of all of the people within them. Therefore, the proclamation and petition by these men stand as representative of the nation. Thus, they are next to ask...

⁸ Provide atonement, O LORD, for Your people Israel, whom You have redeemed,

This is the exact purpose of the ritual. It is to *kaphar*, or cover over, the act which has been committed. In this, atonement is made, and a propitious relationship is restored. This is the petition instead of the alternative, which is...

8 (con't) and do not lay innocent blood to the charge of Your people Israel.'

v'al titen dam naqiy b'qerev ammekha Yisrael – “and not give blood innocent in the midst your people Israel.” If a covering is not provided, then the guilt of innocent blood remains. But the Lord is gracious and merciful in abundance, and so Moses promises...

8 (con't) And atonement shall be provided on their behalf for the blood.

The law is what makes guilt possible. A violation of the law is what makes guilt occur. The mercy seat, or *kapporeth*, was placed over the tablets of the law to protect Israel from it.

The sacrifices of the tabernacle were made to *kaphar*, or cover over, the violations of the law to protect the people from their sins.

And the five means of atonement for the unsanctioned killing of a person were provided to, *kaphar*, or cover the people in order to protect them from the penalty of defilement caused by the shedding of that innocent blood.

It should be noted that it says, “on their behalf” instead of “on your behalf.” It is third-person plural. The people of the nation are given atonement. This is the purpose of the rite. It does not absolve the guilt of the murderer, but it covers over the guilt for the people which would otherwise remain open and exposed. It is a most important point.

9 So you shall put away the *guilt of innocent blood* from among you

It is emphatic— *v'atah tebaer ha'dam ha'naqiy miqirbekha* – “And you shall burn away the blood, the innocent from your (singular, Israel) midst.” Moses picks up his words with this firm command. What had brought guilt upon the people is to be removed.

It is not that they wouldn't have been guilty if no one found the body. Rather, the guilt existed because of the murder. But the rite burns the guilt of the shedding of innocent blood away. But it only comes about...

***9 (fin) when you do what is right in the sight of the LORD.**

Of these words, John Lange says it can mean either, “because it should **do right**, sq. or: when it will **do right**, sq.” In other words, he is saying that Moses might be saying that because the act is done, the blood is forgiven (the example he speaks forth accomplishes it). Or, he might be saying, “when the act is done, the bloodguilt will be forgiven (when the crime is committed, the blood is forgiven upon the accomplishment of the act).”

It’s an important distinction. Both are true from the perspective of the reader, but the fact that innocent blood has not yet been atoned for among Israel, the word “when” still applies. That will be explained in our next section.

*A place where atonement is made
A spot to go where our sins are covered and taken away
What a glorious, marvelous trade
When through grace we were cleansed. Oh, what a day!*

*The heifer is given for our atonement
The guilt of the bloodshed is taken away
Down in the valley a marvelous event
We are free from our guilt. Oh, what a day!*

*Thank You, O God, for Jesus Christ our Lord
Who fulfills what occurred; our guilt is taken away
Thank You for what we have learned from Your word
Thank You, O God, for this marvelous, glorious day!*

II. Pictures of Christ and an Object Lesson

The rite and ceremony conveyed here anticipate the work of Jesus Christ, just as does that of the Red Heifer, the Cities of Refuge, the Day of Atonement, and so on. However, like the Day of Atonement, it also conveys a truth that still exists in the nation of Israel today.

And so, I am going to provide both at the same time, hoping you will clearly see the magnificence of what Christ has done, and also the terrible plight that Israel remains in until they come to resolve what this rite pictures among them.

The first thing to consider is the wording of verse 1 where the Hebrew says, *ha'adamah*, "the ground," rather than *ha'eret*, or "the land." It may be reading too much into this, but the land is Canaan, and the ground is where Israel is.

At the time of Christ's ministry, Israel lived in the land, but they did not possess the land. All they possessed was the ground upon which the Lord placed them. As this is a typological anticipation of Christ, I think the difference is why this is stated.

The words are used interchangeably at times, but this appears to be more than a simple use of synonyms, especially because the last verse of the chapter also uses the word *adamah*, and that is a verse used by Paul when referring to Christ in the New Testament.

At the time of the finding of the body, the elders and the judges are brought forth to conduct an examination of facts. The judges made their determination, and the moral aspect of what is occurring is then handled by the elders.

The guilt of innocent blood rests upon Israel to this day. We know this is so because it is recorded in the gospels –

"So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested. ²⁵ And he released to them the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will." Luke 23:24, 25

This is then reconfirmed in Acts –

"But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, ¹⁵ and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses." Acts 3:14, 15

For a person who shed blood, there have been four provisions given up until this point. None of them applied. 1) The murderer's blood has not been shed; 2) it was not an accidental killing and so the accidental killer cannot be kept within the city of refuge until his death; 3) as the killing was not accidental, the killer also cannot be kept within the city of refuge until the death of the high priest; and 4) the avenger of blood has not killed the accidental slayer.

The murderer had not been slain, nor did this meet the requirements of any of the other provisions for unsanctioned killing. In fact, Barabbas was asked for by the people, leaving an Innocent to be killed in his place.

This heifer, as a type of Christ, has been provided as a fifth means of covering over innocent blood. As we saw, Numbers 35:33 said that “blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it.”

Therefore, to atone for the guilt of murder as is prescribed by Moses, an *eglat baqar*, or “heifer of the herd” is mandated. As we saw, the word *eglah*, or heifer, is derived from *agol*, meaning round or circular. In this case, it appears the word was chosen to convey the idea, “What goes around, comes around.”

The word “herd,” as we saw, is *baqar*. It comes from the verb *baqar* meaning to inquire or seek. The truth of the matter is to be sought out concerning who Christ is, and what He has done, and to seek the Lord’s favor through Christ. Also, as noted, the heifer being a female is the life-bearer, a term that beautifully reflects Christ.

The next designation was that the heifer was not to have been worked. This means it is young, implying innocence, just as Christ was, in His earthly ministry, innocent concerning sin. Further, any strength it has developed would be from itself, and not from the hand of man.

As man works an animal, it will grow in strength, but this one’s strength is its own. It is reflective of the words of Isaiah concerning the coming Christ –

“He saw that *there was* no man,
And wondered that *there was* no intercessor;
Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him;
And His own righteousness, it sustained Him.” Isaiah 59:16

No man participated in the working of the heifer, and Christ performed His own work. His strength is His own. However, the next clause of that same verse explained exactly what “not worked” meant. The heifer had not pulled a yoke.

The *ol*, or yoke, comes from a root meaning, “to affect thoroughly.” This young heifer was not to be worked, meaning it was to have never been yoked. The idea of a yoke on an animal is subjection. On a person, it then conveys the idea of degradation.

The people have a yoke upon them because of the precept of the law having been violated. The oxen that had not been yoked is given to take that yoke away. Therefore, it would be unbecoming of the purpose of this rite being described by Moses, and for which this heifer was to be used, for it to have been placed under a yoke.

And so, this heifer looks to Christ who, though born under the yoke of the law was born sinless under that yoke. In other words, the law is a yoke *because* of sin.

For one who is sinless, and who remains sinless, there is no yoke of bondage; there is no subjugation to sin. Thus, what will happen with this heifer for the people will look to what Christ does for His people –

“Come to Me, all *you* 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.” Matthew 11:28-30

In addition to His state under the law, this not being yoked is certainly explained in Christ’s voluntary service before the Lord. As a yoke implies bondage and forced labor, an animal that has never been yoked has lived free from such constraints. Such was true with Christ, as the author of Hebrews explains it –

“Previously saying, ‘Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and *offerings* for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure *in them*’ (which are offered according to the law), ⁹ then He said, ‘Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.’ He takes away the first that He may establish the second. ¹⁰ By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.”

-Hebrews 10:8-10

Christ voluntarily came to do God’s will, and He voluntarily placed himself under the law. His sacrifice replaced these very rites which are mentioned under the law because His covenant replaced the covenant through which they came.

What could never actually bring God pleasure is replaced by that which pleased God the most. This heifer that was never yoked looks to Christ the sinless Man, and His sacrificial work on our behalf.

So, we have the other four provisions already given within the law for the atonement of blood that has been shed. And yet, none of those other provisions will atone for this

category. Without a remedy, the land would remain defiled, and the death would remain unatoned for.

Thus, this fifth measure is provided. Together, they sum up the atonement for the guilt of unsanctioned shedding of blood – grace. Five is the number of grace, and God has provided these five ways to accomplish it.

As we noted, it is the elders, those morally responsible for the actions of the younger people in the city, who are expected to conduct this rite.

The rite is to be at a *nakhal*, or valley. As we saw, the word comes from the verb *nakhal* meaning to inherit or take as a possession. It anticipates Christ who will inherit the right to establish a New Covenant through His work.

The *nakhal* is then defined by the word *ethan*, or perennial, it is an unending, or never-ceasing inheritance. In this, the qualities of the sacrificial rite are found both in the nature of the heifer and the surrounding land. It all anticipates Christ and what He is doing.

Once at the location, and with the heifer, the neck of the heifer is to be broken. As we noted, the heifer is a clean animal. In this case, this clean animal was to die in this unworked valley in order to atone for the sin of murder, thus becoming unclean through the act. It would bear the guilt of the unsanctioned killing. The clean atones for the defilement that resulted from the murder.

This is what Christ did, as it says in 2 Corinthians 5 –

“For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21

It is at this time that the third set of people are introduced into the narrative, the priests. Of them, it said, *v'al pihem yihyeh kal riv v'kal naga* – “and upon their mouth shall be every strife and every stroke.” Theirs is the determination for this matter. What they decide is what the Lord will go with.

And it is the same groups that were present at the trial of Jesus. First, he stood before the Sanhedrin who judged the matter. He stood before the elders who judged the matter. And He stood before the priests who judged the matter.

Murder has been committed, an Innocent stands before them, for their decision to be rendered. In this, the mouths of the priests speak out their decision, along with the elders –

But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. ²¹The governor answered and said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?”

They said, “Barabbas!”

²² Pilate said to them, “What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?”

They all said to him, “Let Him be crucified!”

²³ Then the governor said, “Why, what evil has He done?”

But they cried out all the more, saying, “Let Him be crucified!” Matthew 27:20-23

At this, the rite takes a perfectly ironic twist when we next read –

“When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather *that* a tumult was rising, he took water and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, ‘I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see *to it.*’ Matthew 27:24

Instead of the elders, the moral representatives of the people washing their hands, Pilate is the one who washes his. Israel was to condemn their murderer. They failed to do so. Instead, they condemned the Innocent.

And yet, in condemning the Innocent, they brought about the very means of their ability to receive forgiveness. They sent Christ, who is the fulfillment of this heifer typology, to His death.

To this day, they proclaim their personal innocence while standing over the dead heifer which had been treated as the murderer in type. And who is it that bears the bloodguilt that they claim no knowledge of? It is them.

They failed to have Barabbas executed. Thus, they bear the bloodguilt of the person Barabbas murdered. But they also bear the bloodguilt of the Innocent who was sent to take away their guilt! That is recorded in the next words found in Matthew –

“And all the people answered and said, ‘His blood *be* on us and on our children.’

²⁶ Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered *Him* to be crucified.” Matthew 27:25, 26

Israel brought on itself its own curse. And that curse continues to this day. Instead of acknowledging their part in the redemptive events they participated in, and which would have provided them atonement, they failed to do so.

The elders represent the people of the city. The city is a city of Israel, and thus their city now stands representative of the cities of Israel. And the cities of Israel stand as representative of all of the people within them. Therefore, the proclamation and petition by these men stand as representative of the entire nation.

Peter and the other apostles explained this to the people, but they rejected what they were told –

“Yet now, brethren, I know that you did *it* in ignorance, as *did* also your rulers. ¹⁸ But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. ¹⁹ Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, ²⁰ and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, ²¹ whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.” Acts 3:17-21

As we saw, the words, “on their behalf.” are third person plural. The people of the nation are given atonement. Rather than the nation as a whole, each person is forgiven. Thus, typologically, each person must come to Christ. For Israel, when they as a nation come to Him, they will also receive national atonement.

What was accomplished in this passage today is a typological anticipation of Christ. Even if the people conducting the rite were not priests, the animal and the surrounding area both anticipate the person of Christ in His priestly role. Therefore, the Levites were included in the rite as well – thus reflecting Him in that capacity.

As such, Israel as a nation remains unforgiven for their actions in the unsanctioned shedding of innocent blood. The New Covenant has been initiated, and until they come to Christ through His fulfillment of these Old Testament types, they will continue to remain unforgiven.

For us – Jew and Gentile – who have come to Christ, the debts are paid. Those things which separated us from God have been atoned for. Now, full, final, and forever forgiveness has been obtained through His magnificent work.

God has promised to bring Israel into this New Covenant, and that day is probably not far off. They are back in the land, the nations are being aligned according to the prophetic scenario, and the nations will be judged for their actions.

Before that, the rapture of the church will occur. Let us be sure we are ready for that day. It just cannot be far off at this point.

Closing Verse: *“Oh, do not remember former iniquities against us!*

Let Your tender mercies come speedily to meet us,

For we have been brought very low.

⁹ Help us, O God of our salvation,

For the glory of Your name;

And deliver us, and provide atonement for our sins,

For Your name’s sake!” Psalm 79:8, 9

Next Week: Deuteronomy 21:10-17 *A rather important subject for Moses to tell... (The Rights of Wives in Israel) (62nd Deuteronomy Sermon)*

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

And Atonement Shall Be Provided

“If anyone is found slain

Lying in the field in the land

Which the LORD your God is giving you to possess

And it is not known who killed him, the killer is not at hand

Then your elders and your judges

Shall go out and measure, whether near or far

The distance from the slain man

To the surrounding cities, to where they are

And it shall be that the elders of the city

Nearest to the slain man, that poor dead folk

Will take a heifer which has not been worked

And which has not pulled with a yoke

The elders of that city shall bring the heifer down
To a valley with flowing water, so shall it be
Which is neither plowed nor sown
And they shall break the heifer's neck there in the valley

Then the priests, the sons of Levi, shall come near
For the LORD your God has chosen them
-----to minister to Him accordingly
And to bless in the name of the LORD
By their word every controversy and every assault shall settled be

And all the elders of that city
Nearest to the slain man, as instructed by me
Shall wash their hands over the heifer
Whose neck was broken in the valley

Then they shall answer and say, to this they shall commit
'Our hands have not shed this blood, nor have our eyes seen it

Provide atonement, O LORD, for Your people Israel
Whom You have redeemed, and do not lay innocent blood
-----a little or a flood
To the charge of Your people Israel
And atonement shall be provided on their behalf for the blood

So you shall put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you
When you do what is right in the sight of the LORD
-----so shall you do

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days
Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 21:10-17 **(The Rights of Wives in Israel)**

Some years ago, while doing Saturday mission work in the projects, one of the daughters of a family that we had come to know asked me to buy one of her newborn chihuahuas. Of course, I had no choice in the matter and was obligated to do so. The house still had room for one more, and so it would be wrong of me to not buy one.

When I looked into the box, I saw the most beautiful puppy I had ever seen, a light tan-colored one that was more than a delight to behold. He was stunning. There were four or five others as well. One of them was the runtiest looking dog anyone could imagine. She was the epitome of “the runt of the litter.”

Only a fool would turn down that beautiful little tan one. But I don’t mind being called a fool. I knew without a doubt that the runt would make the best dog I would ever have – and Hideko and I have had a lot of dogs together.

So, I grabbed the runt, paid the fee, and brought her home. When I showed her to my friends Sergio and Rhoda, Rhoda asked if she could name it. Being asked kind of obligates you to say, “Yes,” and so she named her Miri – short for Miriam.

Text Verse: *“And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.” Hebrews 5:9*

A week or two after buying Miri, I got a call from the girl who owned the chihuahuas. She said, “Uncle Charlie, someone brought one of the chihuahuas back and said that they just couldn’t take care of it. Will you buy this one too?”

Of course, I had no choice in the matter and was obligated to do so. The house still had room for one more, and so it would be wrong of me to not buy that one as well. It was that most beautiful of all in the litter. He is a wonderful dog, though a bit stupid. And he will not listen to me when I tell him it’s time to come inside.

His name is Pi Shnai. Both are wonderful dogs, but Miri really is special. I knew she would be. Every week at the end of our weekly news report, a picture of her closes out the video. She’s a superstar, being seen by many people around the world each week.

Dogs are really special. They, in their own way, reflect a little part of their Creator in that they will always forgive you when you belong to them (yes, they seem to take over in that way), and they are always happy to see you when you return to them.

You may wonder why I brought them up in the intro as I did. Well, stick around and you will get clued into that soon enough. Great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. She Shall Be Your Wife (verses 10-14)

¹⁰ **“When you go out to war against your enemies,**

As a correction, the word is singular – enemy – because in the next clause it says in the singular, “delivers him,” not “them.” It’s an important point missed by all twenty-eight versions I referred to for this sermon.

The guidelines now to be presented are not intended to apply to those within the borders of Canaan. This is only to be in regard to wars against those outside of the land itself. The reference for that will be cited now in order to set the stage for what lies ahead –

“When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, ² and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them *and* utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. ³ Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. ⁴ For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. ⁵ But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire.” Deuteronomy 7:1:5

Not only were the people told what to do, they were explicitly told why it was to be so. The anticipation of these words is that Israel is engaging in war, outside of Canaan and with a nation not forbidden for them to intermingle with. If such is the case...

¹⁰ (con't) **and the LORD your God delivers them into your hand,**

The word “them” should be “him.” It is third person, masculine, singular. As far as the words themselves, Moses does this repeatedly, stating that it is the Lord who delivers. He just said that Israel is going into battle, and yet the victory can never be assumed apart from the Lord’s allowance.

Israel has its responsibility to engage the war, if indeed the war is to be engaged, but the victory is not because of their power, skill, or military superiority. It is solely because the Lord delivers the enemy into their hands. Speaking of the defeat of Israel, Moses says in Deuteronomy 32 –

‘How could one chase a thousand,
And two put ten thousand to flight,
Unless their Rock had sold them,
And the LORD had surrendered them?’ Deuteronomy 32:30

Moses’ words now are a reminder that the victory belongs to the Lord. Israel is to remember this. If the victory is attained...

¹⁰ (con't) **and you take them captive,**

Again, it is third person, masculine, singular: *v’shavita shivyo* – “and you take captive his captivity.” It is a poetic way of saying that the entity which had its own victories and held its own captives has now become captive. David, probably thinking of this verse right now, penned this in Psalm 68 –

“You have ascended on high,
You have led captivity captive;
You have received gifts among men,
Even *from* the rebellious,
That the LORD God might dwell *there*.” Psalm 68:18

Paul then cites this verse from the psalms in Ephesians 4 –

“Therefore He says:
‘When He ascended on high,
He led captivity captive,
And gave gifts to men’” Ephesians 4:8

Those who were once the captors (called the abstract “captivity”) had themselves been made captive. They were now the subdued prisoners who were conducted in bonds during the triumphal procession to the victor’s spot of exultation.

Quite often the words in Ephesians are incorrectly cited as a display of the prisoners being released from captivity by the work of Christ. Though this is something He did, it is not what is being referred to there.

Rather, as can be seen from Moses’ words of Deuteronomy, it is the foes of God being brought into captivity. In that captivity, one of the spoils of war is next highlighted...

11 and you see among the captives a beautiful woman,

v’raita ba’shivyah eshet yephat toar – “and you see in the captivity woman beautiful *in* form.” Women are a spoil of war, which, according to custom – and as is seen elsewhere in Scripture – became slaves of the victors.

In this, the victorious side has the right to take them as if they were any other type of property. Although this may seem offensive to us now, it is still a common thing in parts of the world today, and it is how these things simply work. In the case of Israel, the battle is won, they have taken captive the captivity, and then a man sees a woman captive...

11 (con’t) and desire her

v’khashaqta bah – “and are attached to her.” The word *khashaq* comes from a root signifying to be joined to. He is drawn to her to the point where he is attached to her even in love...

11 (con’t) and would take her for your wife,

Some women were taken as slaves, but in this case, the man actually wants her for his own wife. In this case, she is given unusual protections that would not otherwise be found among other nations. They are points of law, and they must, therefore, be adhered to as such. First...

12 then you shall bring her home to your house,

This is a sign of laying claim to her. She is a spoil of war and now belongs to him. The claim on her is made, thus precluding anyone else from making one. Once there...

¹² (con't) **and she shall shave her head and trim her nails.**

v'gilekha et roshah v'asetah et tsiparenekha – “and she shall shave her head and do her nails.” For such seemingly simple words, there is neither agreement on what is being said nor what the purpose of the rites are. The shaving of the head is not in question, but the “doing” of the nails is.

Does this mean “trim” her nails? Does it mean “let them grow?” Does it mean paint her nails? And so on. Each is possible. And reasons for any option are given by scholars.

As for the purpose of them, the debate is equally unsettled. Some see this as a means of purification, such as when the head is to be shaved at certain times in Leviticus for purification. Others say these are given as signs of mourning.

Some say these are to make her ugly so that the man won't lust after her during the period set by the law. Others claim that the rite is a sign of giving up her pagan life and becoming a new woman in the covenant of Israel. A clue to the general tenor of these rites is found in 2 Samuel 19 –

“Now Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king. And he had not cared for his feet, nor trimmed his mustache, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he returned in peace.” 2 Samuel 19:24

Mephibosheth purposely did not take care of himself as a sign of mourning. The entire time David was in exile, he simply let himself go as a sign of his allegiance to him. Regardless as to whether she was to cut her nails or let them grow long (according to whatever custom existed), nothing is said here of purification. Further, that would have been defined in Leviticus.

As far as making her ugly so that he wouldn't lust after her, that seems pointless and a stretched interpretation. He is bound by law to leave her be for a set time. So, that would be otherwise unneeded. And giving up her pagan life and entering the covenant is assumed simply by the act of marriage.

Thus, this is certainly given as a sign of mourning. It is explicitly stated as much in the next verse. But this also identifies her as having a new authority, a new head over her. For now, more words of law are first given...

¹³ She shall put off the clothes of her captivity,

Again, there are at least two opinions on what this is saying. One is that the clothes of her captivity were her finest clothes because when captivity was inevitable, the women would put on their best in order to make themselves more attractive to their captors.

Another view is that these are garments signifying servitude that the victors would put over the captives. Or, leaving aside either of these, they could simply be the garments the woman normally wore, understanding that most people had one or two garments.

The first option is quite possible, and it would be for this reason that the woman caught the eye of the man in the first place. This is actually something that is recorded in 2 Kings 9 –

“Now when Jehu had come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard *of it*; and she put paint on her eyes and adorned her head, and looked through a window. ³¹ Then, as Jehu entered at the gate, she said, ‘*Is it peace, Zimri, murderer of your master?*’”

-2 Kings 9:30, 31

Unfortunately for Jezebel, all the mascara on the planet couldn't cover over her wicked heart and deeds. As an exciting end to her rule, the words go on to say –

“And he looked up at the window, and said, ‘*Who is on my side? Who?*’ So two *or* three eunuchs looked out at him. ³³ Then he said, ‘*Throw her down.*’ So they threw her down, and *some* of her blood spattered on the wall and on the horses; and he trampled her underfoot.” 2 Kings 9:32, 33

Unlike Jezebel, however, the woman of captivity that found favor in the eyes of a victor by looking her best at such a time of crisis would then be allowed to put off her marks of beauty and exchange them for signs of mourning, including garments of sackcloth.

In other words, the entire point of these laws is directed to the authority of the man, and yet it reflects a merciful allowance upon the woman. Just as people had a period to mourn their dead, this woman is being given the same courtesy. With her physical condition reflecting the state of her soul, she was to...

13 (con't) remain in your house, and mourn her father and her mother a full month;

Whether her mother and father were dead or not in reality, they were as good as dead to her in her new state. She would probably never see them again. Thus, this is a merciful provision on a woman who was to enter into life among the covenant people.

As for the time, the Hebrew says *yerakh yamim* – “a month of days.” In other words, it didn’t go by a calendar month, as if the change from January to February was sufficient, even if it was only eighteen days. It was to be a full thirty-day period. Then...

13 (con't) after that you may go in to her and be her husband, and she shall be your wife.

These words, as much as the explicit timeframe, show that the hair and nails clauses already seen were as signs of mourning and a changing of authority. A person’s hair will not grow back that much in thirty days. It is not the attractiveness of the woman, but the state of her heart, and the authority over her, that the law is concerned with.

Like in the laws concerning female servants found in Exodus 21:7-11, these verses do not deny that tragedy will befall people, nor do they deny that conditions of captivity or servitude exist. But what they do provide are allowances for a woman that were unheard of in other cultures, and which are more caring of the state of such women than countless cultures that still exist in our world today.

14 And it shall be, if you have no delight in her,

In other words, the appeal of the eyes doesn’t match the reality of the situation and she turns out to be a disappointment as a wife. If such is the situation...

14 (con't) then you shall set her free,

v’shilakhtah l’naphsah – “and you shall send her to her soul.” In other words, wherever she desires to go, she may go freely and without any coercion or mandate. To ensure that this is understood, Moses then says...

14 (con't) but you certainly shall not sell her for money;

There is a strong emphasis here: *u-makor lo timkerenah ba’keseph* – “and selling no you shall sell her in the silver.” She is a wife and not a possession. Because of this, she is to

be treated as any wife of Israel was to be treated. This is a complete contrast to the regular allowances for slaves already set forth –

“And as for your male and female slaves whom you may have—from the nations that are around you, from them you may buy male and female slaves. ⁴⁵ Moreover you may buy the children of the strangers who dwell among you, and their families who are with you, which they beget in your land; and they shall become your property. ⁴⁶ And you may take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit *them as* a possession; they shall be your permanent slaves.”

-Leviticus 25:44-46

Though she came in as a captive, she is not to be sold off as one...

¹⁴ (con't) **you shall not treat her brutally,**

lo titamer bah – “no you shall sheave her.” Here, Moses introduces a new word into Scripture, *amar*. It means “to bind sheaves.” It comes from a root signifying “to heap up.” The idea here is probably that of the state of her life as it has progressed.

She was taken captive, she lost her family and culture, she was taken in as a wife and now she is rejected as a wife. Each of these has been as a sheaf of pain being added one upon another. Thus, he was not to add further pain on top of what she has experienced through selling her off as merchandise...

¹⁴ (con't) **because you have humbled her.**

takhat asher initah – “under which you have afflicted her.” The word *anah*, or afflict, gives the sense of looking down, or browbeating. Adding that to the words, “under which,” gives the sense of complete degradation. She has already been looked down upon, and by adding to her sheaves of pain, it would be completely degrading of her.

The entire passage is one of mercy upon the afflicted and care for the person. Where people read passages like this in Deuteronomy and find fault in what is presented, the opposite is true. Captivity for women in battle is the way things are.

It is a fallen world, and it is one where the women will often pay a high price in such a defeat. Just ask the Russian women when the Germans attacked, and just ask the German women when the Russians later responded. However, the Law of Moses gives them a set of protections not otherwise heard of.

*A beautiful woman to be my wife
I'm set on making her mine
One to share the moments of life
From working at the mill to picking grapes from the vine*

*I have no doubt that I want this one
She is the one who is right for me
Soon the waiting will be over, and the deal will be done
This is how things are going to be*

*And once a wife, always a wife
That is how God sees it, despite how things may be
Once a wife, it is for life
From day one and off to eternity*

II. The Son of the Unloved Wife (verses 15-17)

Here, we have an interesting transitional section. The previous spoke of the rights of a wife. The next (18-21) will deal with the issue of a rebellious son. This one between the two deals with both the protection of the wife and the son. As such, it begins with...

¹⁵ **"If a man has two wives,**

Of this and the coming verses, the Jamieson-Fausset-Brown commentary states that it –

"...seems highly probable from the other verbs being in the past tense – 'hers that was hated,' not 'hers that is hated'; evidently intimating that she (the first wife) was dead at the time referred to. Moses, therefore, does not here legislate upon the case of a man who has two wives at the same time, but on that of a man who has married twice in succession, the second wife after the decease of the first; and there was an obvious necessity for legislation in these circumstances; for the first wife, who was hated, was dead, and the second wife, the favorite, was alive; and with the feelings of a stepmother, she would urge her husband to make her own son the heir. This case has no bearing upon polygamy, which there is no evidence that the Mosaic code legalized." Jamieson-Fausset-Brown

In other words, they are saying that nothing in the Law of Moses legalizes polygamy. This is an incorrect analysis, and it is not the intent of the Hebrew at all. Their analysis has been constructed based on an obvious bias against polygamy.

This is not a good way to figure out the intent of a passage. The case says nothing of a dead or divorced wife. It speaks of two wives without such regard.

Their argument about the Mosaic code not legalizing polygamy is an argument from silence. The precedent of multiple marriages is already seen in Genesis, and it is unknown if even Moses had two wives at the same time based on a statement made about having married an Ethiopian woman in Numbers 12:1.

Secondly, the passage concerning kings multiplying wives in Chapter 17 says nothing of only one wife but implies the heaping up of wives, and the reason for that is specifically given.

And more, if having only one wife was implied in the Mosaic code, there would not be the multitude of examples of polygamy found throughout the rest of the Old Testament, including a note from the Lord that He *gave* David the wives he possessed.

Even in the New Testament, Paul's only restriction on polygamy is directed towards elders and deacons (1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1). As such, and looking at the matter objectively, having two wives is not at all frowned upon in Scripture.

Jacob started out his married life almost immediately with two wives (prior to the law). The father of Samuel, Elkanah, had two wives (after the giving of the law). And so on. This short section deals with a particular issue in such a circumstance.

Because the verse begins with the note of having two wives, the first issue of care is that of the wife. This is clear. Though dealing with the rights – meaning inheritance – of the firstborn, it still is clearly dealing with the rights, care, and remembrance of the wife.

If the husband dies and the wife continues on, the son of the greater inheritance will have more to tend to his mother. Further, the blessing of simply knowing her son will prosper is a merciful kindness to her. Therefore, the issue at hand is as much about care for the state of the woman as it is for the son. This is seen with the words...

¹⁵ (con't) **one loved and the other unloved,**

The Hebrew is more specific: *ha'akhat ahuvah v'ha'akhat senuah* – “the one loved and the one hated.” The word *sane* means to hate, and it can signify enemy, foe, odious, and so on. It is the same word used to describe Jacob's attitude toward Leah in Genesis –

“When the LORD saw that Leah *was* unloved, He opened her womb; but Rachel *was* barren.” Genesis 29:31

Jacob loved Rachel. However, his feelings toward Leah seem to be given in a comparative sense – hated in comparison to his love for Rachel. Whether that is the case here or not is not stated. It simply says that she is hated.

It should be noted that divorce has already been mentioned four times, showing that it is something both understood and possible. Later in Chapter 24, the allowance will be made explicit by Moses when he says that a man finds an indecency in his wife, he was allowed to give her a certificate of divorce and send her packing.

It may be that this is a comparative love/hate, or it may be that he really hates her. If so, one might think, “If he hates one of his wives, why doesn’t he just divorce her?” That is irrelevant to the case here.

She may be the best cook on the planet, and he just doesn’t want to lose that, despite hating her. He may be a cruel husband and just not want to see her enjoy life with another man. Or, he may be obligated to her, without possibility of divorce for his entire life for a reason that will be stated in the next chapter –

“If a man finds a young woman *who is* a virgin, who is not betrothed, and he seizes her and lies with her, and they are found out, ²⁹ then the man who lay with her shall give to the young woman’s father fifty *shekels* of silver, and she shall be his wife because he has humbled her; he shall not be permitted to divorce her all his days.” Deuteronomy 22:28, 29

The issue as to why he hates her is irrelevant. He is living with his two wives...

¹⁵ (con’t) **and they have borne him children, *both* the loved and the unloved,**

Moses uses the same general terms again: *ha’ahuvah v’ha’senuah* – “the loved and the hated.” Both women have children that issue from him. For all we know, the children might be the reason for not wanting to divorce hated Helen. He just doesn’t want to upset the applecart for the sake of the family. Whatever. If such is...

¹⁵ (con’t) **and *if* the firstborn son is of her who is unloved,**

v'hayah ha'ben ha'bekor la'seniah – “and it is the son, the firstborn to the hated.” The meaning is obvious. The hated wife has borne him his first son. One could think of all kinds of things he could do to make her miserable, including taking it out on her and the son at the same time through the process of inheritance. Well, the law is way ahead of him in this regard...

¹⁶ then it shall be, on the day he bequeaths his possessions to his sons,

We generally think of passing on possessions to our children after our deaths, but this is not the idea expressed in Scripture. For example, this was already a culturally accepted norm. Abraham did it over four hundred years earlier –

“And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. ⁶ But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had; and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east.” Genesis 25:5, 6

Even in New Testament times, this was still practiced, such as in the parable of the prodigal son, this practice is clearly seen as being something that precedes the death of the person –

“Then He said: ‘A certain man had two sons. ¹² And the younger of them said to *his* father, “Father, give me the portion of goods that falls *to me*.” So he divided to them *his* livelihood. ¹³ And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living.” Luke 13:11-13

There is a time when the parent divides up the possessions to his children according to a set cultural standard. One precept of that is now incorporated into the law itself as a protection for the firstborn, highlighting his rightful status regardless as to the father’s relationship with the mother. In this precept, he says...

¹⁶ (con’t) *that he must not bestow firstborn status*

As at other times, the Hebrew reads in an interesting way: *asher yiyeh lo lo yukal l'baker* – “which he is not able to firstborn.” In other words, he is incapable of doing so because the law forbids it. This does not mean that he cannot do this for other – justifiable – reasons.

It has already been culturally established that such could be done for valid reasons. Jacob did this, as is intimated concerning his firstborn in Genesis 49 –

“Reuben, you are my firstborn,
My might and the beginning of my strength,
The excellency of dignity and the excellency of power.
⁴Unstable as water, you shall not excel,
Because you went up to your father’s bed;
Then you defiled *it*—
He went up to my couch.” Genesis 49:3, 4

This is explicitly then stated in 1 Chronicles 5:1, 2 as well –

“Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel—he *was* indeed the firstborn, but because he defiled his father’s bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel, so that the genealogy is not listed according to the birthright; ²yet Judah prevailed over his brothers, and from him *came* a ruler, although the birthright was Joseph’s.”

Despite this, a father under the Mosaic code had no authority to do this simply out of partiality. He cannot bestow such a status...

¹⁶ (con’t) **on the son of the loved wife in preference to the son of the unloved, the *true* firstborn.**

The prohibition is set, and the weight of the law would forever rest upon this precept. Any challenge to it would have to be for a just, legal, and accepted reason. Such a case of changing the firstborn status is recorded in 1 Chronicles 26 –

“Also Hosah, of the children of Merari, had sons: Shimri the first (*for though* he was not the firstborn, his father made him the first), ¹¹Hilkiah the second, Tebaliah the third, Zechariah the fourth; all the sons and brethren of Hosah *were* thirteen.” 1 Chronicles 26:10, 11

The reason for this father’s designation is not given. One thing that is certain, however. If the motive was arbitrary or vindictive, it could easily be appealed because of the precept of the law now being stated by Moses. The right of the firstborn is of such importance that the precept was to never be arbitrarily abused...

17 But he shall acknowledge the son of the unloved wife as the firstborn

What Moses has done is turn the words of verse 16 around from the negative to the positive in order to provide emphasis –

* he must not bestow firstborn status on the son of the loved wife in preference to the son of the unloved, the *true* firstborn

* he shall acknowledge the son of the unloved wife as the firstborn

In this, there is no legal wiggle room that may otherwise be conjured up by some perverse-hearted soul.

17 (con't) **by giving him a double portion of all that he has,**

latet lo pi shnayim b'kol asher yimatse lo – “to give him mouth two in all which finds he.” If you are still curious as to why I mentioned our dogs at the beginning of the sermon, I'll let you know now. Moses uses the term *pi shnayim*, or “mouth two.” It is rare, being found only here, in 2 Kings 2:9, and in once more in Zechariah 13:8 –

“And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?’

Elisha said, ‘Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.’” 2 Kings 2:9

“And it shall come to pass in all the land,”

Says the LORD,

“*That* two-thirds in it shall be cut off *and* die,

But *one*-third shall be left in it:” Zechariah 13:8

It signifies a double portion. When Cassandra called me up and asked me to buy a second dog, (of which I had no choice but to say, “Yes”), I needed a name. Well, we had one dog, and now there is another, a second portion. And so, we named him Pi Shnai, a poetically shortened form of the words *pi shnayim*.

Thinking up an introduction to a sermon can be a challenging thing, but not this time. Eventually, we'd get to these words, and it was as simple as telling you a story about two of our dogs.

This *pi shnayim* is a double portion as the rights of the firstborn. The idea is that if there were four sons, the inheritance would be divided into five equal parts.

From there, the firstborn would receive two parts while the others received one. Thus, when Jacob blessed Manasseh and Ephraim, Joseph's two sons, he – by default – gave Joseph the *pi shnayim*, or “mouth double,” meaning double portion right of the firstborn. The idea is as if the firstborn is given enough for two mouths to feed. In the case of Manasseh and Ephraim, that was literally true. That case was an exception, but under normal circumstances, it would be given to the firstborn...

17 (con't) for he is the beginning of his strength;

It is emphatic: *hu reshit ono* – “He, firstborn of his strength.” It is the same words that Jacob spoke upon Reuben in Genesis 49:3 that was cited earlier. However, Reuben lost his right as firstborn for his perverse conduct.

***17 (fin) the right of the firstborn is his.**

The word *mishpat* is used. In this case, it signifies a legal right indicating that this is the way it is to be. He was the first of the strength of his father, and therefore he is not to be denied the right of the judgment granting him the *pi shnayim*, the double portion.

*Two wives for a man; there are laws for such
He has a responsibility that he cannot shirk
Even if one is greatly loved, and the other not so much
He must accomplish the law – that is his work*

*When the inheritance is to be divided up
The firstborn must be given his just due
He shall have a double portion, an overflowing cup
To this precept, the man must remain faithful and true*

*And it is good and right that it is so
The firstborn is the beginning of his strength as such
And so, he is to receive the double-portion, even though...
Yes, even if his mother isn't loved so much*

III. Pictures of Christ

The two passages today uniquely look back to the story of Rachel and Leah, probably as a means of helping us to understand why they are included in the law as they are, and thus how they point to Christ. In the first passage, Moses introduces the thought of taking captivity his captive. If you remember, it was in the singular – meaning a single enemy.

It is a way of saying that the enemy who held the captives is taken captive himself. Among his captives is a beautiful woman. The Hebrew is *yephat toar* – beautiful *in form*. It is the exact same phrase used of Rachel in Genesis 29 –

“Now Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder *was* Leah, and the name of the younger *was* Rachel. ¹⁷ Leah’s eyes *were* delicate, but Rachel *was beautiful of form* and appearance.” Genesis 29:16, 17

If you go back to that sermon, you will be reminded that she was made to be a picture of God’s grace. This woman of the captives is brought into the people of Israel through marriage.

She goes through a rite in order for that to come about, and then she is made the wife of the victor. This is especially so because the passage itself speaks in the singular throughout.

The one marrying her stands as representative of any victor, and thus Israel. A premise is given that the husband may not have delight in her. This is simply a proposition of what may occur, it doesn’t say it actually ever will.

In fact, the man may remain crazy about her forever. The proposition is merely set forth as a possibility. If such is the case, it says that this husband is to set her free, but he is not to sell her “in the silver.” In the Bible, silver pictures redemption. The idea is that she is not to be unredeemed by him and thus redeemed by another.

Simply put, this short set of verses anticipates Christ’s victory over Satan and his choosing a bride beautiful in form, just as Rachel was. As Rachel pictured grace, so this chosen wife pictures the doctrine of salvation by grace as well.

Christ is the Victor over Satan – the enemy, Captivity. She was his captive, but she is given unmerited favor and brought into the commonwealth of Israel.

But that is not the main focus of what is being conveyed. The passage hinges on her rights, not his. Even if displeasing, she is never to be sold off again. As it says, she is set free *l'naphsha*, or “to her soul.” The purpose of this passage is to present to us the doctrine of eternal salvation.

A variety of verses in the New Testament speak of this, many in fact, but one that matches what is conveyed here exactly is –

“In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁵ deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” 1 Corinthians 5:4, 5

The shaving of her head and the doing of her nails implies that she is now under the authority of a new head – her husband. This explains the meaning of the otherwise very complicated passage in 1 Corinthians 11 –

“For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. ⁷ For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. ⁸ For man is not from woman, but woman from man. ⁹ Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. ¹⁰ For this reason the woman ought to have *a symbol of* authority on *her* head, because of the angels.” 1 Corinthians 11:6-9

Her hair symbolizes headship and authority. Paul was probably thinking of this passage in Deuteronomy when he wrote out the words to the Corinthians. When one moves from Satan to Christ, the new authority is permanent.

As already stated, the words of Moses here are set forth as a proposition that may or may not occur. However, if it does, there are set limits on what may happen to the wife who is displeasing. And there are set limits on what may happen to a believer who is saved by grace.

The putting off the garments of her captivity means she is no longer under the captivity of Satan. She is granted a new status under Christ – His righteousness.

As far as Moses' words concerning setting her free, this is an allowance of the Law of Moses, it is not what God originally intended for marriage. Jesus clearly indicates in

Matthew 19 that marriage is to be a permanent arrangement. And so, even if this is an allowance under the law, for Christ – who embodies the law – it will never come to pass. The marriage is permanent.

Though displeasing (even if in the extreme) that person's redemption will not be sold off again. That person is free to live his or her life, even being delivered to Satan again for destruction of the flesh, but ultimate freedom has been granted and it will not be removed. The saving of the person is guaranteed.

This is perfectly obvious from New Testament passages, but how sad it is that people still teach that one can lose his salvation. The Bible never speaks of such a thing – it forbids it.

In the second passage, two wives are mentioned. The same terminology is used of them as was used of Rachel and Leah – loved and hated. As Rachel (the loved) pictured grace, Leah (the hated) – if you remember – clearly pictured the Law. The pattern continues here.

The son of the unloved wife is the Son of the Law – Christ. He came through the law, He lived out the law, and He died in fulfillment of the law. In this, He was given a *pi shnayim*, or “mouth two,” meaning a double portion.

He redeemed those who were under law from the law, and He redeemed those who were not under the Law of Moses but who were still separated from God through the law of sin. This is what Paul is referring to in Galatians and Romans –

“Now I say *that* the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, ² but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. ³ Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. ⁴ But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”

-Galatians 4:1-5

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. ²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Romans 8:28, 29

These two short passages today, though seemingly uninteresting except as a curiosity, and though found in the seemingly tedious book of Deuteronomy, are not at all uninteresting. And Deuteronomy is anything but tedious.

These verses were given to Israel to express matters of law for the conduct of the people. This is true, and they were matters of law to be obeyed. But, ostensibly, they may never have had such a scenario arise in the entire fourteen hundred or so years of their history.

Despite this, they were placed there as guides for the people, but they were more specifically placed there to show us what God has done, and what God is doing, for us in Christ. Christ is the purpose, and He is the reason for these things to be stated.

And in seeing what He has done, we can then see how we fit into the overall scenario of the redemptive narrative. Will we trust in Christ's fulfillment of the law, or will we attempt (and fail) to be the one to try and usurp His status as the firstborn? Who would even think of such a thing!

And yet, it has happened since the beginning, and it continues on today when people attempt to merit God's favor apart from Christ's finished work.

And when we are in Christ, do we really trust that we are in Christ? Do we really believe that we have been brought into the commonwealth of Israel with an eternal guarantee? Or do we think that, displeasing as we may be to Him, Christ will sell us off once again? Who would even think of such a thing!

And yet, it has happened since the beginning, and it continues on today when people attempt to earn God's favor apart from His finished work.

The fact is that if you can lose your salvation at any point after being saved, then it is not of grace, but of works. And if you believe your continued salvation is because of what you must do, then you do not understand what the word "grace" means.

But it is found here, right here in the book of law known as Deuteronomy, if you will just look for it. It is found here because this book looks to Christ. Let us do so too, to the glory of God who sent Him to redeem us. It is He who has brought us out from the power of the captivity unto Himself. Praise God for Jesus Christ who has done all these things for us.

Closing Verse: *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. ²¹ I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.” Galatians 2:20, 21*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 21:18-23 *The words seem unusual, even odd...* (He Who Is Hanged Is Accursed of God) (63rd Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Rights of Wives in Israel

“When you go out to war against your enemies
And the LORD your God delivers them into your hand
And you take them captive
And you see among the captives a beautiful woman
-----yes, she is really grand...

And desire her and would take her for your wife
Then you shall bring her home to your house
And she shall shave her head and trim her nails
Before she can become your spouse

She shall put off the clothes of her captivity
Remain in your house, and mourn her father and her mother
-----a full month of her life
After that you may go in to her and be her husband
And she shall be your wife

And it shall be, if you have no delight in her
Then you shall set her free, but you certainly shall not
-----sell her for money, for sure
You shall not treat her brutally
Because you have humbled her

“If a man has two wives, one loved and the other unloved

And they have borne him children, both the loved and the unloved
-----a certain difficulty
And if the firstborn son is of her who is unloved
Then it shall be...

On the day he bequeaths his possessions to his sons
That he must not firstborn status adorn
On the son of the loved wife
In preference to the son of the unloved, the true firstborn

But he shall acknowledge the son of the unloved wife
As the firstborn by giving him a double portion of all that he has
For he is the beginning of his strength
The right of the firstborn is his, double... and all that jazz

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 21:18-23 **(He Who Is Hanged Is Accursed of God)**

There's something wrong with a conversation I had with Sergio when preparing the previous Deuteronomy 21 sermon. I will read you the conversation as it is both quite comical and also highly embarrassing. I copied the messages directly from the conversation. I needed help with the Hebrew on one of the verses, needing to make sure I was correct in an analysis I was putting together. The exchange reads:

C: "Hey, I got something for you. Do you have a Hebrew moment?"

S: "What's that mean?! As in, it'll take more than a moment?! Sure. Just answering emails"

C: I just have a question that I want to reconcile. Deut 21:15-17. Is there any way to determine if the wives are at the same time, or only one after another (the first wife is gone by divorce or death). Only one scholar comments, insisting that they are one after the other and not both alive at the same time. I think they are trying to inject their bias against polygamy into it. It seems (as far as I can tell) that the Hebrew is clear - two wives together. The other commentators seem to agree, but I just wonder how you read it.

S: I think the telling part is in v 16- the tense of the verbs. Sounds like both at the same time. I've read this and stumbled over it every time as I try to figure out why this is ok but today no polygamy. Not wanting to read my bias in but what you said in sermon yesterday was a brain squiggle."

C: Exactly how I read it. And it is not true that polygamy is not allowed today. It is only forbidden for elders and deacons. Implying that it is not disallowed for anyone else.

S: I guess I mean in our culture context, which is based on biblical law

C: Yes!

S: But maybe I presume too far. So then have to rethink the whole Muslim 4 wives thing...

C: It would make no sense to go to Africa and say, you cannot be a Christian unless you divorce your wives.

S: Absolutely not

C: The Lord accommodates cultural things like this. But the real question is... Why would anyone want the headache of two wives!

S: Of course I can't imagine the drama of more than one wife...

C: We think exactly alike ahahahaha

S: And I'm a woman!!

C: Is that Rhoda? Oh gee I thought I was talking to Sergio.

It got worse. I wasn't just not talking to Sergio or Rhoda. I was messaging a lady here in the church, not realizing I had hit the wrong contact...

Text Verse: *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."* 1 Peter 1:3-5

Sometimes, we do something thinking that we are taking an action in order to resolve one issue when, in fact, we may be resolving a completely different issue. The verses today will show us this.

Israel thought they were taking care of an issue through the crucifixion of the Lord, when in fact the issue that was being taken care of through His cross was exactly the opposite of what they thought it was. For me and my messaging, it was embarrassing to say the least. For Israel, and for us, what occurred was glorious.

One thing is for sure, nothing God has done in and through Christ will ever cease to amaze us – even for eternal years. Marvelous things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. He Will Not Obey Our Voice (verses 18-21)

¹⁸ **"If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son**

ki yihyeh l'ish ben sorer u-moreh – "According to has to man son backsliding and rebellious." Here is a new word, and another that still should be defined. The first word, translated as "stubborn," is *sarar*. It is new to Scripture, and it signifies stubborn, backsliding, rebellious, etc. Robert Young translates it as "apostatizing."

It means "to turn away" in a moral sense. In the writings, psalms and prophets, it will be used again and again when referring to Israel the people.

The second word is *marah*. It signifies to be contentious, rebellious, provoking, and so on. It comes from a root which signifies, causatively, to make "bitter." Thus, when one is rebellious, it will embitter the one who is rebelled against.

It has been used 8 times so far, always in relation to a person or the people of Israel. For example, it was used of both Aaron and Moses who embittered the Lord through disobedience. It has also been used several times about the entire congregation.

Like the other word, it will also be used in the writings, the psalms, and the prophets when referring to rebellious Israel. Through their actions, they embitter the Lord.

Taken together, however, the words as they are used here *sorer u-moreh*, become an idiomatic expression in Israel. They are used together in the Hebrew in the same manner elsewhere, such as in Psalm 78:8 and Jeremiah 5:23 –

“And may not be like their fathers,
A **stubborn and rebellious** generation,
A generation *that* did not set its heart aright,
And whose spirit was not faithful to God.” Psalm 78:8

‘But this people has a **defiant and rebellious** heart;
They have revolted and departed.” Jeremiah 5:23

As a curious side note, the word *moreh* is noted in the margin of Matthew 5:22 in the Revised New Testament where the Greek word *more* is translated as “you fool” –

“But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘**You fool!**’ shall be in danger of hell fire.”
-Matthew 5:22

There, the Greek word is *móros* – a stupid or foolish person. The noun form is where the English word “moron” finds its origin. Though the words are not etymologically related, it appears that they carried basically the same idiomatic relation in both languages just as many similar words in various languages do for us today.

For now, and with these words understood, we see that this son both turns away from what is right, and he also embitters his parents in the process. He is a selfish malcontent that continuously chooses the rebellious path to his shame and to the grief of those who are responsible for him, as is next explicitly stated...

18 (con’t) **who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother,**

The Hebrew reads: *b'qol aviv u-b'qol imo* – “in voice father and in voice mother.” The “and” can mean “or” at times, but for now, just note that it says “and.”

As far as the clause, this explains the use of the word *marah*. Not only is he a deadbeat that does disgraceful things, maybe without his parents knowing it, but he purposefully ignores the words of his parents. He does what they tell him not to do, and he doesn't do what they tell him to do. What they say is shunned, even after correction. As it says...

18 (con't) and who, when they have chastened him,

In this, the word *yasar* is used. It signifies to discipline, chasten, admonish, and so on. It means to literally chastise with blows, or figuratively with words – as if for instruction.

This word has been used six times, all in relation to Israel. The first three were in Leviticus 26 where the Lord said he would *yasar*, or punish, Israel for their future disobediences. Further, it is especially noteworthy that a parallel is made to them and to this disobedient son twice so far –

“You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the LORD your God chastens you.” Deuteronomy 8:5

The word will continue to be used in relation to Israel in the writings of the prophets. And more, it is used in an emphatic form in Psalm 118:18 (a messianic Psalm) when referring to the chastening of the Lord upon His Messiah –

“The LORD has chastened me severely,
But He has not given me over to death.” Psalm 118:18

There the Hebrew reads: *yasor yiserani Yah* – “chastening has chastened me Yah.” The idea here in Deuteronomy is that the parents took the appropriate measures that should be taken. They have spoken to him, and he would not listen – to either parent – and they then disciplined him as a parent should, and nothing has helped. He is worthless and beyond any hope of redemption. Even after chastening he...

18 (con't) will not heed them,

v'lo yishma alehem – “and no will hear them.” The same word used in the second clause and translated there as “obey,” is again used here. It is *shama*. Here, it signifies to hear in the sense of hearkening to, and thus to obey. He purposefully ignores the words of his

parents to his own shame and to their agony. What to do with such a rebellious punk? Moses next says...

19 then his father and his mother shall take hold of him

v'taphesu bo aviv v'imo – “and shall take hold of him his father and his mother.” As you can see, verse 18 was translated as “father or mother,” but now they translate it as “father and mother.” In this, scholars then give an opinion on the meaning that may not be correct.

We will get to that in a few minutes. For now, the parents are to lay their hands upon Miscreant Mike and march him to those who will attend to the matter accordingly...

19 (con't) and bring him out to the elders

The elders are those referred to in verse 21:2. As we saw, they are those who represent the citizens. Generally, it is the elders who are responsible for proper conduct within the families, and for maintaining proper standards for all who issue from the tribe to which they belong. They have the age and experience to evaluate moral matters within the city, as it next says...

19 (con't) of his city,

The translation is correct. It is not “of the city,” as if it were any city. Rather, it is personal – *iro*, “of his city.” He lives there, and those who have seen him grow up know full well what kind of a loser he is. They will now be allowed to make the moral decision about his wayward disposition. Specifically, he is to go...

19 (con't) to the gate of his city.

Now the translation is incorrect. It says: *v'el shaar meqomo* – “and to gate his place.” The word *maqom* means “a standing.” It is the place where he lives and takes up the air, water, and food that are jointly used by all the people. The words are personal and reveal the intimacy of the situation.

The gate of the city, as has been seen, is the place where the affairs of the city are conducted, and matters of morality, legality, and so on are discussed, evaluated, judged, and tried. Once the parents have him there at the gates...

²⁰ And they shall say to the elders of his city,

The word *iro*, or “his city,” is used again. It is a personal matter dealing with a person in the city in which he lives, and he is standing before the elders of his city. They are those who are morally responsible for heeding the words of his parents and taking action after hearing the parents’ words, which are...

²⁰ (con’t) ‘This son of ours

benenu zeh – “son of ours, this.” You can almost see them standing there pointing at him, distancing themselves from him. They have had enough, and they now will be rid of him, because he...

²⁰ (con’t) is stubborn and rebellious;

Sins one and two: *sorer u-moreh* – “backsliding and rebellious.” It is an exact repeat of the words stated about him in verse 18. It is probable that if this was not yet an idiom, it became one at this time. The repetition from verse 18 now, as is to be proclaimed by the parents, would be long remembered and used by the people henceforth. Along with these sins...

²⁰ (con’t) he will not obey our voice;

The third sin: *enenu shomea b’qolenu* – “not hear our voice.” It is again a repeat of verse 18. He does what they tell him not to do, and he doesn’t do what they tell him to do. What they say is shunned, even after correction. And more...

²⁰ (con’t) he is a glutton and a drunkard.’

The fourth and fifth sins: *zolel v’sove* – “glutton and drunkard.” The word *zalal*, or “glutton” is introduced. It signifies “to shake” as in the shaking of the wind, and also to quake. It figuratively means to be morally loose, and thus prodigal and worthless. It is used in Proverbs 28:7 when speaking of a worthless son –

‘Whoever keeps the law is a discerning son,
But a companion of gluttons shames his father.’ Proverbs 28:7

It is of note that Israel did not keep the law. The words of this Proverb implicitly speak against Israel. It is certainly what was on the Lord's mind in Luke 15, a proverb clearly referring to Israel –

“A certain man had two sons. ¹² And the younger of them said to *his* father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls *to me*.’ So he divided to them *his* livelihood. ¹³ And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living.” Luke 15:11-13

The second word, *sove*, is also introduced here. It signifies wine and thus abstractly it speaks of carousal, coming from *sava*, meaning to drink heavily. This word is found only four times, once here, twice in relation to Israel, and once in relation to Nineveh.

The first word, and the verb form of the second word are found together in Proverbs, and it is very probable that Solomon was considering this verse from Deuteronomy when he wrote out his thoughts there. This is especially likely considering that he refers to both the father and the mother in the passage –

“Hear, my son, and be wise;
And guide your heart in the way.
²⁰ Do not mix with winebibbers,
Or with gluttonous eaters of meat;
²¹ For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty,
And drowsiness will clothe *a man* with rags.
²² Listen to your father who begot you,
And do not despise your mother when she is old.
²³ Buy the truth, and do not sell *it*,
Also wisdom and instruction and understanding.
²⁴ The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice,
And he who begets a wise *child* will delight in him.
²⁵ Let your father and your mother be glad,
And let her who bore you rejoice.” Proverbs 23:19-25

As far as why I mentioned the use of “or” and “and” above is revealed here. In this, both parents are said to come and testify against the son. As such, scholars generally state the same thing as with Matthew Poole does –

“The consent of both father and mother is required to prevent the abuse of this law to cruelty. And it cannot reasonably be supposed that both would agree without manifest necessity, and the son’s abominable and incorrigible wickedness...” Matthew Poole

One must read into the text that both parents must agree to this. If there are two parents, this would certainly be the case. But if there was only one parent, his words would be just as valid. It is the law of two or three witnesses that testify to a crime. In the case of the parents, two is sufficient. Albert Barnes is right when he says –

“The formal accusation of parents against a child was to be received without inquiry, as being its own proof. Thus the just authority of the parents is recognized and effectually upheld...”

However, if there is only one parent, the purpose of bringing the son before the elders, and the reason it highlights in a personal way “his city” and the “gate of his place,” is because those elders would be fully aware of the conduct of the person, and they – or someone from the city – would be fully qualified to speak against him.

What is necessary is the voice of the parent – be it one or two. There is nothing in the law that speaks of stoning such a person apart from the witness of the parent who has the moral right to testify against the son. This is what is highlighted in the passage. If this has been established...

²¹ Then all the men of his city

Again, it is personal, *iro*, or “his city.” The people of the town would have been aware of this person’s conduct, the parents had brought him forward, no longer able to bear his conduct, and he is thus considered irredeemable. What is of note, however, is that the stoning is reserved for the men of the city.

In Leviticus 20:2, it says “the people” shall stone a person who gives his descendants to Molech. Five times in Leviticus and Numbers, it says “all the congregation.” However, here, only the men are mentioned who...

²¹ (con’t) shall stone him to death with stones;

Without any explanation of why the men are singled out, it simply says that it is they who are to stone him until he is dead. Stoning has already been used as the punishment

for a blasphemer and a Sabbath-breaker. It is also noted as the prescribed punishment for other offenses as well.

The idea here is that if this son is rebellious against his own parents, he is – in essence – acting as a blasphemer. This is because the fifth commandment has been given, which is to honor one’s parent. In ignoring the command, he thus blasphemes God. And a blasphemer is to be stoned...

21 (con’t) **so you shall put away the evil from among you,**

This is the first purpose of capital punishment. Some punishments will drive the evil from a person. However, some forms of evil are so egregious that there is no remedy except to purge the source of the evil, meaning the person, from the society. If this is not accomplished, the society will eventually devolve into anarchy. However, when appropriate action is taken, a positive aspect will arise from it...

21 (con’t) **and all Israel shall hear and fear.**

This is the second purpose of capital punishment. This is unlike our nation today where a certain element is allowed to run amok and get away with anything – no matter how egregious it seems – thus resulting in even more wickedness.

Instead, when a person is executed for his crime, others will hear and be less likely to commit the same offense. Eventually, enough miscreants will be removed where the people will live in peace without them, and those who would dare to act accordingly will – instead – turn to a more productive lifestyle. This punishment is probably what Solomon was referring to –

*“The eye that mocks his father,
And scorns obedience to his mother,
The ravens of the valley will pick it out,
And the young eagles will eat it.” Proverbs 30:17*

A person who has been stoned outside the city for offenses against his parents will be left to rot where he lies. In such a state, the birds of the air will fill themselves with his otherwise worthless remains.

*Stubborn and rebellious, deserving to be stoned
This is what should happen to this son*

*Can his sins ever be atoned?
Look at all the wickedness he has done!*

*He is a glutton and a drunkard and deserves to die
This is for certain, and it should come about
The parent has had enough, though He did try
But his life should end with stones... and in a shout*

** The evil must be put away from us
We are Israel and we must be rid of this Man!
We must remove from the land this Jesus
We must purge Him away as soon as we can*

II. You Shall Surely Bury Him That Day (Verses 22 & 23)

²² “If a man has committed a sin deserving of death,

v’ki yihyeh b’ish khet mishpat mavet – “And regarding is in man a sin, judgment of death.” The meaning is that a person is found to be worthy of death and is thus under a sentence of death. It is a capital crime that is referred to.

The words here follow immediately after stoning of the stubborn and rebellious son, and the connection is certainly intentional. It may be that what Moses will next say about such a person is to underscore the need to end punishment for even such a vile offender so that the people do not assume that their punishment can exceed the boundaries of God’s grace and mercy.

This must be the case based on what will be said in the next verse. For now, there is the case of one worthy of death and under a sentence of death. If this is the case...

^{22 (con’t)} and he is put to death,

This could include any form of execution. A person may be killed with the sword, stoned, and so on. The means of death is irrelevant to the passage. He came under a sentence of death, and he is executed. If this occurs...

^{22 (con’t)} and you hang him on a tree,

The word translated as “tree” is *ets*. It signifies wood. It can be a tree, gallows, or the like. In this, it is obvious that this is referring to publicly displaying him after death. It is a practice that had its own significance and was practiced in Israel. One such example is seen in the killing of five Amorite kings in Joshua 10 –

“And afterward Joshua struck them and killed them, and hanged them on five trees; and they were hanging on the trees until evening. ²⁷ So it was at the time of the going down of the sun *that* Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees, cast them into the cave where they had been hidden, and laid large stones against the cave’s mouth, *which remain* until this very day.”

-Joshua 10:26, 27

The idea here is that of victory over the foe. Joshua defeated the five Amorite kings, and they were hanged off of the land by men’s hands, demonstrating that they no longer had any authority over the ground below them – “We have gained victory over the foe, and this is a public demonstration of it.”

The same is true with the person who is found to have committed sin and who is then under a judgment of death. The body is on public display that the sin of the man has been judged by men, he has been executed for it, and he has then been lifted up by men after the execution as a symbol of victory over the sin – “We have gained victory over the foe, and this is a public demonstration of it.” If such is the case...

²³ **his body shall not remain overnight on the tree,**

The word is *nebelah*, a *carcass*. As was seen in the account of the five Amorite kings, they were hung until evening, the start of a new day, and then they were taken down. This was to avoid violating this clause of the law.

As I said just a minute ago, what is being said here is stated so that the people do not assume that their punishment can exceed the boundaries of God’s grace and mercy.

The person has died for his sin, the victory over it has been gained, and the day has revealed this. But how God deals with the person after that is wholly at His will. Before the sun went down, this was to be accomplished. As it next specifically says...

²³ (con’t) **but you shall surely bury him that day,**

The words are emphatic: *ki qabor tiqberenu ba'yom ha'hu* – “For burying him you shall bury him in the day the that.” This makes it absolutely clear that the person is to be buried before the sun goes down, meaning before the start of the next day.

They were not to wait until sundown and then take the body down, but they were to have this accomplished before the next day began. And there is a reason for this...

^{23 (con't)} **so that you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance;**

In the Hebrew, this is actually the last clause of the verse. And it will be evaluated as such. The correct rendering is: “(for he that *is* hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance” (KJV). With that understood, we will first evaluate the words...

^{*23 (fin)} **for he who is hanged *is* accursed of God.**

ki qilat Elohim talui – “for accursed of God he who *is* hanged.” The word is *qelalah*. It signifies cursed, but what does that mean? John Lange is correct when he says –

“the word contains the idea; to reject as detestable, wherefore the one cursed of God must be removed as soon as possible out of sight, from off the land given by God, which is defiled (morally, not physically, not even leuitically) by him.” John Lange

The person died in sin, a moral issue. It isn't the physical body that is being referred to, even though defilement does come to one who touches a dead body. And it is not a ceremonial defilement that is being referred to. It is a moral issue being addressed.

And more, this does not mean that the person who is hanged is accursed in the sense of not being saved. That would mean that any saved person who was hanged on a tree could not be saved. That is not the issue. What this means is that the person becomes a curse when hanged on a tree. Why?

Because sin is in all people. Anyone who is publicly displayed on a tree is dead. Death is the final penalty for sin. It is not the physical body, but the sin that is being focused on. *Sin* hangs on the tree and that sin is accursed of God. Albert Barnes explains it quite well

—

“That is, he has forfeited his life to the law; for it is written, Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them; and on his body, in the execution of the sentence of the law, the curse was considered as alighting; hence the necessity of removing the accursed thing out of sight.” Albert Barnes

The dead body is the evidence of the sin, the body is placed on display as a sign of victory over the sin, but then the sin is to be put away. The hanging of the body on the tree is the sign of being accursed by God and that is to be ended with the coming of the new day. With that, the final clause of the verse in the Hebrew can now be analyzed.

The body is to be taken down from the tree before sundown, “so that you do not defile the land.” The Hebrew says, “your earth,” not “the land.” As was seen in the first verse of the chapter, the word used both there and here is *adamah*.

It usually signifies the ground, soil, or earth, rather than the land as territory. It comes from the same root as *adam*, or man. Both come from the verb *adam*, implying redness. As we noted in verse 21:1, the thought of defiling the ground (not the land) with a body curiously brackets the contents of the entire chapter.

Such an ongoing public display of the sin would defile the ground because it would be an ongoing public display of the curse of God, thus defiling it.

With that understood, Moses closes out this incredible chapter with the usual formula that he has used again and again in Deuteronomy, saying it is that “which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.”

Israel was in bondage, and Israel was brought out. The Lord chose the land, promised it to the fathers, and is fulfilling His promise by bringing Israel in and giving them the land. The idea, then, is that just as the Lord has given it, so He can remove them from it.

The statement is both a note of ownership and a note of expected performance. Unfortunately, the record of Israel shows that they have consistently treated the land by the first notion, but they have rarely treated it by the latter. With the verses complete, we must next find what the Lord expects us to discover concerning them...

*Look at Him there, hanging on that tree
He is cursed of God, just as the law does say
I'm so glad that it isn't me*

That is hanging there on that cross today

*I have done nothing so that I deserve to die
I am Israel, God's chosen son
He looks with favor on me, I don't even have to try
Yes, I am the favored one*

*But there... there upon that tree
There is the accursed of God for what He has done
What happens to Him has nothing to do with me
I am Israel, God's chosen son*

III. Pictures of Christ

In this Chapter of Deuteronomy, there has been a high stress on typology pointing to the Person and work of Jesus Christ. The first passage (1-9) pointed to His work cleansing the people from the guilt of innocent blood. As accomplished through the breaking of the neck of an unworked heifer.

The second passage (10-14) refers to the doctrine of eternal security for the believer who is brought out from the power of the devil. Such a person can never be sold back to his power again.

The third passage (15-17) looks to the *pi shnayim*, or firstborn's portion (the double portion) that came through Christ's work. Through His work, He redeemed to Himself those under law, both Jew and Gentile – be it the Mosaic Law or the general law of sin.

In our verses today, we first came to the fourth passage (18-21) which revealed the penalty for the disobedient son who would not listen to his father or mother. As we saw, the words used in those verses have been, and continue on throughout Scripture to be, applied to Israel, God's disobedient son.

In the fifth passage (22 & 23), which is intimately connected with the fourth passage, a note concerning hanging a person on a tree was presented, telling the reader that such a person is accursed of God. With those two final thoughts in mind, we can ask, "How is God glorified?" And we can answer: "It is by demonstrating His works in, through, and for His people." In John 9, we read –

“Now as *Jesus* passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. ² And His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’

³ Jesus answered, ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. ⁴ I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; *the* night is coming when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.’” John 9:1-5

Jesus came to do the works of God. One of those works was to take upon Himself the punishment that His own people deserved for their stubborn and rebellious nature before God, their Father. As we noted, the words translated as “stubborn” and “rebellious” in verse 18 are used again and again of Israel – the people under the law.

The word “rebellious” was even used of Moses and Aaron who represent the law. Explicitly, sin is an issue that must be dealt with. But what is implicit is that the law is the main issue that must be dealt with. As Paul says, “by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

Israel is under law, they violate the law even to the point of being stubborn and rebellious, and thus they deserve the penalty of stoning levied upon such a son. But before that, they were chastened in order to correct them. It is a chastening that Israel did not heed, just as the disobedient son did not heed.

As we saw, the word translated as “chastening” was used of them time and again, but it did not produce proper conduct, just as it did not in the case of the rebellious son. However, in their place, God chastened Christ, as we saw in 118th Psalm, a messianic psalm.

Because of this, Israel deserved the penalty of the disobedient son – stoning to death. However, they have been spared that penalty because Another took their place. The account said that the parents were to take their disobedient son before the elders and to the gates (the place of judgment) of the city. Christ fulfilled that –

“And those who had laid hold of Jesus led *Him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. ⁵⁸ But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest’s courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end.

⁵⁹ Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death.” Matthew 26:57-59

“When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called *The Pavement*, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.” John 19:13

As I noted, there was a stress on the fact that when speaking of the disobedient son, it repeated the word *iro*, or “his city.” This becomes a veiled reference to the deity of Christ, as is noted in Matthew 5, where Christ speaks of the Lord –

“But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; ³⁵ nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.” Matthew 5:34, 35

After that, and when he is brought to the place of judgment, the parents state the following: 1) “This son of ours,” a term applied to Israel by the Lord (e.g., Exodus 4:22); 2) is “stubborn and rebellious,” both words – as we have already seen – commonly applied to Israel by the Lord; 3) “he will not obey our voice,” words spoken about Israel so many times it isn’t worth the effort to count; 4) “he is a glutton and a drunkard,” words which certainly applied to Israel, and yet a term directly applied by Israel to the Lord –

“For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ ³⁴ The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ ³⁵ But wisdom is justified by all her children.” Luke 7:33-35

In such a state, a state that applied to Israel, and which the Lord assumed in their place, such a Son was to be taken out and stoned. The way this came about was to accuse Him of blasphemy. The same penalty for being a stubborn and rebellious son (Israel) is given for one accused of blasphemy –

“And whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of *the LORD*, he shall be put to death.”
-Leviticus 24:16

And this is exactly what the leaders of Israel accused Him of –

“Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, ‘He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard

His blasphemy! ⁶⁶ What do you think?’

They answered and said, ‘He is deserving of death.’” Matthew 26:65, 66

However, because they, Israel at the time of Jesus, were not allowed to execute their wrongdoers, the words of the final two verses are given – that of hanging a person. This is seen in John’s gospel. First, the note of why He is not stoned –

“Then Pilate said to them, ‘You take Him and judge Him according to your law.’ Therefore the Jews said to him, ‘It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,’ ³² that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die.” John 18:31, 32

And next, the formal charge once again, supposed blasphemy –

“The Jews answered him, ‘We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.’” John 19:7

The deserved penalty of stoning a stubborn and rebellious son, Israel, was imputed to Christ. As we saw earlier, what is necessary is the voice of the parent – be it one or two. There is nothing in the law that speaks of stoning such a person apart from the witness of the parent who has the moral right to testify against the son.

The Father witnessed against Israel, his son, through the prophets. The law, as a mother, witnessed against Israel as well, a precept implied in Solomon’s words of Proverbs 6:20 (and elsewhere) –

“My son, keep your father’s command,
And do not forsake the law [**torah, fem. noun**] of your mother.”

But God graciously substituted Christ Jesus in their place. As stoning could not take place, the Lord was crucified on a tree.

Hence, seeing this in advance, the Lord placed these final verses into this chapter in order to complete the narrative of what Christ has done for His people. Christ was hung, but according to the law, His body had to be taken down before sunset.

Though He was crucified by Romans who were not bound to this precept, the Lord foresaw that day and spoke these words through Moses now. Of this, in relation to Christ’s cross, John says –

“Therefore, because it was the Preparation *Day*, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.”
-John 19:31

The Sabbath, meaning Saturday which began at sundown, was nearing. In order to ensure these men did not remain on the cross, their deaths were to be expedited. When they came to Christ, however, He had already died. Thus, all were removed before the coming of the new day so that the land would not be defiled.

But this defilement was not because of Christ’s sin! Rather, it was for the sin of Israel and, indeed, the whole world –

“For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21

Paul explicitly states and explains this in Galatians 3 by referencing this exact passage from Deuteronomy –

“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree”), ¹⁴ that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Galatians 3:13, 14

The Jews, understanding the law, did not want the bodies of those crucified to remain on the cross and thus defile the land, especially over the Sabbath and during the feast. Little did they know that the curse of sin attached to the body of Christ was theirs, not His.

As I said twice, and now amend and repeat for the picture to be understood, what Moses wrote out was to underscore the need to end punishment for even such a vile offender, Israel, so that they would not assume that *their punishment of Christ could exceed the boundaries of God’s grace and mercy... toward them.*

Of this act of being hung on a tree, Matthew Henry says –

“Those who see a man thus hanging between heaven and earth, will conclude him abandoned of both, and unworthy of either.”

Israel stood looking at their own sin when they beheld the crucified Christ. It is they who were abandoned of heaven and earth, and it is they who were unworthy of either. And yet, Christ did what He did for them... and for you, and for me.

As we saw, the first and last verses of the chapter speak of defilement of the *adamah*, or earth, because of death. The death is the result of sin, and the sin is the result of the law. It is from the *adamah*, or earth, that Adam was fashioned. Thus, if the earth is defiled, those who are from the earth are defiled.

What we need is a new birth, from a heavenly Source, in order to be cleansed of our defilement. That is what Christ came to do, and that is what the gospel of Jesus Christ conveys to us.

He accomplished this and now offers, to any who will simply receive what He has done, the gift of eternal life. Let us be wise and let us receive that wondrous gift. In this, we will put behind us the defiled earth and partake of that incorruptible and undefiled inheritance that Peter spoke of in our text verse today. The choice is yours. Choose wisely.

*Sometimes I imagine
that You came Lord,
so many gathered
to hear your voice,
and I am frozen,
and standing still.
How can that be
my King came for me?*

*I fall on the ground,
my heart pounding hard,
I'm overwhelmed
by You at my sight.
I'm sobbing and shaking
soaked in my tears.
How can that be
my Lord came for me?*

*And I am still
frozen in awe,*

*filled to a brim
with Your precious love.
I can't comprehend.
I fall at Your feet.
How can that be Lord,
You came for me?*

*On that old tree
long time ago
You took my sins
to save my soul.
You suffered and died
that I can be freed
to live my true life
when You'll come for me.
~Izabela Bednara*

Closing Verse: *“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know— ²³ Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; ²⁴ whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.” Acts 2:22-24*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 22:1-12 *Be sure to watch your ways...* (That You May Prolong Your Days) (64th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

He Who Is Hanged Is Accursed of God

“If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son
Who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother
And who, when they have chastened him, will not heed them
Bad news is coming to him, O brother

Then his father and his mother shall take hold of him
And bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city
And they shall say to the elders of his city
'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; it truly is a pity

He will not obey our voice
He is a glutton and a drunkard, his life choice

Then all the men of his city
Shall stone him to death with stones, O my dear!
So you shall put away the evil from among you
And all Israel shall hear and fear

"If a man has committed a sin deserving of death
And he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree
His body shall not remain overnight on the tree
But you shall surely him that day bury

So that you do not defile the land
Which the LORD your God is giving you
-----the land on which you trod
As an inheritance, please understand
For he who is hanged is accursed of God

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 22:1-12 (That You May Prolong Your Days)

This sermon got typed on Memorial Day, 31 May 2021. As always, I did my early morning work after my devotionals, sending out a daily Revelation commentary, typing up a new Revelation commentary, and so on.

After that, and lots of other daily items of importance, I went to emails to delete all the junk that filtered in over the night, and to see if anything important needed to be answered right away. "Important" actually has two meanings on Monday morning: 1) "Important," and 2) brief.

If an email isn't brief, I don't care how important it is, it isn't important. It will wait at the bottom of the pile. Brevity indicates my time – to the person emailing – is important. It is appreciated.

I got a short email from a marvelous soul who I hear from occasionally that blessed me enough to share it with you. As I didn't ask for permission to use it, no name or other identifiers are included. But I need an introduction to the sermon, and it fits well with this or any other sermon of detail, and so here is what was said –

Dear Charlie,

Good morning, I am certain it is a bit early over there, probably at 2am, so kindly bear with me. I was looking into the errors you compiled from the KJV and i think this is incorrect... Genesis 20:13 –

"The word translated as 'God' is incorrect. The verb is plural and the verse should thus say 'gods.' There is a reason for this which is missed by the translators. 1 demerit."

Since it was Abraham speaking to Abimelech could he really have said that the gods made him wander from his father's house?

First, the fact that anyone would go through and take time to read the innumerable errors recorded on that document is incredible. The copy on my computer is currently 219 pages long of line-by-line errors. It is mind-numbing to think anyone would even bother scrolling through it. It reveals a truly studious soul who finds the word a real treasure. My hat is off to this person.

Text Verse: *“Remember the Law of Moses, My servant,
Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel,
With the statutes and judgments.
⁵ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet
Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.
⁶ And he will turn
The hearts of the fathers to the children,
And the hearts of the children to their fathers,
Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.” Malachi 4:4-6*

The Law of Moses is an anticipatory step to the glory to be revealed in the coming of Messiah. When He arrived, it should have been no doubt to anyone that He was the Messiah. But they failed to do their due diligence, and many missed their chance at being saved by Him.

Many of them knew the word, but simply rejected Him outright. Others probably failed to seek out the Lord through His word. That is like many of us, we hear something and we either reject it outright, or we may accept what we are told without checking for ourselves.

Before I even got up to answer the first email, my friend had already emailed back –

Dear Charlie,

Hello again, I have seen that I was wrong in the above mail... as I was going through the verse it surely didn't make sense to put the word “gods” there, I mean we are talking about Abraham here... But after sending you my thoughts, I was like, surely Charlie couldn't have made such a ridiculous error, and went through the rest and found the same comment on Genesis 35:7, and I couldn't understand thus I thought of looking into your Genesis commentary and boom there I got to understand. Thank you for being very meticulous and have a fruitful day ahead.”

I appreciate both this person's willingness to check things out and not just accept something at face value, and I would say to this person, “Rather, thank YOU for being very meticulous.” It is this type of person that is able to make my day go from regular, to exceptionally wonderful. This is a person that loves God's word.

I should also say, “Thank you for helping me to find a suitable introduction to the sermon. It is much appreciated.” Many wonderful details are to be found in God's

superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. And Who Is My Neighbor (verses 1-4)

Chapter 22 deals with all kinds of moral laws, something that seems disconnected from what has just been presented in Chapter 21. However, a logical progression is seen. The last thing that was seen was these words –

“If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, ²³ his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you *as* an inheritance; for he who is hanged *is* accursed of God.” Deuteronomy 21:22, 23

As we saw, that section anticipated Christ who “has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us” (Galatians 3:13). In understanding that, it logically follows that He saw us wandering in our sins, and He took the initiative to bring us back to our rightful owner, meaning God.

In understanding the connection, the introductory verses we will now look at make all the sense in the world. Though they are moral laws for Israel, they are based on the very work that Christ has accomplished, and they reflect His perfect moral character. They speak of purity, holiness, and that which is fair and just...

¹“You shall not see your brother’s ox or his sheep going astray, and hide yourself from them;

The word “brother” is to be taken in the broadest sense, meaning any person. In fact, in Exodus, as we will see in a minute, this includes one’s enemy. What is being referred to is an animal that belongs to another person, regardless as to who he is.

The word translated as “going astray” has a more specific meaning. It is the word *nadakh* – to impel, thrust, or banish. The intent here is not only a wanderer, but also that of an animal that has been chased away by wild animals or even thieves. The thought is reflected in Jeremiah 50:17 –

“Israel *is* like scattered sheep;
The lions have driven *him* away.

First the king of Assyria devoured him;
Now at last this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has broken his bones.”

In such a case, where an animal has been so chased away, it would be easy to simply hide oneself and say, “This isn’t my concern.” However, by seeing it and knowing what occurred, it is right to do what one can to resolve the situation.

The very fact that one has to hide himself from them signifies that the conscience knows the proper course that should be taken. Though dealing with a person and not merely an animal, such was the attitude of the priest and the Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan found in Luke 10. When asked, “And who is my neighbor,” we read the following –

“Then Jesus answered and said: ‘A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead. ³¹ Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³² Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side.’” Luke 10:30-32

Eventually, a Samaritan came and took care of the person. At the end of the parable, Jesus then put forth a question to elicit a necessary response –

“So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?”

³⁷ And he said, “He who showed mercy on him.”

Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.” Luke 10:36, 37

Whether a wounded person or the property of another person, the matters involve interpersonal relationships. Moses says that the right and moral course is to be pursued. Hence...

¹ (con’t) **you shall certainly bring them back to your brother.**

hashev teshivem l’akhikha – “returning, you shall return them to your brother.” In these words, all kinds of implied moral doctrines can be determined. The right to private property, the collective responsibility to private property, and even the rejection of whatever motive would stop a person from acting – such as laziness, cowardice, animosity towards a neighbor, and so on.

As our moral compass is to be in accord with that of the Lord, examples of the Lord doing exactly what Moses admonishes here are found in Scripture in order to instruct us, such as –

“I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment.” Ezekiel 34:16

This precept in Ezekiel is repeated in the New Testament concerning Jesus. Such things as this are expected because they reflect the good, pure, and moral nature of the Lord. The general tenor of this verse has already been seen earlier in Exodus –

“If you meet your enemy’s ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again.” Exodus 23:4

Concerning the animal, more directions are now given...

² And if your brother *is* not near you,

To be understood, the words will need to be further defined by the next clause. For now, an animal has been found, but it does not belong to anyone around you, meaning it is someone’s outside of your sphere of influence.

You would have no idea whether to go south or north or east or west to find out who’s it is. There isn’t either the time or ability to take it out in search of finding its rightful master. If such is the case...

^{2 (con’t)} or if you do not know him,

The clause is not conditional. It does not say “or if.” It says, “and you do not know him.” This then explains the previous clause. He obviously lives far away because you have no idea who owns the animal. If such is the case...

^{2 (con’t)} then you shall bring it to your own house,

The words are more personal: *v’asaphto el tok betekha* – “and you shall gather it unto the midst *of* your house.” In other words, you shall secure it as you would secure your own possession, guarding it as if it was your own, but certainly not with the intent of keeping it. Rather...

² (con't) **and it shall remain with you until your brother seeks it;**

It is not to be eaten, sold, let out to borrow, or mishandled in any way. There is nothing said of it not being worked in a field or handled like any of his other animals, and that would actually be expected because it had to be fed and cared for. But it should be treated as if it was loaned property at best. When the owner comes seeking it...

² (con't) **then you shall restore it to him.**

The word simply means “return.” It is his, and it shall be returned to him. The good deed is evidenced by the care of the animal, and the willingness to readily return it to its rightful owner.

One can easily see the redemption of man in this. The Lord made the man and placed him in the garden. Because of the devil, the man was chased from the garden. Christ recovered us and he keeps us both safe and, in His grasp, until we are returned to the place we had once been separated from. And yet, He is the Owner of the very place of rest we are returned to.

In the end, and though the words are in a different context, what Paul says in Romans sums up the precept quite well –

“For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, to whom *be* glory forever. Amen.” Romans 11:36

³ **You shall do the same with his donkey, and so shall you do with his garment; with any lost thing of your brother’s, which he has lost and you have found, you shall do likewise;**

The verse repeats the same words at the beginning of the first three clauses, *v’ken taaseh* – “and so you shall do.” Moses is speaking out direct and unambiguous instructions.

The repetition then provides its own emphasis to make it an all-inclusive statement. “And you shall do to his donkey, and so you shall do to his garment, and so you shall do to all lost thing of your brother which he has lost, and you have found.”

³ (con't) **you must not hide yourself.**

Donkeys are unclean animals, and they can have their own pleasant or nasty demeanor at times. Someone might not want to tend to one that is contrary.

A garment, a gold watch, or a grain basket – it doesn't matter how unimportant or how expensive it might be – each was to be cared for and to be returned accordingly.

One was not to hide himself from collecting the thing and tending to it, and one was not to hide himself from returning it upon the owner's arrival to retrieve it.

In like manner, the Lord has not hidden himself from Jew or Gentile, from the high and mighty or from the low and contemptible. He has reclaimed and restored all that come His way – meaning by faith in Him. The moral code for Israel is a reflection of the moral standard of the Lord.

⁴“You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fall down along the road, and hide yourself from them;

These words now again clearly show that the term “brother” is referring to humanity in general. This is because it is a close repeat of what is said in Exodus 23:5 –

“If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden, and you would refrain from helping it, you shall surely help him with it.”

^{4 (con't)} you shall surely help him lift *them* up again.

haqem taqim imo – “raising, you shall raise up with him.” Again, how can one not help but see Christ's own work in this. The donkey is an unclean animal, and the ox is a clean animal.

There are Jews and there are Gentiles. All are fallen. But Christ did not restrain Himself or hide Himself from any. Instead, in being raised up Himself, He then raises up all who come into His path –

“And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *peoples* to Myself.” John 12:32

“And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

-John 6:40

Of these first four verses, Adam Clarke correctly states, “These comparatively small matters were tests and proofs of matters great in themselves, and in their consequences.”

And more, these matters of law are to be considered shadows and reflections of those great matters in which Christ personally and intimately interacted with in regard to humanity.

*Who is my neighbor, and who is my brother?
How do I decide which is and which ain't?
Is it someone I'm related to? Is it that and not another?
Is it anyone on the street, or only the greatest saint?*

*How do I define who I am responsible to tend to?
From which can I ignore by turning away?
If I see my enemy in need, what shall I do?
What does the nature of the Lord to me say?*

*I must remember that God demonstrates His love toward us
In that while we were still sinners, He opened the door
He did this through the death of Jesus
And through that, we are reconciled forevermore*

*I shall think likewise towards those around me
Be they a friend, a relative, or even my greatest enemy*

II. That It May Be Well with You (verses 5-12)

The previous verses referred to what was peculiar to the individual, meaning private property. The next verses speak of that which is peculiar in nature. Just as man has that which belongs to him, the Lord has designated things to belong to nature as defined by Him.

⁵“**A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man,**

lo yihyeh keli gever al ishah – “No shall be implement male upon woman.” The word translated as “anything that pertains” is *keli*. It signifies a utensil, implement, article, vessel, and so on.

There are various words that are translated as “man.” In this verse, it uses the word *ishah*, or woman, but instead of using *ish*, or man, it uses *gever*. That comes from *gavar*, meaning strong or mighty. Thus, the distinction is being made more pronounced.

This certainly includes the thought of battle implements, such as armor. The implements of a man are those things that identify a man even when he is not wearing them. There is an understood division between what a woman may have upon her, and that which she was to not have upon her. Likewise...

^{5 (con't)} **nor shall a man put on a woman's garment,**

v'lo yilbash gever simlat ishah – “and no shall put on male garment woman.” The idea here is being effeminate. That which makes a woman stand out as a woman, even when it is not on her, is that which is not to be worn by a man.

The interchangeable nature of many garments, or parts of garments, isn't what is being referred to here. It is referring to those things that clearly are set apart for men or for women and which would then blur the sexes.

Paul speaks of these things in 1 Corinthians 11, saying –

“Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? ¹⁵ But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for *her* hair is given to her for a covering.” 1 Corinthian 11:14, 15

When Paul says, “Does not even nature itself teach,” he is indicating the state of things that are understood in all societies, because it is evident from nature itself. Thus, when Paul says, “if a man has long hair,” it is not the length of hair that is actually being referred to – a fallacy known as the beard fallacy. In other words, when does “long” become “long.”

He is referring to being effeminate. Q: “Who, or what, is to define ‘long hair’ on a man?” Is it more than a marine-style jarhead haircut? Is it more than one inch? Is hair on the collar a dishonor? What if hair goes even past the neck? What if... what if (perish the thought!) the hair is found to touch the shoulders? Just what is the definition of “long hair?”

It must be understood that the Bible never contradicts itself. However, people like Samson and John the Baptist were set apart to the Lord from birth and would never have cut their hair. Absalom had very long hair.

Amos 2:12 refers to Nazirites in Israel, and even Paul took such a vow in Acts 18:18. During the time of their consecration, they never cut their hair. Thus, having long hair, in and of itself, cannot be a shame or dishonor to a man because men of God were known to have had long hair.

Therefore, Paul's words would be contradictory. Understanding this, it must be the *appearance* of the long hair which is a dishonor. If a man looks like a woman, then he has passed from manliness to femininity. This, in and of itself, then, would be dishonoring to him.

Men are men and women are women. God intends for men to look like men, and He intends for women to look like women. Further, the actions of the man are to be manly actions and the actions of a woman are to be feminine.

If a man has a beard, no matter how long his hair is, he will certainly not be mistaken for a woman, unless maybe he is in a circus sideshow. However, if the long hair on a man becomes the primary point of identifying him as a female, then he has brought shame upon himself. This is the idea behind Moses' words, behind Paul's words, and that which nature itself speaks of. This is because...

⁵ (con't) **for all who do so *are* an abomination to the LORD your God.**

The sexes that were created by God, and which are purposed to demonstrate headship within humanity. When they are blurred, the intent is ruined, and thus God is dishonored through the situation. Therefore, it is an abomination to Him.

⁶ **"If a bird's nest happens to be before you along the way, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, with the mother sitting on the young or on the eggs,**

In this, two new words are introduced. The first is *ephroakh*, or "young ones." That comes from *parakh*, meaning to bud or burst forth. Thus, they are young birds, having recently burst from the shell.

The other is *betsah*, or egg. That comes from an unused root meaning to bleach, and thus to be white.

⁶ (con't) **you shall not take the mother with the young;**

There is a natural order to things that the Lord has instilled in creation. We have ducks, even since the world was created, because ducks produce a certain number of babies each year. Some get eaten by snakes, some get eaten by hawks, and so on. After all, snakes and hawks have also been around since the world was created.

Each thing in nature finds its place and, at times, a mother bird will lose her young. Despite this, she can have more to replace them. Generally, the only part of the equation that will upset the natural order of things is man. If you don't believe that, see what Mao did to the swallow population in China, and which then brought the society to a point of famine.

And so, God has instilled in man both a conscience, and the ability to positively affect the world around him if he is willing to do so. In this case of the law, it is mandated for him to do so. The precept is to guard the conscience, and the conscience is to make right decisions about the world in which he lives.

It is the man that the Lord is actually caring for when Moses, under inspiration, gives these words. This is certainly the case, as is understood from the next verse...

⁷ **you shall surely let the mother go, and take the young for yourself,**

Shaleakh teshalakh eth ha'em – “letting go, you shall let go the mother.” To take the mother and not the young would leave the young for dead. But to take the young would leave the mother alive. The young could be raised and eaten, raised and sold, or whatever. The species is able to continue, man is benefitted materially, and man is benefitted in his conscience, as is next seen...

⁷ (con't) **that it may be well with you and that you may prolong your days.**

l'maan yitav lakh – “for end purpose it may be well with you.” There is an intended purpose for the command. The implication is that if it is not followed, things will not go well. The reason isn't the Lord actively running such a person down.

Rather, it is that such a person will, by the reason of seared conscience, become more and more depraved. Compassion is something that can be nurtured in a person, and it is something that can be obliterated in a person – all based on his own conduct. The law is given to nurture it.

The words of this clause are seen elsewhere in the fifth commandment –

“Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you.” Deuteronomy 5:16

These are general statements that one will prosper through adhering to the commands. In many cases, the world of man is governed by general laws of God, not by laws that are universal. This promised blessing is one that is therefore generally to be expected, but not necessarily universally received. The intent is for the well-being of the person so that it will more assuredly come to pass.

⁸“When you build a new house, then you shall make a parapet for your roof,

Here is a word found only once in Scripture, *maaqeh*, or “parapet.” It is from an unused root meaning to repress. The idea is that a small wall or battlement is to be erected on the roof so...

^{8 (con’t)} that you may not bring guilt of bloodshed on your household if anyone falls from it.

The guilt of bloodshed will be imputed to anyone who fails to do as is stated here. In that, one would fall under the laws of the avenger of blood because of his negligence. As it says: *ki yippol ha’nophel* – “When falling the faller.”

The idea here is the preservation of life. In this, an obvious connection to the work of the Lord is seen. The New Testament says God is building a house out of his people. It is a new house in contrast to the earthly temple, or house, of the law. This house is referred to numerous times in the epistles. Thus, what is said here is what Paul refers to in Romans 14:4 –

“Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.”

Thus, this is a picture of eternal security. The house God is building is a house that is designed to keep any from falling. The earthly precept anticipates the divine edifice.

⁹“You shall not sow your vineyard with different kinds of seed, lest the yield of the seed which you have sown and the fruit of your vineyard be defiled.

This, along with the next two verses, closely follow after Leviticus 19:19. For this verse, it matches the clause which says, “You shall not sow your field with mixed seed.” The words here speak of *purity of source*. To sow with different kinds of seed will stress the soil, and it would also stress the crops – one type fighting against another.

Thus, this was forbidden. To do otherwise will defile all that the land produces. The expectation is that which is the best, which is undefiled, and which will bring about the most profit from the effort. None of this is possible when a mixing of varieties occurs.

¹⁰ “You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together.

Like the previous verse where soil will be stressed by mixing seeds, the same thought is true here. The words, however, diverge from Leviticus 19:19. There it says, “You shall not let your livestock breed with another kind.”

There, it is referring to *purity of type*. By mixing various animals, an impure strain will result. In this case, it is speaking of *purity of effort*. The ox is a larger, more powerful animal. The donkey is smaller and incapable of bearing up under the same load as an ox. Thus, the donkey will be stressed and possibly even die.

It would be unprofitable to both owner and animal, it would defile the work if the donkey succumbed, and the result would be less than the best concerning the plowing effort. Next, Moses continues with another unauthorized aspect of mixing things...

¹¹ “You shall not wear a garment of different sorts,

In these words, is the second and final use of the word *shaatnez*. The first was in Leviticus 19:19. It signifies “mixed stuff.” The words follow after, and more fully explain, Leviticus 19:19 which says, “nor wear a garment of two kinds of material mixed together” (NASB). Here, two examples are added to make sure the precepts are properly understood...

^{11 (con’t)} *such as wool and linen mixed together.*

No garment was to be made of both wool and linen. This precept speaks of *purity of result*. To wear a garment of two or more materials would cause the garment to wear out unevenly. Only garments of single materials were thus to be worn.

Each of these three verses speaks of purity involved in the matter at hand. The Lord wanted the best for His people, and therefore, these precepts were given to them.

However, these things are only typical of greater spiritual truths found in the New Testament. Each of the laws carries a moral meaning which can be summed up in New Testament verses concerning purity in the lives of believers, such as –

“You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons.” 1 Corinthians 10:21

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God.” 2 Corinthians 6:14-16

These verses in both Leviticus and Deuteronomy are given to point us to the spiritual truth that we are not to mix the holy with the profane. One will always stress, and often wear out, the other. The best result will not be obtained, the matters at hand will be defiled, and that which is profitable will be tainted, even to the point where it no longer profits at all.

***12 (fin) “You shall make tassels on the four corners of the clothing with which you cover yourself.**

Moses introduces a rare word to Scripture here, *gedil*. It signifies a tassel, but it is completely different than that used in Numbers 15 when referring to the same thing, *tsitsith*. This word *gedil* is only found elsewhere in 1 Kings 7:17 where it is translated as wreaths.

The word signifies “twisted threads,” coming from the word *gadal* meaning to advance, bring up, and so on. Threads are twisted together to form tassels.

The tassels are to be placed on the *kanaph*, or corners of the people’s covering. That word literally means wing, or an extremity. The traditional garment would be a four-cornered cloth with a hole in the middle. Thus, two corners would be on the front and two on the back. On each of these corners, or wings, a tassel was to be attached.

What Moses mandates here is much more fully explained in Numbers 15 –

“Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners. ³⁹ And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the LORD and do them, and that you *may* not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, ⁴⁰ and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God. ⁴¹ *I am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: *I am* the LORD your God.” Numbers 15:38-41

The blue thread signifies the law, thus, the tassels served as an identifier of the individual with the covenant, and the blue within it was to serve as an identifier with the law. However, and unfortunately, despite being given to serve as a reminder to do the commandments of the Lord, they actually became a source of personal idolatry. Jesus rebuked the leaders of Israel for this in Matthew 23:1-5 –

“Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, ² saying: ‘The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. ³ Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, *that* observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. ⁴ For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay *them* on men’s shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers. ⁵ But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.’”

The enlarging of the borders of their garments is speaking of this practice. It was a way of pretending to be more pious than others, by showing off their desire to follow and do the Lord’s commands, more than anyone else – whether that was actually true or not.

As we saw in our text verse today, the final petition of the Old Testament, found in Malachi 4 was to “remember the Law of Moses.” As that was the purpose of these tassels, and as the Law of Moses was given to anticipate the coming of Messiah, then these tassels are actually given to ask the people to remember... Messiah.

They are to remember that He is coming, and that they must hear Him when He speaks. Therefore, the tassels are given as a picture of the coming Christ, just as everything else is.

The blue cord contained within them is a reminder not of their fulfillment of the law, but of His. He is the fulfillment of this beautiful blue cord in the tassel. Hints of this are actually seen in His ministry. This is what it says in Matthew –

“And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment. ²¹ For she said to herself, ‘If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well.’ ²² But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, ‘Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well.’ And the woman was made well from that hour.” Matthew 9:20-22

“When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret. ³⁵ And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick, ³⁶ and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched *it* were made perfectly well.” Matthew 14:34-36

It says they reached for the spot of the tassel. They understood that He was to be the fulfillment of the law which they were reminded of with the wearing of their own tassels. One was to come who would heal the people, but not just physically.

Christ’s mission was to heal the people spiritually as well. It is He who came and walked among humanity in order to redeem us from the curse of the law. The law can only bring a curse, but as we saw at the end of the last chapter, and as we noted today, Christ *became* a curse for us through being hanged on a tree.

But more, He also fulfilled all of the typology of the verses we have looked at today. Each one gives us moral hints of what God is like and how we are to emulate Him. When we fail to do so, we must either face the penalty of our transgression apart for the Lord, or we can receive full and forever forgiveness for it by calling out to the Lord.

In Christ, the curse is removed. In Christ, the lost are rescued. In Christ, the burdens are lifted, and in Christ full, final, and forever restoration with God is obtained.

He is our Healer – both physically and spiritually. In Him is the fulfillment of the law, and so when we look to Him in faith we can gladly proclaim, “Thank God! Curse removed!” Let us trust in Christ, rest in Christ, and honor our heavenly Father through the Lord Jesus Christ all of our days. Yes, may it be so.

Closing Verse: “...who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. ²⁵ For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.” 1 Peter 2:24, 25

Next Week: Deuteronomy 22:13-21 *For this crime, there will be a'purg'n...* (I Found That She Was Not a Virgin) (65th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

That You May Prolong Your Days

“You shall not see
Your brother’s ox or his sheep going astray, as if passing it on
-----to another
And hide yourself from them
You shall certainly bring them back to your brother

And if your brother is not near you
Or if you do not know him, as to you I submit
Then you shall bring it to your own house
And it shall remain with you until your brother seeks it

Then you shall restore it to him
You shall do the same with his donkey
And so shall you do with his garment
This is how it is to be...

With any lost thing of your brother’s
Which he has lost and you have found
You shall do likewise
You must not hide yourself, as if no one else is around

“You shall not see your brother’s donkey
Or his ox fall down along the road, like wicked men
And hide yourself from them
You shall surely help him lift them up again

“A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man
Nor shall a man put on a woman’s garment, that is wicked and odd
For all who do so are an abomination

To the LORD your God

“If a bird’s nest happens to be before you along the way
In any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs
With the mother sitting on the young or on the eggs
You shall not take the mother with the young
-----You would be society’s dregs

You shall surely let the mother go
And take the young for yourself; being kind always pays
That it may be well with you
And that you may prolong your days

“When you build a new house
Then you shall make a parapet for your roof, to this
-----you shall commit
That you may not bring guilt of bloodshed
On your household if anyone falls from it

“You shall not sow your vineyard
With different kinds of seed, such would be bizarre and wild
Lest the yield of the seed which you have sown
And the fruit of your vineyard be defiled

“You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together
Neither on a sunny day or in stormy weather

“You shall not wear a garment of different sorts
Such as wool and linen mixed together; you can put that idea
-----back on the shelf

“You shall make tassels on the four corners of the clothing
With which you cover yourself

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 22:13-21 (I Found That She Was Not a Virgin)

Today, we have two sections in this one passage. The first proposes the exact opposite conclusion as the second. There is a daughter who has been accused of wrongdoing, and yet she has not done wrong.

Then, there is the daughter who has been so accused and it is found out that there is no evidence of her innocence. Imagine if the fate of the daughter in the first instance was tied up in the fate of the second daughter.

“How could that be?” you might ask. Well, it could be and it, in some measure that you will soon discover, is. It all comes down to the simple idea of what God is doing in the world to reconcile us to Himself.

While we are thinking about this, doesn't it seem obvious to you that if a culture kept the evidences of a woman's virginity as a protection for her that nobody would ever dare to accuse a woman as proposed here?

If it is so, and it is, then why would the Lord even bother putting such a passage into His word? It seems comparable to something like, “If you put your finger into a wall socket, you will get electrocuted.”

When people know what that means, they wouldn't think of putting their finger into one. It's so obvious that it should make you wonder. But... there is a good purpose for doing so.

Text Verse: *“Sing, O daughter of Zion!
Shout, O Israel!
Be glad and rejoice with all your heart,
O daughter of Jerusalem!
¹⁵ The LORD has taken away your judgments,
He has cast out your enemy.
The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;
You shall see disaster no more.” Zephaniah 3:14, 15*

The daughter of Jerusalem has her judgments taken away from her. She shall see disaster no more. Well, that hasn't happened yet, but it shall come to pass. And no, that is not symbolically speaking of the church or something.

It is speaking to any who lives in Jerusalem. How can we know this? Because the same terminology is spoken of concerning Gallim, Moab, Tarshish, Sidon, Babylon, the Chaldeans, and so on. It is a term that speaks of a specific place. In this case, it is again and again referring to the earthy, not the heavenly, Jerusalem.

So much for replacement theology. The word requires study and tender care to draw out what is correct concerning its many theologies. That is why it is so important to know the word. Once you know the word, you can then make right judgments about the theologies that you are presented with from day to day.

Get into the word, consider the word, and meditate on the word. It is a lesson that is for sure to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. I Gave My Daughter to This Man (verses 13-19)

The passage now introduced is intended to protect the society from miscreants who would disrupt the proper moral order of the people. It is intended first to protect the honor of a woman who had done nothing wrong from an uncaring and malicious man. The next verses will protect the man from a woman who is a deceiver.

Both of these will affect the people who are aware of the circumstances, either positively or negatively. If such a man is allowed to act in the manner set forth, a state of tyranny over women would result. If a woman described later was allowed to act in the manner set forth, the morality of the population would – inevitably – decline.

As with the previous verses, these speak of purity, holiness, and that which is fair and just. For now, the words are directed to the uncaring and malicious man...

¹³ **“If any man takes a wife,**

ki yiqah ish ishah – “When takes man woman.” For such a limited number of words, much is implied. A process of obtaining a wife has been pursued, be it through love, making an agreement with the father, or some other event that brought them together.

Regardless, it isn’t just that a man saw a woman and married her five minutes later. There was an involved process of which marriage is the result. Because there was this

process, it was the man's responsibility to be aware of what he was getting into. Once he is married, then the next step of the process occurs...

13 (con't) and goes in to her,

This is the biblically acceptable context for a man going into, meaning having sex with, a woman. He went through the process, he agreed to whatever terms were set forth, and he openly married her in accord with the established rules of the society and culture.

One would expect that he followed the protocols, and in his uniting with her, he would be happy. However, something else arises...

13 (con't) and detests her,

The word is *sane*. It means "hate." What should have been a happy state of love, especially because he went through the process and should not have been unaware of what was coming, turns out to be a condition of hate.

An account of such a "love" turning pretty much immediately to "hate" is found in 2 Samuel 13 where King David's son Amnon "loved" his half-sister Tamar.

He wanted her to the point of being sick, and then when he forced himself on her, it immediately follows by saying, "Then Amnon hated her exceedingly, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, 'Arise, be gone!'" (vs. 15).

In this, we can see that the word "love" is – in his case – closely connected with our thought of "lust." And the word "hate" is well reflected in the thought of "detest." Amnon got what he lusted after, and in his getting, he no longer desired her.

Amnon failed to take everything into consideration, and he found that what he wanted didn't meet his expectations. Such is true with the man in the proposition set before us now. Because of this...

14 and charges her with shameful conduct,

v'sam lah aliloth devarim – "And lays upon her actions of words." A new word is introduced here, *alilah*. It signifies actions or deeds. The context decides if they are positive or negative. For example, it says this of the Lord in Psalm 66 –

“Come and see the works of God;
He is awesome in His doing toward the sons of men.” Psalm 66:5

In the case of this verse, the NKJV paraphrases the intent to explain it by saying, “with shameful conduct.” In this...

^{14 (con't)} **and brings a bad name on her,**

v'hotsi aleha shem ra – “and brings upon her name evil.” The idea of a name is that of character. To bring upon a woman an evil name is to identify her character as evil. In this case, the man has brought into question the woman’s deeds, thus imputing to her evil character. He next defines what he means...

^{14 (con't)} **and says, ‘I took this woman,**

In taking a woman, there is inevitably an expectation. If someone marries her under the assumption that she is a good cook, he would expect tasty dinners. If he married her because she was said to be a quiet, hard worker, he wouldn’t be happy if she sat around all day and talked. In the case of this man, he had expected one thing, but now claims he got another...

^{14 (con't)} **and when I came to her I found she *was not a virgin,***

va'eqrav eleha v'lo matsati lah bethulim – “and I came near to her, and no I found her virginities.” The word *bethulim* is a plural noun. As such, some translations say, “tokens of her virginity,” but that is more of an explanation than a translation.

What it means is there are evidences of her being a virgin which are collectively termed “virginities.” She was lacking these things according to him, and thus he is implying she has been out playing the harlot. Because of such an accusation...

¹⁵ **then the father and mother of the young woman**

Both parents are mentioned, probably because it would be the mother’s responsibility to maintain the item next to be presented. This seems likely, because this is the only time she is mentioned in the passage. After this, the father is the center of attention in this regard. He is the head of the household and stands as representative of it.

^{15 (con't)} **shall take and bring out *the evidence of the young woman’s virginity***

The words, “the evidence of” are inserted. It more closely says, “and bring out the young woman’s virginites.” Like the Hebrew word water (*mayim*) which is a plural construct, so is this word – “virginites.” It doesn’t mean there is more than one virginity, but that what is presented is, like water, a collective thing.

This evidence of her virginity would be a cloth that she laid on when the marriage was consummated. It was bloodied and then saved as an evidence of the consummation of the marriage. It is this that is brought forth and presented...

15 (con’t) to the elders of the city at the gate.

The elders are those who make the moral judgments, the gate is the place where judgment is rendered. At this place, and before these who render the decisions concerning such matters...

16 And the young woman’s father shall say to the elders,

This is unlike the stubborn and rebellious son of Chapter 18. There, both parents were there to testify against him. In this case, it is the father alone who testifies.

This is because an accusation against the daughter was implicitly an accusation against his good name. He is the one to receive the dowry, and it is he who had assured the man that his daughter was an acceptable wife, being a virgin.

As such, he presented her to him being confident of this. Knowing that the accusation is false, he proceeds, saying...

16 (con’t) ‘I gave my daughter to this man as wife, and he detests her.

As before, the word is *sane*, signifying hatred. For whatever reason, he decided he is not pleased with her and in order to get rid of her...

17 Now he has charged her with shameful conduct,

In Chapter 24, we will see that man is given the right to divorce his wife. The right, according to the verse, is given “because he has found some uncleanness in her.” The word translated as “uncleanness” literally means “nakedness.”

Nothing is specified beyond that, and it opens up a host of possible excuses for divorce. So, one might question, “Why doesn’t this guy just divorce his wife if he doesn’t like her?” The answer goes in one of two directions.

It could be that he paid the dowry price for her and wants it back after finding out he has a wife that is a dud. Or it could be selfish pride in that he doesn’t want to look like the person who would flippantly divorce his wife. He wants vindication that the problem rests with her and not with him.

For one of these, or some other worthless reason, he decides to manipulate the situation, ensuring that the fault of the failed relationship rests on the wife, not on himself. In this, he is...

17 (con’t) saying, “I found your daughter *was not a virgin,*” and yet these *are the evidences of my daughter’s virginity.*’

In making such a claim, it implies he wants something from the father. It would be like us buying a car and finding out it was a lemon. When that happens, we will return to the place where it was obtained, and there try to strike a deal to get compensation.

It appears that this is what is on the mind of the person. Otherwise, there were certainly other options available to him. Despite the accusations, though, the father is able to vindicate himself through the evidences he possessed concerning her virginity. Therefore...

17 (con’t) And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city.

Although this seems like a far-fetched thing to be done, scholars note that this practice has been recorded in Egypt and Syria among the Bedouins and the Muslims, even up to modern times. This is done to protect the honor of the family and the life of the daughter.

The fact that blood does not always shed at such times does not negate that this is a valid practice. Girls were generally married off at much younger ages than we might find tolerable today, even at ages around or before the early teens.

And if a girl had an unlikely accident where the proof of her virginity was torn, the parents would have been aware of it and would apprise the prospective husband that

such had occurred. There is no reason to dismiss the Bible, as some commentators do, over a passage like this.

For now, the custom of presenting the virginities to the elders has proven that the husband's story is false. He has disrespected his wife, the family of his wife, and himself in the process. And so...

¹⁸ Then the elders of that city shall take that man and punish him;

The word translated as "punish" is *yasar*. It means to chastise, discipline, admonish, and so on. It can be literal or figurative punishment. As such, the exact punishment is left unstated. Some Jewish commentators, like Josephus and others, say that he would be beaten with a rod.

What is likely is that because the punishment isn't defined by Moses, the elders of the city – knowing the man and his propensities – would determine the punishment according to their wisdom and his past record. Regardless of what their determination is, Moses does add more which is specific...

¹⁹ and they shall fine him one hundred *shekels* of silver

Of this, Albert Barnes incorrectly says –

"The fact that the penalties attached to bearing false witness against a wife are fixed and comparatively light indicates the low estimation and position of the woman at that time." Albert Barnes

In other words, he is saying that this is such a small amount of money that it demonstrates the low status of women under the law. This appears to be faulty thinking. In verse 22:29, if a man essentially rapes a young virgin who is not betrothed, the father is to be compensated for it with fifty of silver.

As such, it would imply that fifty of silver would be the outside price for a dowry. In other words, a normal dowry would be expected to be that or less. However, this person is being fined double the maximum expected dowry.

Further, the valuation of a male between twenty and sixty years of age who is consecrated by a vow to the Lord was fifty shekels (Leviticus 27:3).

Rather than a low estimation of women, this highlights her importance to the family. In discrediting this man's daughter which also brought his own name into question, this high fine is imposed upon the man. From there...

19 (con't) **and give *them* to the father of the young woman,**

The father has now received a dowry for the daughter, and he has also received double the maximum anticipated amount for a dowry as well. As such, he possesses a triple portion. Likewise, the accuser has essentially ended up paying three times for a wife because of his unacceptable conduct. This is...

19 (con't) **because he has brought a bad name on a virgin of Israel.**

The father receives the money because it is his household in which she was raised, and it is his name that is implicitly disgraced through the accusation. The idea is that if he has a non-virgin daughter, he failed as the head of the house.

Culturally, the words "a bad name on a virgin of Israel" can certainly be directly equated to "he is a bad father in Israel." With his name restored, the honor of the daughter is restored, and it is restored permanently...

19 (con't) **And she shall be his wife; he cannot divorce her all his days.**

The words are emphatic: *v'lo tihyeh l'ishah lo yukal l'shalekhah kal yama* – "and to him she shall be to wife; no able to send her out all his days." He is permanently stuck with her for what he has done.

Although it is not recorded as such, because this is a judgment of law, it is certain that she would be able to go to the gates anytime her husband failed to faithfully perform his marital duties, and she could make a case against him. He truly shoved his proverbially foot into his mouth.

*What are you accusing her of?
Just what are you trying to say she has done?
I may just pull off my glove
And go a round or two with you, son*

*You have my daughter, and I don't interfere at all
But when you bring my honor in, it just isn't right*

*Oh! The nerve. Oh! The gall
Surely, you are looking for one heck of a fight*

*We can testify that she was pure and undefiled
On the day she entered your house
The blood is the evidence, so don't get me riled
She is yours forever now; she is your forever spouse*

II. To Play the Harlot (verses 20 & 21)

²⁰ “But if the thing is true, *and evidences of virginity* are not found for the young woman,

The claim has been made, and the man making it would be aware of the law. If he knew that his claim was false, it would mean that he would be an idiot (like the guy in the previous verses) to make such a claim at all.

Therefore, with firsthand knowledge of the matter, and knowing that no evidences will be found, the matter is presented. When no evidences are produced, the matter is considered true. When such is determined to be the case...

²¹ then they shall bring out the young woman to the door of her father's house,

Instead of taking her to the gates of the city, the girl is brought rather to the door of her father's house. She is guilty, but in this, the guilt of the girl is implicitly also placed upon the house of the father, evidenced by the judgment being rendered there. Once at the door, it says...

²¹ (con't) and the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones,

Although a different word for the act of stoning is used here, the words are very similar to those concerning the disobedient son in the previous chapter –

“Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones.”

-Deuteronomy 21:21

A son who is disobedient to his parents, and a daughter who would presume to play the harlot are treated in the same manner.

21 (con't) **because she has done a disgraceful thing in Israel,**

The offense is ultimately against the whole. Because of what has happened, Israel has been tainted. The word used is *nevalah*, meaning senseless or disgraceful. It comes from the verb *navel* meaning senseless or foolish. It has only been used once before, in Genesis 34 when Shechem, the son of Hamor violated Jacob's daughter –

“And the sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard *it*; and the men were grieved and very angry, because he had done **a disgraceful thing** in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, a thing which ought not to be done.” Genesis 34:7

The same terminology is used in both accounts, *b'yisrael*, or “in Israel,” because both convey the same thought. A virgin of Israel has been defiled. In this case, the girl dared...

21 (con't) **to play the harlot in her father's house.**

The verb *zannah* means to commit fornication or to be a harlot. The daughter failed to uphold the honor of the law, regardless as to what the conditions of the household were.

In this, it brought a stain upon the name of Israel. Evil has been committed, and the law calls for the punishment to be meted out in order for there to be peace once again...

*21 (fin) **So you shall put away the evil from among you.**

ubiarta ha'ra miqirbekha – “And you shall burn the evil from your midst.” The word is *ba'ar*, a common one in Deuteronomy, signifying to consume by fire or by eating. In this, the idea is to completely purge away the evil.

The clause is word for word and letter for letter identical to the clause of Deuteronomy 21:21 when referring to the disobedient and rebellious son.

*She needs to die for what she has done
She has disgraced our name and the name of Israel
The law will press down on her like stones, a ton
She forsook the path to heaven, and chose the one to hell*

*There is no blood to witness for her
There is none who has stood up for what she has done*

*Her end will not be pretty, that is for sure
The law will press down on her like stone, a ton*

*There was an offer of peace, there at the Door
And it could have restored her name in Israel
She would have been granted life and so much more
But she forsook the path to heaven, and chose the one to hell*

III. Pictures of Christ

The nine verses of today's passage certainly speak first and foremost of honor. In the first section, the honor of the father is on prominent display. Even if the daughter appears to be the center of focus, this is only incidentally so.

What is said to have occurred was in the father's house, and thus it is a reflection on him, especially because he would have received a dowry for her. Once the matter was established that the daughter was, in fact, a virgin, it is the father who is recompensed for the false accusations.

And more, the woman is given a permanent protection under the law. The lying husband may never send her out. She will remain his wife all his days.

On the other hand, if the daughter is found to be guilty of harlotry, she is to be stoned to death.

The virgin daughter represents the people of Jerusalem, and thus – by implication – the people of Judah. This is seen first in 2 Kings 19, and the same account is substantially repeated in Isaiah 37 –

“Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel: “Because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have heard.”’²¹ This *is* the word which the LORD has spoken concerning him:
‘The virgin, the daughter of Zion,
Has despised you, laughed you to scorn;
The daughter of Jerusalem
Has shaken *her* head behind your back!’” 2 Kings 19:20, 21

This is certain because Lamentations uses the same terms, “daughter of Jerusalem” and “virgin daughter of Zion” (Lamentations 2:13). But it also uses the term “virgin daughter

of Judah” (Lamentations 1:15). Jerusalem is the seat of power, and thus representative of Judah, the people.

These terms are set forth as an ideal. They are the people of God and live among the house of God where the Lord dwells. As they are reckoned among His house, they are collectively given this term, the virgin daughter.

Logically, if there is a virgin daughter, then there is a Father of that daughter. That is the point of calling them the virgin daughter. The purpose of virginity is, above all, purity of the seed of the people. They were to maintain this because it is through their seed that Messiah would come.

This is seen in the fact that not long after Jacob was named Israel, the account of Shechem and Dinah was mentioned. In what occurred, it said that Shechem had done a disgraceful thing *b’yisrael*, or in Israel. The daughter, the people of Israel, were to remain undefiled.

However, it is true that the collective group known as Israel, or Jerusalem the city, are also noted as the spouse of Israel at times, such as in Ezekiel 16 –

“You erected your shrine at the head of every road, and built your high place in every street. Yet you were not like a harlot, because you scorned payment. ³² *You are an adulterous wife, who takes strangers instead of her husband.* ³³ Men make payment to all harlots, but you made your payments to all your lovers, and hired them to come to you from all around for your harlotry. ³⁴ You are the opposite of *other* women in your harlotry, because no one solicited you to be a harlot. In that you gave payment but no payment was given you, therefore you are the opposite.” Ezekiel 16:31-34

Such terms, son, daughter, virgin daughter, wife, and so on are given to show the various relationships that exist between the Lord and His people. Being a virgin daughter is an ideal concerning the people.

If a daughter is found to have committed harlotry, she was to be taken to the door of her father’s house and there stoned to death. This was to be the penalty for harlotry and doing a disgraceful thing in Israel.

However, it is seen innumerable times that this is exactly what Judah and Jerusalem did. Despite this, and even after being punished for their sins, the Lord still calls them the daughter of Jerusalem and the virgin daughter of Zion.

The ideal lives on because the daughter continues to exist. She is punished for her deeds, but not completely destroyed. This is where Christ steps in. The seed of the daughter remains and eventually Jesus comes, born to that group –

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your King is coming to you;
He *is* just and having salvation,
Lowly and riding on a donkey,
A colt, the foal of a donkey.” Zechariah 9:9

As the King, it is He who represents Jerusalem, and Jerusalem represents Judah. The people are the daughter. In His representation of them, He takes the penalty for their sins, dying in their stead.

As I said of this daughter, reflective of the people, she is guilty, but in this, the guilt of the girl is implicitly also placed upon the house of the father. God’s name is tarnished by the actions of the people and so He will take action to correct this through Christ.

First, the offender was to be brought to the *door* of the father’s house. This is what Christ did. He *is* the Door to His Father’s house (John 10:9). It is in His capacity as the One, and the Place, to receive the guilt of His people that His work is accomplished.

As we saw in a sermon from Chapter 21, though the penalty for such actions is stoning, because Israel was under Roman rule, His death was on a cross. This was all in order to meet the plans of God. It is the death that is required, as it says, to “put away the evil from among you.”

Christ took the penalty, and He purged the evil from the fornicating daughter. But that now takes the reader back to the earlier verses. If the evil has been put away, the daughter is innocent of any claims against her.

This then brings the reader to the purity of the daughter. The account is set forth as a proposition. If a husband says his wife is defiled, the tokens of her virginity were to be

brought forth as evidence against his claim. If the words are found false, a double payment to the father was to be made.

Christ took away the guilt of the people. Any charge against them, such as the law does by witnessing against the people, cannot stand. The blood of the virgin – meaning the true Israel, Christ – is brought forth to witness to their purity.

In such a false accusation, a double restoration in silver is exacted. Silver pictures redemption. Again, from Zechariah 9 –

“As for you also,
Because of the blood of your covenant,
I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.
¹² Return to the stronghold,
You prisoners of hope.
Even today I declare
That I will restore double to you.” Zechariah 9:11 12

The words there are in the feminine, speaking to the daughter of Zion. The restoration in Deuteronomy is paid to the father, but it is for the sake of the conduct of the daughter. Thus, the daughter is implicitly vindicated and receives her own double in that the husband may never send her out, meaning divorce her, for all his days.

As the Lord is the Husband who has fulfilled the Law, meaning the accusation against her (which is His word), and as He is the One to take their penalty and to restore the double, then the wife He now has is His forever. It is, again, a note of eternal security.

In this, the Lord has filled all of the roles on behalf of His people. He is the Author of the law that witnesses against the daughter. He has come as the Ideal of the virgin daughter (the people of Israel).

He is the husband who detests the wife (she was actually guilty of harlotry). He is the Door of the Father’s house. He is the One who took the penalty for the guilty daughter, thus cleansing her.

He is the Payer of the double fine. He is the Father who receives the payment. He is the Husband who will never divorce His wife for all of His (eternal) days.

The words are actual law for Israel, and yet they speak in typology. No record of this passage being carried out is later found in the Old Testament. But a record of the fulfillment of the typology is found in the New.

And though this is dealing with Israel, Judah, and Jerusalem, it pertains to any who will come to Christ Jesus by faith. Paul says in Ephesians 2 –

“Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—¹² that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” Ephesians 2:11-13

God wasn't just preparing to save His people Israel. When He sent Christ, He was sending the Savior of all people – Jew and Gentile alike. All peoples are brought into the commonwealth of Israel through His one great act.

It is with this typology in mind that we can find out the truth of several doctrines in Scripture, such as the doctrines of substitution, imputation, eternal salvation, and so on. As for eternal salvation, if you are a part of the bride of Christ, you will never be cast off again. But in order to be a part of this body, you must first come to Christ by faith.

This is what God asks of you. Accept the gospel, believe in your heart that God has done all of this for you, and be reconciled to Him through the beautiful offer of the giving of His Son – our Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember that this passage hinges on the evidences of virginity. The fact is that none are chaste. All are impure, and we have all been rebellious against our God. However, in Christ, God has granted us Christ's perfection (substitution and imputation) and we are counted as a virgin daughter before Him because of the evidences of the blood.

For those who have not come to Christ, Jew or Gentile, there are no such evidences, and there is only the anticipation of being destroyed just at the Door of the Father's house. We can be so close to it, and yet we will not go through it to safety without the blood to witness for us. Be wise and call on Christ today. Your decision will decide your fate. Choose wisely.

Closing Verse: *“Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly—and indeed you do bear with me. ² For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” 2 Corinthians 11:1, 2*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 22:22-30 *So that in your land there will be no upheaval... (You Shall Put Away the Evil) (66th Deuteronomy Sermon)*

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

I Found That She Was Not a Virgin

“If any man takes a wife, and goes in to her
Whoever he may be, even the Pres.
And detests her, and charges her with shameful conduct
And brings a bad name on her, and says...

“I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found
She was not a virgin, but she has been around

Then the father and mother of the young woman
Shall take and bring out the evidence that will clearly state
Of the young woman’s virginity
To the elders of the city at the gate

And the young woman’s father
Shall say to the elders words that she was pure
‘I gave my daughter to this man as wife
And he detests her

Now he has charged her with shameful conduct, saying
“I found your daughter was not a virgin, but it’s a lie you see
And yet these are the evidences of my daughter’s virginity
And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city

Then the elders of that city shall take that man and punish him
And they shall fine him one hundred shekels of silver

-----as to you I now tell
And give them to the father of the young woman
Because he has brought a bad name on a virgin of Israel

And she shall be his wife
He cannot divorce her all his days of his life

“But if the thing is true
And evidences of virginity for the young woman are not found
Then they shall bring out the young woman to the door
Of her father’s house, then the men shall gather around

And the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones
Because she has done a disgraceful thing in Israel
To play the harlot in her father’s house
So you shall put away the evil from among you, as I now tell

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 22:22-30 (You Shall Put Away the Evil)

On Monday the 14th of June, I was struggling with motivation. I was in the ninth of ten days of antibiotics for a wound I had in my foot, and I was dragging. By 9am, I wasn't sure if I could make it through this sermon, so to get some pity points from my friend Sergio, I sent him a message:

Do you have any motivation? For what? For me. I am completely lacking. If you have some to spare, I could use it.

About ten minutes later, I got an email with a folder to unzip. When I did, there was a short movie from Sergio. He and Rhoda had written out sticky notes and pasted them all over their house. They were little notes of motivation accompanied by some great, great spunky music as he went from one to another.

Eventually, the music came to a climax as the last sticky note took me to their refrigerator and a note about how soon the day would end and I would get a nice treat at that time. It's just what I needed. If it had ended with a sticky note on their cat, I would not have survived the day. I thank them for getting me back into the groove. The sermon got done and so may the Lord be magnified!

As far as the sermon passage, it follows in the same general theme as the verses from the previous weeks – of purity, holiness, and that which is fair and just. The people were to abstain from sexual immorality, and there were to be consequences for those who failed to measure up.

Even today, in the church, we are to conduct ourselves properly in regard to the main issue set forth in our verses. Paul, Peter, and James all refer to adultery. At times, it may be speaking of the physical act. At others, it refers to spiritual adultery. But this shows us how intimately connected the two are in the mind of the Lord.

Text Verse: *“Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” James 4:4*

The thing about adultery is that nobody ever goes unscathed from it. We may think we did, but eventually, even those who did so in this life must face the Lord who judges all

such things. And so, we need to be attentive to the covenant in which we exist – be it with our spouse or with our God.

For those who fail, and we all do at some point, the mercy of the Lord covers our failings. Thank God for Jesus Christ who took the penalty and the punishment that we deserve upon Himself. We are freed from this body of death, once and forever through His cross.

Because of this, shouldn't we be more willing to be obedient to the word? Grace is granted, but it doesn't offer us license in the process. That is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture. And so let us live in purity and holiness in gratitude for what He has done!

Once again, such lessons as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Cases of Adultery (verses 22-27)

²² **"If a man is found lying with a woman married to a husband,**

ki yimatse ish shokev im ishah beulat baal – "When is found man lying with woman married to husband." As so often is the case, rather than a possibility – "If a man," the words are set forth as a positive proposition – "When a man." The words presuppose the wickedness of man and that such a thing will, in fact, occur. When it does, action to correct the infraction must take place.

Further, instead of the word *ish*, or man, the word *baal*, or master, is used. Both are translated as "husband," but with *baal* there is conveyed the sense of ownership rights. The words therefore subtly convey the idea that a violation of property rights is a part of the crime. One is taking that which belongs to another.

Both the verb and the noun form of *baal* are used. The verb signifies to be master over and the noun signifies master or owner. Thus, to paraphrase this for understanding, we could say "a woman under the authority of her master." To see the difference, Hosea 2 uses both words, thus making a play on the word *Ba'al*, meaning the heathen god of that name –

"And it shall be, in that day,"
Says the LORD,
"That you will call Me 'My Husband,' [ishi]"

And no longer call Me 'My Master,' [baali]
17 For I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals,
And they shall be remembered by their name no more.
18 In that day I will make a covenant for them
With the beasts of the field,
With the birds of the air,
And *with* the creeping things of the ground.
Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth,
To make them lie down safely." Hosea 2:16-18

As far as the contents of this verse, the words substantially repeat, but rephrase, the thought of Leviticus 20:10 –

"The man who commits adultery with *another* man's wife, *he* who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death." Leviticus 20:10

As in Leviticus, Moses now repeats the command...

22 (con't) **then both of them shall die—**

u-metu gam shenehem – "and shall die also two of them." One violated the rule of authority over her, and the other violated the principle of mastership belonging to his neighbor. In such a case, and because of the intimate nature of the act, they both are to die...

22 (con't) **the man that lay with the woman, and the woman;**

ha'ish ha'shokev im ha'issah – "the man the layer with the woman." One might wonder why the same thing as the previous clause is repeated in a different way. The explanation may be as simple as the wickedness of the human heart, and the faithlessness of the judge of the case.

The nearest antecedent in the first clause is the master of the woman, not the man who lay with her. Therefore, the man who lay with the woman might say, "The law says that the woman and the husband are to die."

As stupid as that sounds, the general rule of language could be twisted in this way – especially if the man who lay with the woman was best friends with the judge.

Also, the word *ish* is used here to describe the man rather than *baal*. The man has no right to authority over this woman. Moses is being direct, precise, and unambiguous in his words. It is something that, unfortunately, is needed because of the black heart of man. Removing these offenders serves a good purpose as well...

²² (con't) **so you shall put away the evil from Israel.**

The words are in the singular: *u-biarta ha'ra miyisrael* – “so you (singular) shall purge the evil from Israel.” Israel is collectively responsible, as a single entity, to purge away its evil.

Again, as he repeatedly has, Moses uses the word *baar* which gives the sense of consuming by fire, and thus purging. Without such an action, the nation would quickly devolve into greater and greater wickedness.

A moment ago, I gave a possible explanation for why Moses repeated the same thought in a different way. As incredible as it may sound, such a violation, or another type of violation of the law is not only possible, it should be considered inevitable. In fact, such a scenario is recorded right in Scripture, in John 8:2-11 –

Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. ³ Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, ⁴ they said to Him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. ⁵ Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?” ⁶ This they said, testing Him, that they might have *something* of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with *His* finger, as though He did not hear.

⁷ So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.” ⁸ And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. ⁹ Then those who heard *it*, being convicted by *their* conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest *even* to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. ¹⁰ When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, “Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?”

¹¹ She said, “No one, Lord.”

And Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.”

The law is clear and unambiguous, and yet when these people brought the woman before Jesus in an attempt to trap Him, they violated the very law they were attempting to set Him up with.

There are all kinds of ideas as to what Jesus wrote on the ground, but it may be as simple as Him writing out the words of law that He had spoken through Moses approximately 1400 years earlier. In realizing that they had broken the law, they could not claim that they were without sin.

A heavy weight is associated with the law. In the end, every person there stood as guilty as the woman they brought forward. But more, the Lord defined the law in a completely unexpected way when He spoke to them on the Mount of Beatitudes –

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’²⁸ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” Matthew 5:27, 28

Jesus could rightly say this without anyone challenging Him because the Tenth Commandment already set the standard. In saying, “You shall not covet,” the law thus noted that the heart was being evaluated by God. Coveting is something internal, known only to the coveter and God. And yet, the command is given.

Thus, adultery which is in the heart produces guilt, even if it is not acted upon. But more, for Israel who was as a wife to the Lord, there was the added guilt of national apostasy. The Lord addresses that time and time again in Scripture.

One such example is found in Ezekiel. It shows the deserved punishment for the people, and yet it also reveals to us the faithfulness of God who gave them less than they deserved –

‘Now then, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD!³⁶ Thus says the Lord GOD: “Because your filthiness was poured out and your nakedness uncovered in your harlotry with your lovers, and with all your abominable idols, and because of the blood of your children which you gave to them,³⁷ surely, therefore, I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure, all those you loved, *and* all those you hated; I will gather them from all around against you and will uncover your nakedness to them, that they may see all your nakedness.³⁸ And I will judge you as women who break wedlock or shed blood are judged; I will bring blood upon you in fury and jealousy.³⁹ I will also give you into their hand, and they shall throw

down your shrines and break down your high places. They shall also strip you of your clothes, take your beautiful jewelry, and leave you naked and bare.

⁴⁰ “They shall also bring up an assembly against you, and they shall stone you with stones and thrust you through with their swords. ⁴¹ They shall burn your houses with fire, and execute judgments on you in the sight of many women; and I will make you cease playing the harlot, and you shall no longer hire lovers. ⁴² So I will lay to rest My fury toward you, and My jealousy shall depart from you. I will be quiet, and be angry no more. ⁴³ Because you did not remember the days of your youth, but agitated Me with all these *things*, surely I will also recompense your deeds on *your own* head,” says the Lord GOD. “And you shall not commit lewdness in addition to all your abominations.” Ezekiel 16:35-43

From the notion of adultery by a wife, next, a new scenario that is in line with it is addressed...

²³ **“If a young woman *who is* a virgin is betrothed to a husband,**

Again, the word isn’t so much “if” as “when.” The circumstance is where a virgin is betrothed. The word is *aras*, signifying a betrothal or engagement. This was a formal acknowledgment that a woman now belonged to a man with the same regard as if she was already married to him. If such is the case...

²³ (con’t) **and a man finds her in the city and lies with her,**

The reason at this point is irrelevant. However, the union came about. All that matters is that the betrothed wife of the man has been violated by another. This is the position Joseph was in concerning Mary. Until he was alerted to the truth of the matter, this is certainly what he thought –

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.”

-Matthew 1:18, 19

For Joseph, there were surely two and possibly three reasons for being called “a just man.” The first is that he is of the tribe of Judah, and thus could possibly be a father of the Messiah. This would have been the hope of anyone of the line of David, and this scandal would damage any such hopes.

A second possible reason is that if he was one to adhere to the law and/or who understood the lessons of the books of wisdom, having a woman like this into the future would only increase his grief and turn out to be a thorn in his side. In this, it would not be wise to hold on to such a wife.

A third, and obvious, reason is seen in the words “not wanting to make her a public example.” The reason for that is explained in the next verse...

24 then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city,

The words in this and the next clause are in the plural – “You all are to do this thing.” The gate is the place of judgment. In the disclosing of their actions, the judgment is determined already. As such, punishment is to then be meted out...

24 (con’t) and you shall stone them to death with stones,

Stoning is the set penalty for adultery, and this is to be considered adultery, even if the woman is only betrothed. She was promised to a man, the agreement was made, and nobody else, including her, had the right to violate the agreement. But she did implicitly, even if she was forced. As it says...

24 (con’t) the young woman because she did not cry out in the city,

Cities in Israel at this time were small, normally enclosed in walls, and the houses would be closely arrayed. If she had been raped, there is no doubt that it would have been heard. Even if he had his hand over her mouth, eventually his hand would be removed. Thus, it is implied that she consented to the act. For this, she is to die. Also...

24 (con’t) and the man because he humbled his neighbor’s wife;

The word *eshet*, or wife, is used. Thus, it is made explicit, in the law itself, that a betrothal carried the same weight and responsibility as after the marriage took place. Like the man in verse 22, he has taken a man’s wife that did not belong to him, and for it, he must die.

24 (con’t) so you shall put away the evil from among you.

Now, the words return to the singular – “so you (singular) shall put away the evil from among you (singular).” The nation as a whole is directed to take the action that is necessary to remove the evil.

And again, it is the same expression as in verse 22, except there it said, “put away the evil from Israel.” Here it says, “put away the evil from among you.” The evil in Israel was to be purged away, as if by fire. Thus, there is a purifying nature to the stoning of such offenders.

25 “But if a man finds a betrothed young woman in the countryside,

Here the state of the woman is the same as the previous verse, but instead of *ba’ir*, or “in the city,” it emphatically says *v’im ba’sadeh*, or “But if, in the field.” Thus, it signifies that they are outside of the city walls. If it is in such a place...

25 (con’t) and the man forces her and lies with her,

v’hekheziq bah – “And forces her.” Unlike such a case in the city where no such action is assumed, the woman in this case is presumed to have been raped. As such...

25 (con’t) then only the man who lay with her shall die.

A separation is made between the man and the woman, and she is given the benefit of the doubt that it was completely beyond her control. Moses makes this law and states it explicitly. The people cannot go beyond what is written unless other evidence is available. As he next says...

26 But you shall do nothing to the young woman;

Here, the words are in the singular again, “But you (singular) shall do nothing.” The woman, by stated law, is not to be stoned. Thus, Israel the people, as a whole, are restrained from taking action against her. The assumption of innocence is given to her, and it must be maintained. As Moses next says...

26 (con’t) there is in the young woman no sin *deserving* of death,

The Hebrew reads no “sin-death.” There are sins, and there are sins. In the case of adultery, the sin is a sin where death is the expected and mandated punishment. In

order to impress upon them that this is expected, Moses gives a real-life example for them to consider...

²⁶ (con't) **for just as when a man rises against his neighbor and kills him, even so is this matter.**

This takes the reader back to Deuteronomy 19:11-12 –

“But if anyone hates his neighbor, lies in wait for him, rises against him and strikes him mortally, so that he dies, and he flees to one of these cities, ¹² then the elders of his city shall send and bring him from there, and deliver him over to the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die.”

Such a person is deemed a murderer and is not to be spared. He purposefully waited for him, came upon him, and struck him. Likewise, the woman was preyed upon and had no chance to flee from her assailant. The man is as guilty as one who commits murder, and the woman is free from the stain of guilt.

With even that stated, Moses goes further to ensure that the woman is considered innocent and cannot be harmed, speaking in advance of how the law is to deem such a situation...

²⁷ **For he found her in the countryside,**

The first protection: Moses overlooks any hint of impropriety in the woman. In saying, “For he found her,” it implies that she was as prey to him. The fact is that she could have gone out into the field and met a man, but that is not entertained here.

As this is the law, it must then be adhered to as it is written. Next, Moses continues to anticipate the circumstance...

²⁷ (con't) **and the betrothed young woman cried out,**

tstaatqah hanaarah hamorasah – “cried out the young woman, the betrothed.” The second protection: Moses anticipates the situation for the woman, thus giving any woman in such a circumstance the benefit of the doubt. The weight of the law is on her side.

²⁷ (con't) **but there was no one to save her.**

The third protection: Moses, in advance of entering Canaan, speaks on behalf of a woman in such a situation. Not only was she preyed upon, and not only did she cry out, but she also had no one to save her from the man's attacks, including herself. She was defenseless and totally subjected to him.

As far as Joseph, and what the words "a just man" means, as well as his not wanting to "make her a public example," some reasons were given earlier, but it is still somewhat speculative. However, the account in Luke is clear. Mary lived in a city and the angel came to her in her house –

"Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" Luke 1:26-28

We are not told of any conversations between Joseph and Mary, but one of them was certainly a plea of innocence – something surely claimed by many others throughout history.

Beyond this, we cannot impute any type of wrongdoing to Joseph in regard to neglecting the law as it is written. The words stand without further explanation except that it says –

"But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." Matthew 1:20, 21

With these three cases complete, there is another to consider, but one which does not involve the bonds of marriage...

*The law is written, and the deed is done
There is no hope for one who has acted in this way
What was only a moment of temporary fun
Will cost you your life this very day*

What value did I gain when I did this thing?

*My life will surely end this very day
What I thought would make me laugh and sing
Has brought me to my end by acting in this way*

*It can't be that all of them are without sin!
Why are they all leaving? They know what I have done
A moment ago, I thought I was done in
By I have been brought from death to life by God's perfect Son*

II. The Father's Rights (verses 28-30)

²⁸ "If a man finds a young woman *who is* a virgin, who is not betrothed,

Now a circumstance similar to the previous one, but with the difference of the virgin not being betrothed is given. If this was not presented as such, there would be a void in how to handle the matter.

But more, the way that the matter is handled is given to impress upon the mind the high importance of the betrothal and/or marriage of a woman. Once such an action takes place, she assumes a completely different category than a woman who is not betrothed or married.

Some may find this unfair, especially for what happens to the woman in this case, but it is given to demonstrate and highlight the immense importance of the husband/wife relationship. It is not something to be taken lightly.

In this case, a woman is a virgin, but she is not betrothed, and a man finds her...

²⁸ (con't) and he seizes her and lies with her, and they are found out,

It is a different word than that used in verse 25, but it is rightly translated as "seizes her." He is forcing himself on her. This is a similar law to that already recorded in Exodus 22 –

"If a man entices a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall surely pay the bride-price for her *to be* his wife. ¹⁷ If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money according to the bride-price of virgins."

-Exodus 22:16, 17

There, it says he entices her. The difference between enticing and seizing does not seem to be significant in regard to the overall principle and the punishment imposed. It instead appears one account is simply repeating and further defining the other.

Whether she was enticed or forced, she is not bound to another man, and she is under the authority of her father. If a man takes her in such a case, thus stripping her of her virginity...

²⁹ then the man who lay with her shall give to the young woman's father fifty *shekels* of silver,

This is the "bride price" as is stated in Exodus 22. The difference is that the Lord mandated a bride price, whatever it may be, at that time. Now, Moses builds upon that and mandates what that bride price will be.

This does not mean that the bride price for any virgin of Israel is fifty shekels of silver. It means that in this case, it is the amount set. In other words, someone may have an exceptionally beautiful daughter and require more. Or he may have one still waiting to get her beauty on, and he may require less.

However, in this case – regardless as to any other factor – this man must pay as required by the set law. He has no choice in the matter. This amount, fifty shekels, was the highest amount required for the consecration vow of a person in Leviticus 27.

It was set for a man in the prime of his life, between twenty and sixty years of age (Leviticus 27:3). In other words, this act by the man against the father's daughter is noted as an exceptionally grievous offense. The working years of the father were, in essence, stolen from him. Therefore, the father is to receive this as fair compensation...

²⁹ (con't) and she shall be his wife

Although this may sound out of place, and even cruel, it is actually appropriate for the society where a woman may be betrothed even at a very young age.

In fact, the betrothal period certainly included a set age before which she could not be given away for the sake of consummating the marriage. In this case, she was not even yet betrothed, and yet she has been deflowered. As such, she would be hard-pressed to find a husband that would treat her properly as a wife. Therefore, this is actually a protection for the woman as is seen in the next words...

29 (con't) **because he has humbled her;**

It is the same word used in verse 24. There, the betrothed woman has been humbled, thus depriving the husband of what belonged to him. As the betrothed didn't cry out, her humbling was as much her fault as the man's.

In this case, the woman is humbled in a society where her chances of happiness in marriage are significantly reduced. Therefore, the man is required to assume responsibility for his conduct and to marry the woman.

What is probable here in Deuteronomy is that the principle set forth in Exodus still applies. If the father absolutely refuses to allow him to marry his daughter, then the matter would be settled with the fifty shekels of silver.

In this, the father could possibly obtain another bride price, but not as a virgin. And further, he could also ensure that whoever married her would be a suitable husband in the process. If the father permits the marriage to the man to go forward...

29 (con't) **he shall not be permitted to divorce her all his days.**

In addition to paying this exceptional amount of fifty shekels, the man will be obligated to remain married to the woman for his entire life.

What is likely, but which is unstated, is that such a marriage would be subject to his treating her faithfully in that marriage. She would have the weight of the law on her side to ensure that she was not simply pushed aside and neglected.

The protections for the woman were especially strong in the Israelite society. They surely stand above the laws of other societies of the time in their treatment of such situations. With these cases complete, the chapter ends with one more verse concerning sexual relations...

30 **"A man shall not take his father's wife,**

No man was to have relations with his father's wife. This is true in any circumstance. In some Mideastern cultures, if a man had a young wife in his old age, the son would assume her as his own upon her death. Any such thing was absolutely forbidden. This point of law has already been stated as a sin punishable by death –

“The nakedness of your father’s wife you shall not uncover; it *is* your father’s nakedness.’ Leviticus 18:8

“The man who lies with his father’s wife has uncovered his father’s nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death. Their blood *shall be* upon them.”

-Leviticus 20:11

To uncover the nakedness of a father’s wife was to uncover the father’s own nakedness. It is considered a perversion. So much is this the case that it will also be seen as worthy of a curse –

“Cursed *is* the one who lies with his father’s wife, because he has uncovered his father’s bed.” Deuteronomy 27:20

*³⁰ (fin) **nor uncover his father’s bed.**

v’lo yegaleh kenaph abiv – “and no uncover wing his father.” The wing signifies the hems of a garment. When Ruth offered herself to Boaz, she used the same term –

“Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet. ⁹And he said, ‘Who *are* you?’ So she answered, ‘I *am* Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative.’” Ruth 3:8, 9

It is also the same term that the Lord used in Ezekiel 16 when referring to Jerusalem –

“‘When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time *was* the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine,’ says the Lord GOD.” Ezekiel 16:8

This term then signifies the rights, authority, and possessions of the father. In other words, it would extend to any woman, even a concubine. Thus, it shows that what Absalom did was a violation of this point of law –

“And Ahithophel said to Absalom, ‘Go in to your father’s concubines, whom he has left to keep the house; and all Israel will hear that you are abhorred by your father. Then the hands of all who are with you will be strong.’ ²² So they pitched a

tent for Absalom on the top of the house, and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel." 2 Samuel 16:21, 22

It is also certainly the point of law that Solomon used to convict and execute his brother Adonijah. He came with subtlety and asked Bathsheba to convince Solomon to give King David's concubine Abishag to him.

Solomon saw through his words, knowing that he would use having her as a pretext to make a claim on the throne. Therefore, because this law forbade such an act, Solomon had a reason to execute him –

"And King Solomon answered and said to his mother, 'Now why do you ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also—for he *is* my older brother—for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah.' ²³ Then King Solomon swore by the LORD, saying, 'May God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah has not spoken this word against his own life! ²⁴ Now therefore, *as* the LORD lives, who has confirmed me and set me on the throne of David my father, and who has established a house for me, as He promised, Adonijah shall be put to death today!' ²⁵ So King Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he struck him down, and he died." 2 Kings 2:22-25

*Some are meant to die, and yet they are given life
Some will die without any hope
The difference is who ends the strife
For some, total deliverance is the scope*

*Every debt must be paid as surely as the sun does rise
Nothing will be overlooked on the judgment day
But for those in Christ, eternal life is the prize
Those who have seen the good and pursued the right way*

*Only in Him does the promise hold fast
And without Him, nothing will satisfy the debt that must be paid
Until your end, the time of favor is not past
So come to Christ and the wrath towards you will be stayed*

III. Pictures of Christ

Because the various scenarios follow the same theme as last week, that of honor and purity, there is no need to give minute detail in how each of these precepts anticipates the work of Christ. But, in short, it is evident when considered.

The first incident was adultery by a man and a woman. Israel has already been shown to be the spouse of the Lord last week. The Lord is said in Ezekiel 16 to be married to Jerusalem. Jerusalem stands for the people who fall under her scope.

The Lord spread his wing over them, and they became His. In their adultery with others, both should be destroyed. And, indeed, those who committed adultery with her suffered their destruction. But because of His covenant with Israel, Christ took their punishment instead.

The next two instances follow in the same thread of thought. Whether in the city or in the country, a betrothed woman is violated. In both instances, the man is to be executed. In the city, that includes the woman. In the country, it is not to be so.

However, as before, Christ took the penalty of the woman in the city. In the other instance, she is violated but not held responsible. One can easily see the church in this. The church is betrothed to Christ, and yet, she has been violated –

“For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ. ³ But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. ⁴ For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or *if* you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted— you may well put up with it!” 2 Corinthians 11:2-4

In some cases, the violating was accepted and voluntary – in the city. In other words, choosing to allow an apostate to lead one away. In the other, the violating was involuntary – in the field. In other words, being led astray in an involuntary manner.

In both instances, the offender (represented by the man) will be destroyed. In the case of the woman in the city – as before – Christ has already paid the price for her transgression. She cannot be punished a second time. In the case of the woman in the country, believers who have been violated in this manner (beyond their control), no charge is brought against them.

The last proposition is more difficult to discern its meaning, but it is based on sexual contact with a woman who is not betrothed. Being consistent, this would mean she is not a part of the body of Christ. What seems likely is that it would refer to an apostate body, such as the JW's or the Mormons.

The number fifty is that of jubilee or deliverance. A payment of deliverance to the father is made, signifying that there is no longer the connection between the two. Further, the note that the husband must remain married to the woman forever seems to imply that an apostate body will always remain so. It has been freed from righteousness to live with the husband that defiled her.

The final verse spoke of the sanctity of the father's bed and of that which is under his authority. Unlike the faithless son, Israel, who constantly is recorded as attempting to usurp their Father's authority, Christ never tried to do so. Rather, He was obedient to the Father, and, through His finished work, He received His own bride through the New Covenant.

In the end, the lesson of Chapter 22 is, above all else, that of honor and purity. The individual sections involve real laws that governed Israel, but they anticipate spiritual truths in God's redemptive narrative.

Each one is given to ensure that every aspect of the human condition, as it stands in relation to God, is covered. The laws of Israel were given to govern potential scenarios that may never have come about, but the precepts which are stated are given to cover actual scenarios that have occurred, and continue to occur, in relation to spiritual matters.

And every positive spiritual matter is covered by one overarching thought – that Jesus Christ has taken care of it. It is only through Him that such things are resolved. For those who are not a part of what He is doing, they are wedded to another.

The only way to have this corrected is to come under the wings of our heavenly Father by coming to Christ who has fulfilled these things for His people. There is no religious expression that can bring us back to Him apart from Christ.

Be wise, be discerning, and make the call. He is waiting to forgive every trespass and every failing if we simply accept that He has opened this avenue for us. He has sent His Messiah into the world. His name is JESUS.

Closing Verse: *"I will betroth you to Me forever;
Yes, I will betroth you to Me
In righteousness and justice,
In lovingkindness and mercy;
²⁰ I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness,
And you shall know the LORD."* Hosea 2:19, 20

Next Week: Deuteronomy 23:1-14 *How will you act toward... toward the Glorious One?...* (Holy Conduct Before the Lord, Part I) (67th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

You Shall Put Away the Evil

"If a man is found lying with a woman married to a husband
Then both of them shall die, so to you I tell
The man that lay with the woman and the woman
So you shall put away the evil from Israel

"If a young woman who is a virgin is betrothed to a husband
And a man finds her in the city and lies with her
Then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city
And you shall stone them to death with stones, for sure

The young woman because
She did not cry out in the city, such she failed to do
And the man because he humbled his neighbor's wife
So you shall put away the evil from among you.

"But if a man finds a betrothed young woman
In the countryside, by and by
And the man forces her and lies with her
Then only the man who lay with her shall die

But you shall do nothing to the young woman
There is in the young woman deserving of death no sin

For just as when a man rises against his neighbor and kills him
Even so is this matter; this is what has been...

For he found her in the countryside
And the betrothed young woman cried out
But there was no one to save her
No one heard her shout

“If a man finds a young woman who is a virgin
Who is not betrothed; of this there is no doubt
And he seizes her and lies with her
And they are found out

Then the man who lay with her
Shall give to the young woman’s father fifty shekels of silver
-----yes, this is what he pays
And she shall be his wife because he has humbled her
He shall not be permitted to divorce her all his days

“A man shall not take his father’s wife, as I have to you said
Nor uncover his father’s bed

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 23:1-14 **(Holy Conduct Before the Lord, Part I)**

The final verses of our passage today deal with handling of human waste. It's something I have been intimately familiar with for most of my life. In high school, dad got me into a job at the local wastewater treatment plant. I could go on all day, every day for months, telling you stories about my adventures there.

But that wasn't enough for me, so when I came back from the military, I got back into the field for some years. Then I left it to go mine gold in Alaska. When I got back from that, I did a few other things, and then...yes, I got back into handling wastewater for several more years. I could go on and on about it.

The stories would probably never get tiring too. It is a great field to be in, the work is (to me) exciting and challenging, and it is one of those things that is actually doing a huge service for society in many ways, for the environment, and for the health and well-being of people worldwide.

Eventually, I left that to take up preaching, but I still have to take care of such things on a smaller level six days a week. Yes, I clean public bathrooms at a mall I take care of. I can absolutely assure you that it is ten thousand times worse than working at a wastewater plant... maybe a million.

No wonder the passage today says what it says. When things aren't properly taken care of in this regard, my morning job is as distasteful as anything you could imagine. The one word I can use to really catch the scent (pun intended) for what I have to deal with is "unholy."

Hence, the Lord told the Israelites that their war camps were to be holy. It is that simple. It is as obvious as the nose on a person's face (and as obvious TO the nose on a person's face), why we are to properly take care of business.

Text Verse: *"But you have not so learned Christ, ²¹ if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: ²² that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³ and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness."*

-Ephesians 4:20-24

If I can give one general theme for all of Deuteronomy, it would be in accord with the title of this sermon – Holy Conduct Before the Lord. Obviously, each section is quite a bit different, but that is a good main theme for it.

Some of it deals with conduct towards others, some of personal conduct concerning hygiene, and so on. But one thing we need to do is to not get so carried away in our analyses of Scripture that we make the word say something wholly unintended. It is a big and not-uncommon problem though.

One of the sites I use quite often is Abarim Publications. They have the best analyses of the meaning of names in Scripture to be found anywhere. And some of their Bible commentaries are very insightful.

But their commentary on verses 12 and 13 of our passage today is so out of line with the intent of what is being said that I am actually embarrassed to recommend them lest someone read it and get misdirected down such an odd avenue.

Once we start doing what they did there, from that point on we can make anything say anything. This is not responsible theology. We need to stick closely to what the text actually says, and then consider any typological analogies based solely on how the words are fulfilled through the work of Christ or how they apply to believers based on the work of Christ.

I just thought I would say that about Abarim because I want people to be careful and not just accept what they read or hear because it sounds enlightening or insightful. I love their site, I enjoy some of their biblical analyses, but everything has to be carefully considered and not just taken at face value.

You should even do this with the Superior Word sermons. Make sure what you are taking in is in accord with the word. And guess what? The only way you can do that is to ... to ... know the word! Be sure to know this word! It is well worth the time you put into it.

Great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Assembly of the Lord (Verses 1-8)

¹“He who is emasculated by crushing or mutilation shall not enter the assembly of the LORD.

The variations in the translation of this verse are rather incredible. Most are paraphrases to help explain the obvious intent of what is being conveyed. The Hebrew reads: *lo yavo petsua daka u-kerut shaphkah biqhal Yehovah* – “No shall enter – wounded, crushing and cutting, male organ – in assembly Yehovah.”

The first words, “No shall enter,” are obviously tied to the last words, “in assembly Yehovah.” The intervening words explain who is being described. Exactly what it means to “enter the assembly” is debated. Adam Clarke may be right when he says –

“If by entering the congregation be meant the bearing a civil office among the people, such as magistrate, judge, etc., then the reason of the law is very plain; no man with any such personal defect as might render him contemptible in the sight of others should bear rule among the people, lest the contempt felt for his personal defects might be transferred to his important office, and thus his authority be disregarded.”

Whether correct, or whether it extends to something even more general, the matter was understood clearly by the people. The word *qahal*, or assembly, is not the same as *edah*, or congregation. Therefore, it may be that such a person could be a part of the congregation, but not entitled to the benefits of the assembly. That seems likely based on the coming verses.

In this verse, are three new and rare words –

Patsa. It is a verb meaning to bruise or wound. It comes from a root signifying “to split.” It will be seen only three times.

Dakah. It is a noun signifying a crushing from the verb *dakah* meaning to crush. This is the only time it is used in the Bible.

Shophkah. It is a noun that speaks of the male organ. Coming from *shaphak*, meaning to pour out, as in wine or blood. It is also only found here in the Bible.

What is being conveyed is a precept that has already been noted concerning the priests of Israel –

“For any who has a defect shall not approach: a man blind or lame, who has a marred *face* man or any *limb* too long, ¹⁹ a man who has a broken foot or broken hand, ²⁰ or is a hunchback or a dwarf, or *a man* who has a defect in his eye, or eczema or scab, or is a eunuch. ²¹ No man of the descendants of Aaron the priest, who has a defect, shall come near to offer the offerings made by fire to the LORD. He has a defect; he shall not come near to offer the bread of his God.”

-Leviticus 21:18-21

But this precept now goes further. It is an expansion of the thought presented concerning sacrificial animals in Leviticus 22 –

“You shall not offer to the LORD what is bruised or crushed, or torn or cut; nor shall you make *any offering of them* in your land.” Leviticus 22:24

The perfection of the Lord demands that only perfect sacrifices should be presented to Him. The defects now noted in human males, are defects that have been purposefully made by man’s hands. If such sacrificial animals were unacceptable as offerings, how much more should those who are His people, who bring forward their offerings, be perfect in their physical being!

In this, it is seen that perfection is demanded when coming before God. This has already been seen innumerable times in Leviticus. Anyone who was unclean for a host of reasons could not come before the Lord.

Some instances of uncleanness, like leprosy, kept them away from Him permanently. Some, such as an issue in the night, kept them away from Him until evening. But the idea being conveyed is perfection. Only perfection can come into the presence of the Lord.

Thus, being included in the assembly of the Lord meant to be considered a member of the Israelite society with all of its rights, privileges, and responsibilities. It is seen later that eunuchs served kings in Israel, but they were not a part of Israel. One of them, Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian eunuch, received a special blessing from the Lord in Jeremiah 39:16-18 –

“Go and speak to Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: “Behold, I will bring My words upon this city for adversity and not for good, and they shall be *performed* in that day before you. ¹⁷ But I will deliver you in that day,” says the LORD, “and you shall not be given into the hand

of the men of whom you *are* afraid. ¹⁸ For I will surely deliver you, and you shall not fall by the sword; but your life shall be as a prize to you, because you have put your trust in Me,” says the LORD.”

In Acts 8, a eunuch came to Jerusalem to worship, but he was not considered a member of the assembly of Israel. Only those considered as acceptable could be a member of the society, and those who were members of the society still had to be acceptable – at any given time – to make their offerings to the Lord. Again, the idea is that nothing imperfect can come before the Lord.

In Israel, this was all typology. Like the animal sacrifices that were actually ineffectual (Hebrews 10:4), the people of Israel were actually imperfect as well. What they did and the way they were set apart, was only anticipatory of something greater. This is perfectly evident from the words of Isaiah –

“Do not let the son of the foreigner
Who has joined himself to the LORD
Speak, saying,
‘The LORD has utterly separated me from His people’;
Nor let the eunuch say,
‘Here I am, a dry tree.’
⁴ For thus says the LORD:
“To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths,
And choose what pleases Me,
And hold fast My covenant,
⁵ Even to them I will give in My house
And within My walls a place and a name
Better than that of sons and daughters;
I will give them an everlasting name
That shall not be cut off.” Isaiah 56:3-5

Isaiah prophesied of a time when those who were excluded from the assembly under Moses would actually become an eternal part of the assembly through Christ. The irony of Isaiah’s words is that “those who are ‘cut off’ in the body, would never be ‘cut off’ before God because of Christ.”

This was literally fulfilled in the eunuch of Acts 8. Though excluded from the assembly of Israel under the Mosaic Covenant, he was brought into the commonwealth of Israel

through the New Covenant in Christ, thus being given an everlasting name that would not be cut off.

In other words, he was made perfect in Christ and thus made acceptable to God. The typology of the Old only anticipated the fulfillment of it in the New. But this then brings in the words of Paul who was speaking to the Galatians about those of Israel who still preached circumcision as a necessary requirement for being acceptable to God. He says—

“And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased. ¹² I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!” Galatians 5:11, 12

What Paul is referring to when he says “cut themselves off” is a step beyond what was mandated for Israel under the law. His words turn on the idea of circumcision. He is showing the utterly ludicrous nature of being circumcised in order to please God over and above what Christ had already done.

And so, he basically says, “Gee, if you can make God happy by being circumcised, then keep on cutting. Maybe He will be more pleased with additional mutilation of the flesh.” His words are both ironic and sarcastic.

If these Judaizers wanted to live out their lives under the Mosaic covenant, they would find that they were as unpleasing to God as if they had emasculated themselves.

They were still living out the typology and not entering into that which the typology anticipated. They had missed the significance of what Christ had done. In Him, we are perfected – regardless of the condition of our physical bodies.

If entering the presence of the Lord means we must be perfect, and if the Mosaic law can make nothing perfect, then no person could ever enter the presence of God. But in Christ, we are made perfect – once and forever. This is stated, explicitly, in Hebrews 7 –

“For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, ¹⁹ for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, *there is the* bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.” Hebrews 7:18, 19

² **“One of illegitimate birth shall not enter the assembly of the LORD;**

lo yavo mamzer biqhal Yehovah – “No shall enter illegitimate into assembly Yehovah.” Here is a new and rare word, *mamzer*. It is found only twice, here and Zechariah 9:6. It signifies a child of incest, or illegitimately generated.

An example of such a birth would be that of Judah and Tamar found in Genesis 38. Judah slept with his own daughter-in-law, and thus, under the law, such a child would be illegitimate. Though that happened before the time of the law, it still could be said to apply to the line of Judah that issued from that union, at least for a certain period. That is because...

² (con't) **even to the tenth generation none of his *descendants* shall enter the assembly of the LORD.**

Again, the word *qahal*, or assembly, is used. Any such person, even to the tenth generation, could not enter into the assembly of Yehovah. The number ten in Scripture signifies *the perfection of divine order*. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete.

When the tenth is arrived at, the cycle of the prohibition is thus completed. It is this verse that the author of the book of Ruth certainly had in mind when he finished the book with the words –

“Now this *is* the genealogy of Perez: Perez begot Hezron; ¹⁹ Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadab; ²⁰ Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon; ²¹ Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed; ²² Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David.” Ruth 4:18-22

Perez was the child born to the illegitimate union between Judah and Tamar. As such, until the tenth generation, the descendant could be considered illegitimate. Hence, those words, affixed to the end of Ruth, establish that David was – in fact – eligible to enter the assembly of the Lord and hold the office of king because he was the tenth, or completing, generation of the prohibition.

However, it is clear that his ancestors were accepted as members of the congregation of Israel, and so there is seen to be a difference between the *edah*, or congregation, and the *qahal*, or assembly. This will also be seen again as we continue.

³ **“An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the LORD;**

The explanation for this prohibition will be given in the next verse. For now, the words simply provide the precept. What is said must refer to a male, not a female. However, this is taken by Ezra as an absolute prohibition, and he forced those who married such women to divorce the wives thus also abandoning the children. Ezra must have misinterpreted the law because this cannot be the intent of the verse, as will be seen in the words ahead...

^{3 (con't)} **even to the tenth generation none of his *descendants* shall enter the assembly of the LORD forever,**

A literal translation of the entire verse would say, “No shall enter Ammonite and Moabite in assembly Yehovah; also, generation tenth no shall enter to theirs in assembly Yehovah until vanishing point.”

The question is, does “until vanishing point,” or “forever,” interpret the words “tenth generation,” or does it simply mean that the precept of not entering to the tenth generation is to be adhered to forever?

The answer must be the latter. In other words, “tenth generation” is not – as some scholars claim – being used synonymously with “forever.” Rather, the term “forever” is speaking of the fact that this precept is to be adhered to forever.

First, the reason this must apply to males only is because David’s great grandmother was Ruth, the Moabite, and yet David was a member of the assembly of the Lord. Likewise, his grandson through Solomon, Rehoboam, was the son of Naamah, an Ammonite.

Therefore, it cannot be that this applied to the descendants of females from these people groups who married into Israel. And further, the word *qahal*, or assembly, must be specifically different than *edah*, or congregation.

This is because listed among David’s mighty men in 1 Chronicles 11 are Zelek the Ammonite (11:39) and Ithmah the Moabite (11:46). To be reckoned as members of his chief fighting men, they surely had to be members of the congregation, even if not members of the assembly.

Therefore, Ezra (and later Nehemiah) – though having good intentions, misunderstood the intent of Moses’ words now. Nehemiah clearly equates the words “to the tenth generation” with “forever” when he misquotes Moses –

“On that day they read from the Book of Moses in the hearing of the people, and in it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever come into the assembly of God.” Nehemiah 13:1

For now, Moses next explains why the precept is mandated...

⁴because they did not meet you with bread and water on the road when you came out of Egypt,

Rather than “when,” it reads, “in your coming out from Egypt.” The Exodus happened almost forty years before this event. It was a long, extended process that includes the travels after leaving. In this, the words introduce a new thought not previously stated. The Lord specifically told Israel to not harass these people groups –

“Then the LORD said to me, ‘Do not harass Moab, nor contend with them in battle, for I will not give you *any* of their land *as* a possession, because I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot *as* a possession.’” Deuteronomy 2:9

“And *when* you come near the people of Ammon, do not harass them or meddle with them, for I will not give you *any* of the land of the people of Ammon *as* a possession, because I have given it to the descendants of Lot *as* a possession.”

-Deuteronomy 2:19

Despite the Lord’s admonition to not harm these people because they were extended family who had been given their land as a possession, these same groups did not extend any family courtesies toward Israel, not even the basic necessities such as bread and water. But more than that, they were hostile to them...

^{4 (con’t)} and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you.

This was specifically done by Moab, as is seen in Numbers 22. A singular verb is used as well (he hired). Thus, it speaks of the people as a collective.

This could be referring only to Moab then, but in 2 Chronicles 20:1, it identifies the two people as the same stock, even if they are separate clans. They were united in action and so it appears that the guilt of hiring Balaam is imputed to both...

⁵ Nevertheless the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam, but the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you,

Balaam, who was hired by Moab, blessed Israel. However, Israel is reminded now that the original intent was for him to curse Israel. It was because the Lord intervened in the affair that the anticipated curse was turned into a blessing. Moses then explains why this is what came about saying...

^{5 (con't)} because the LORD your God loves you.

This is in the singular still. It refers to the nation as the object of the Lord's affections. And that affection is for who they can be, not necessarily who they are. God is love, and it is the anticipated relationship with Israel, based on the covenant promises, that the Lord directs His love towards them. This is seen in the words of Jesus, the fulfillment of those covenant promises, in John 3 –

“The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. ³⁶ He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” John 3:35, 36

The Ammonites and Moabites were not a part of these covenant promises. As such, the Lord acted for Israel. But of this same Israel, most have rejected Christ. In this, God's wrath remains on them. Thus, the love spoken of here is one of covenant love, and it pertains to those who are faithful toward Him in that covenant standing. For Ammon and Moab, this was not true. Thus...

⁶ You shall not seek their peace nor their prosperity all your days forever.

The words are to Israel in the singular, meaning the nation as a whole. The aims and goals of Israel were not the same as the aims and goals of these nations. Nor would they ever fully see eye to eye. Because of this, they were not to unite as nations would in alliances and the like.

Does this prohibition extend to individual relationships as well? It is hard to be dogmatic, but it probably does because of the words of the previous verses, and because the next verse, will speak of individuals from Edom and Egypt. What is evident is that David had a friendly relationship with the king of Ammon –

“It happened after this that the king of the people of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his place. ²Then David said, ‘I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness to me.’” 2 Samuel 10:1, 2

It is hard to say if David’s friendship with Nahash was a violation of the precept now being given by Moses. But what occurred in the rest of the chapter shows that the Ammonites remained suspicious of, and at enmity with, Israel. Nahash means “Serpent,” and the son of Nahash turned around and bit at David like a serpent would.

⁷ **“You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he *is* your brother.**

Here, Moses speaks of the individual Edomite. He was not to be abhorred. This was to be the case even though Edom came out against Israel with the sword –

“Then Edom said to him, ‘You shall not pass through my *land*, lest I come out against you with the sword.’

¹⁹ So the children of Israel said to him, ‘We will go by the Highway, and if I or my livestock drink any of your water, then I will pay for it; let me only pass through on foot, nothing *more*.’

²⁰ Then he said, ‘You shall not pass through.’ So Edom came out against them with many men and with a strong hand. ²¹ Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his territory; so Israel turned away from him.” Numbers 20:18-20

Despite their conduct, Moses gives the explicit reason for why they were to not abhor an Edomite, saying emphatically: *ki akhikha hu* – “for your brother, he.” Edom was the brother of Israel; therefore, the Edomite was to be treated as a brother as well. Likewise...

⁷ (con’t) **You shall not abhor an Egyptian,**

Egypt afflicted Israel, and Egypt attempted to destroy Israel, and yet, like the Edomite, the Egyptian was not to be abhorred. And again, Moses explicitly states why it was to be so –

⁷ (con’t) **because you were an alien in his land.**

The people of Egypt had provided a home, land, and sustenance for over two hundred years. When Israel left the land, the Egyptians that they knew gave them many parting

gifts. Israel was a stranger nation in their land, and yet they were cared for. Therefore, kindness was to be shown, in turn, to the individual Egyptian as well.

⁸The children of the third generation born to them may enter the assembly of the LORD.

The Hebrews says, “sons,” rather than, “children.” In only three generations, instead of ten for Ammon and Moab, the sons of an Edomite or an Egyptian could enter the assembly of the Lord.

What can be seen here is a practical lesson that has already been seen in other examples. First, Edom can be considered near of kin, whereas Ammon and Moab – though related – were not. Secondly, Ammon and Moab had intended to curse Israel without ever having had any direct relations with them.

Edom could be seen as a near of kin, and thus in a special kinsman relationship with Israel. Egypt despite having afflicted Israel as a master to a bondservant, was also kind to him as well. The bonds between these two and Israel were stronger and more enduring than those of Ammon and Moab.

Thus, the lesson of forgetting the lesser matters and uniting on the greater and more enduring matters is being taught to Israel in these directives now.

*Holiness before the Lord, to this we have been called
We are to always walk carefully in His ways
Let not our momentum diminish or get stalled
Let us press forward for all of our days*

*May it be so, to the honor of the Lord our God
May it be so, that we live in holiness
May it be so, every step that we trod
Onward toward the final prize, may we continue to press*

*He is our God and to Him we must be true
He is our Lord, our glorious Lord Jesus
Let us act in holiness in everything we do
And in this, His smiling countenance will radiate on us*

II. Your Camp Shall Be Holy (verses 9-14)

⁹“When the army goes out against your enemies, then keep yourself from every wicked thing.

For consistency, the word “army” here should be “camp.” The same word, *makhaneh*, is used twice in the next verse, both times translated as “camp.” It is the purity of the camp that is being focused on.

When Israel went out as a camp to fight their battles, the Lord would be among them. This has already been seen in Deuteronomy 20, saying –

“When you go out to battle against your enemies, and see horses and chariots *and* people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for the LORD your God *is* with you, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.”

-Deuteronomy 20:1

Moses is noting that the conduct and purity of the people will have a direct bearing on the Lord’s attention to them in battle. Impurity of the camp would show a disdain for the presence of the Lord who is ultimately the One who would either deliver the enemy over to Israel, or who would deliver Israel over to them. As such...

¹⁰ If there is any man among you who becomes unclean by some occurrence in the night,

This is referring to a man that has a nocturnal emission. If this were to occur, it would render him unclean until the next evening. This has already been explained in Leviticus –

“If any man has an emission of semen, then he shall wash all his body in water, and be unclean until evening.” Leviticus 15:16

In such a case as this...

¹⁰ (con’t) then he shall go outside the camp; he shall not come inside the camp.

The Hebrew reads specifically in relation to the camp: *v’yatsa el mikhuts lamakhaneh; lo yavo el tok ha’makhaneh* – “and he shall go unto from outside to the camp; no shall he come unto midst the camp.” The purity of the camp is to be maintained. He is defiled, and he must separate himself from the camp, which is considered holy. That is to continue for a set time period...

¹¹ But it shall be, when evening comes,

The evening is the start of the new day. It is this time that is set forth again and again in Leviticus to reflect the time when a state of defilement is ended. However, this is the only time in Deuteronomy that the term is used in this way. As such, it is right to reexplain the meaning.

As biblical days go from evening until evening, it indicates that the state of defilement lasts until the starting of the new day. Only when the old had passed away, can the new come in.

The evening then looks forward to the work of Christ. He died in the afternoon and was buried as the evening approached. With His death and burial, all defilement of man was washed away. This is seen in Matthew 27 –

“Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸ This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. ⁵⁹ When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, ⁶⁰ and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. ⁶¹ And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb.”

-Matthew 27:57-61

¹¹ (con't) that he shall wash with water;

yirkhats bamayim – “he shall wash in the water.” He is defiled, it is evening, and he is now being purified. This typologically looks to the cleansing of Christ as is seen in Hebrews 10 –

“Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, ²¹ and *having* a High Priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” Hebrews 10:19-22

Christ died, He entered the Most Holy Place, and we enter into His death and burial. In this, our spiritual bodies are washed clean. What Israel did in the fleshly body, we participate in through Christ in a spiritual sense.

11 (con't) **and when the sun sets, he may come into the camp.**

The thing about this prohibition is that it doesn't matter if it happens just at sundown (we'll say 7:20pm) or five minutes before the guy wakes up (at 5:50am), the state of uncleanness only lasts until the evening.

Therefore, it cannot be that the emission is unclean, but that it is typical of something else that is unclean. So, what is it concerning an emission of semen that so renders a person unclean?

As we saw in Leviticus, this precept is actually understood by many religions. It was considered so in ancient Egypt. It is so in Islam. Babylonians, Hindus, and others considered such an emission unclean.

Judaism to this day follows the precept in a cultural sense, especially those who piecemeal adhere to the law. Other religions as well understand this. It is something ingrained in the religious psyche. But it is not something Christians consider defiling.

The reason it is so is because the precept anticipates Christ. The bible implicitly teaches that the seed of man is how sin travels to the next generation of humans.

As all people (male and female alike) are born of man's seed, all thus all inherit Adam's sin through the male's emission. Religions around the world intuitively know there is inherited sin, even if they don't understand why it is so.

It is the reason why circumcision was given to Abraham. In cutting the male member, it pictured cutting the transfer of sin in humanity. The Lord even called circumcision a sign. But a sign is something that anticipates something else.

That which circumcision anticipates is Christ. Christ came born of a woman, but with no human father. Thus, He cut the line of sin because no human seed (bearing sin) from a father was transmitted to Him. The picture is fulfilled, the requirement in the law is ended. We are cleansed when we come to Christ's perfection and His sacrifice, pictured by the coming of the new day at evening.

For the Israelite in the camp of the Lord, after washing, he remained unclean until evening. When the sun set, he could then reenter the camp. This was merely a ceremonial defilement of the conscience that typologically anticipated Christ. Now, in

Him, our consciences are cleansed. We are free from the consciousness of sin, because we are freed from all sin through the work of Christ.

¹² “Also you shall have a place outside the camp, where you may go out;

The Hebrew of this and the next verse is very obscure. Here, it reads: *v’yad tihyeh lekha mikhuts lamakhaneh v’yasata shamah khuts* – “and hand shall have to you from outside to the camp and you go there outside.”

The word “hand” certainly is indicating a direction or location. In other words, if someone needs to go, he will ask the sentry of the camp, “Hey buddy, where do I go?” The response is with the hand – “over there.” Thus, most translations say, “place,” or “station.” In other words, a latrine.

¹³ and you shall have an implement among your equipment,

v’yated tihyeh lekha al azenekha – “and peg shall have to you upon your ear.” That doesn’t make much sense, does it? The idea is that a peg will be used as a handle, and the ear is being equated to something broad, or ear-shaped. In other words, Moses is describing a spade with a handle and a flat part for digging.

¹³ (con’t) and when you sit down outside,

v’hayah b’shivtekha khuts “and it shall be in your sitting outside.” In other words, it is repeating the thought that one is to sit (meaning you know what) outside. The repetition is to ensure that the outside is where this is to occur. The lowest soldier to the highest chief, all were to go to the designated place and do their sitting out there.

¹³ (con’t) you shall dig with it and turn and cover your refuse.

v’khaphartah bah v’shavta eth tseatekha – “and you shall dig with it and turn and cover the coming out.” The wording, though a bit annoying to us from a literal translation, has an obvious meaning – “You are to take your spade, dig a hole, and then cover what just came out.”

In this, is another rare word, *tseah*. It signifies outcomings. It is found only here and in Ezekiel 4 –

“And you shall eat it *as* barley cakes; and bake it using fuel of human waste in their sight.” Ezekiel 4:12

Just a couple verses later, we read this –

“So I said, ‘Ah, Lord God! Indeed I have never defiled myself from my youth till now; I have never eaten what died of itself or was torn by beasts, nor has abominable flesh ever come into my mouth.’”

¹⁵ Then He said to me, ‘See, I am giving you cow dung instead of human waste, and you shall prepare your bread over it.’” Ezekiel 4:14, 15

It is cooking with the human waste that defiled the food Ezekiel was to eat. Thus, these outcomings were to be covered. And there is a specific reason for this...

¹⁴ For the LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp,

The idea here is still that of typological purity. The waste from a body is putrid and it is defiling (as seen in Ezekiel 4). To do this in the camp would then defile the camp. But the camp is the fighting force of the hosts of the Lord, and thus it was to remain undefiled. In this, the Lord would be among them...

¹⁴ (con’t) to deliver you and give your enemies over to you;

The implication is that if the camp was defiled, the Lord would not be among them, and they would not be delivered. Rather, in offending the Lord, they would be delivered over to their enemies.

¹⁴ (con’t) therefore your camp shall be holy,

v’hayah makhanecha qadosh – “And it shall be your camp holy.” The camp was to be set apart from all defilement and thus holy to the Lord. This is the main purpose of everything that has been said in these verses. The Lord is holy, and He will not walk among those who are unholy. The camp was to be kept pure...

***¹⁴ (fin) that He may see no unclean thing among you, and turn away from you.**

The law is what sets the standard. To not adhere to the precept would be a violation of the law. The typology of the coming of Christ must be maintained, and therefore the

purity of the camp – based on the standard set forth in the law – was to be adhered to. If not, as should be obvious, the Lord would turn away from them.

It is without any doubt at all that this set of verses was on Paul's mind when he wrote his words to those at Corinth. Though divided by a chapter, the words run concurrently from the end of one chapter to the beginning of the next –

“For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

‘I will dwell in them

And walk among *them*.

I will be their God,

And they shall be My people.’

¹⁷ Therefore

‘Come out from among them

And be separate, says the Lord.

Do not touch what is unclean,

And I will receive you.’

¹⁸ ‘I will be a Father to you,

And you shall be My sons and daughters,

Says the LORD Almighty.” 2 Corinthians 6:16-18

“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” 2 Corinthians 17:1

Everything that is said anticipates something that looks forward to the coming of the Messiah and of the true cleansing that can only come from Him. All of these earthly ordinances anticipated His coming, and in Him is found the fulfillment of them all.

He either actually fulfills the precepts, or He does so through fulfilled typology. Either way, it is only through Christ that we are truly cleansed and set apart to God. As this is so, we should separate ourselves, wholly and forever, from that which defiles.

He has already set us apart as holy through faith in His work, but it is our responsibility to act in accord with the word that has now been given and to conduct ourselves in a manner which is honoring of Him.

Therefore, may it be so. May we strive from day to day to walk in holiness, to act in righteousness, and to live in the hope of that day when our full, final, and forever

glorification comes to be. May it be so, to the glory of the Lord who has already fulfilled that which restores us once again to our heavenly Father.

Closing Verse: *“For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; ¹² giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.” Colossians 1:9-12*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 23:15-25 *No way you will be bored, it is true...* (Holy Conduct Before the Lord, Part II) (68th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Holy Conduct Before the Lord, Part I

“He who is emasculated by crushing or mutilation
Shall not enter the assembly of the LORD
-----this is to be a holy nation

“One of illegitimate birth shall not enter the assembly of the LORD
Even to the tenth generation
None of his *descendants* shall enter the assembly of the LORD
This is to be a holy nation

“An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly
Of the LORD; even to the tenth generation
None of his *descendants* shall enter the assembly of the LORD
Forever: This is to be a holy nation

Because they did not meet you with bread and water
On the road when you came out of Egypt, so they did not do
And because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor
From Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you

Nevertheless the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam
But the LORD your God turned, because He is faithful and true
The curse into a blessing for you
Because the LORD your God loves you

You shall not seek their peace nor their prosperity
All your days forever, so shall it be

“You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he *is* your brother
You shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were an alien
----- in his land
The children of the third generation born to them
May enter the assembly of the LORD so you now fully understand

“When the army goes out against your enemies for fighting
Then keep yourself from every wicked thing

If there is any man among you who becomes unclean
By some occurrence in the night
Then he shall go outside the camp
He shall not come inside the camp as is just and right

But it shall be, when evening comes
That he shall wash with water until all watered up and damp
And when the sun sets
He may come into the camp

Also you shall have a place outside the camp
-----where you may go out
And you shall have an implement among your equipment
-----so I say
And when you sit down outside
You shall dig with it and turn and cover your refuse
-----so to you I relay

For the LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp
To deliver you and give your enemies over to you
-----as He has promised to do
Therefore your camp shall be holy

That He may see no unclean thing among you
-----and turn away from you

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 23:15-25 (Holy Conduct Before the Lord, Part II)

There is a lot of similarity in what is said here and what Paul writes in his first letter to the Corinthians. Much of that is found in 1 Corinthians 6. Moses writes about holy conduct before the Lord, and Paul writes about the same, even mirroring particular points that Moses makes at times.

The idea of holiness is that of being set apart. In the case of holiness to the Lord, it speaks of being set apart to Him in life, conduct, and action. The more we move towards Him, the less our life will be affected by the flesh. And it is the flesh that wages war against the spirit.

This is a struggle all of us have had and will continue to have to some extent. But the grace of God is there to cover over our failings if we are in Christ. Thank God for Jesus Christ. It is He who came to do God's will in order to bring us into a better hope than the law could ever provide. It is a marvelous and blessed thing God has done for us through Him.

Text Verse: *"Previously saying, 'Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them' (which are offered according to the law),⁹ then He said, 'Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.' He takes away the first that He may establish the second.¹⁰ By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Hebrews 10:8-10*

While typing up this sermon, I noticed a decidedly chiasmic structure to the verses we will look at today. Rather than specifics, for the most part it deals with generalities, but it's pretty evident when you see it laid out –

Deuteronomy 23:15-25 – Holiness, purity, and justice
Miscellaneous Laws for Israel (28 June 2021)

- a. rights within the land (15, 16)
 - b. prohibitions concerning vows (17, 18)
 - c. you shall not charge interest to your brother (19)
 - x. to a foreigner you may charge interest (20)
 - c. to your brother you shall not charge interest (20)
 - b. mandates concerning vows (21-23)
- a. rights within the land (24, 25)

The first section, verses 15 and 16, deals with the rights of a slave who had escaped from his master. At first, it might not make much sense, but in looking at the details, it all comes into focus. As far as slavery, I'm sure I've mentioned my ancestor Thomas Garrett before.

He is who my grandfather, Thomas Garrett was named after. He devoted his life's energy to freeing the slaves in America. As this passage deals with not returning an escaped slave, and as I need an introduction that will fit with the theme, I'll tell you just a little about him once again.

From a Wikipedia page on him, we'll read just a short passage –

“Garrett was also a friend and benefactor to the noted Underground Railroad Conductor Harriet Tubman, who passed through his station many times. In addition to lodging and meals, Garrett frequently provided her with money and shoes to continue her missions conducting runaways from slavery to freedom. Garrett also provided Tubman with the money and the means for her parents to escape from the South. (Both were free people at the time Tubman rescued them, but Tubman's father faced arrest for secreting runaway slaves in his cabin.)”

“The number of runaways Garrett assisted has sometimes been exaggerated. He said he “only helped 2,700” before the Civil War put an end to slavery.”

“In 1848, however, he and fellow Quaker John Hunn were sued in federal court for helping the Emeline and Samuel Hawkins family of seven slaves owned by two owners escape, although their lawyer colleague John Wales had managed to free them from imprisonment the previous year when a magistrate granted a writ of habeas corpus. However, the two slaveowners sued Hunn and Garrett. U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger B. Taney presided at the trial in the New Castle Court House, and James A. Bayard, Jr. acted as prosecutor. Garrett and Hunn were found guilty of violating the Fugitive Slave Act by helping a family of slaves escape. As the ‘architect’ of the escape, Garrett received a \$4,500 fine, later reduced to \$1,500. According to Kathleen Lonsdale, referencing the American Friends Service Committee, ‘The fine was so heavy that it left him financially ruined, yet Thomas Garrett stood up in Court and said Judge thou has left me not a dollar, but I wish to say to thee and to all in this courtroom that if anyone knows a fugitive who wants a shelter and a friend, send him to Thomas Garrett and he will befriend him.’ A lien was put on his house until the fine was paid, and although Hunn ended up losing his house in a sheriff's sale, with the aid of friends Garrett continued in his iron and hardware business and helping runaway slaves to freedom. By 1855, traffic

through Garrett's station had increased, and Sydney Howard Gay noted that in 1855 to 1856 nearly 50 fugitives whom Garrett had helped arrived in New York.”

He was adamant that the slaves he helped would not be returned to their master. Whether you agree with his position or not, he was a man of principle and he did what was right in regard to this great issue that plagued his time in history.

As for the slave who escaped from his master that Moses refers to, and concerning several other interesting issues laid down in our passage today, they will be looked at in detail as we continue.

Great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

Various Laws (verses 15-25)

¹⁵ “You shall not give back to his master the slave who has escaped from his master to you.

The pronouns are all in the singular, “you Israel.” It is a national mandate that the escaped slave is not to be returned to a master outside of Israel.

The words here need to be taken in the fuller context which is inclusive of the next verse. This is referring to a non-Hebrew slave that has escaped into a town of Israel. The words *lo tasgir*, or “no you shall give back,” speak of being shut up, as if in confinement. A paraphrase might be, “you shall not re-confine slave to his master.”

He has escaped, obtaining his freedom, and he should be allowed to continue in that state. In modern Hebrew, the words *lo tasgir* mean “to not rat out.” In the end, to rat out a slave would result in the same thing happening, and so the meaning hasn’t changed that much, at least in this regard.

The unusual thought of not returning a slave being included here is rather perplexing. This is so much the case, that some scholars tie it to the idea of warfare that was mentioned in the previous verses (9-14) of the last sermon.

However, those verses – though dealing with an army – were not really speaking of warfare, but of purity and holiness. The same idea will be seen in verses 17 and onward,

and so it is unlikely that this is simply referring to a slave who escaped during war. Instead, Moses must be conveying the idea of purity, holiness, and/or what is just here as well.

What seems to be the case is that the thought of him being a slave is secondary to the larger principle being set forth. In other words, it says this in Leviticus 19 –

“And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. ³⁴ The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.” Leviticus 19:33, 34

The same principle is being stated here in Deuteronomy. Israel was a slave-nation to Egypt. Each person was an individual slave as well. But they had been brought out from that. However, there is the truth that being brought from slavery in Egypt they had been brought into the bondage of the law. Paul explains this to us –

“Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? ²² For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. ²³ But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, ²⁴ which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— ²⁵ for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children— ²⁶ but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. ²⁷ For it is written:

‘Rejoice, O barren,
You who do not bear!
Break forth and shout,
You who are not in labor!
For the desolate has many more children
Than she who has a husband.’” Galatians 4:21-27

Israel was brought out of slavery to Egypt and brought into the bondage of the law. The escaped slave was to not be returned to his master out of the same principle by which the Lord freed Israel.

The idea now being set forth is that everyone is a slave to someone or something. One must choose who he will be a slave to. This principle continues on for those in Christ. As Paul says –

“Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called. ²¹ Were you called *while* a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use *it*. ²² For he who is called in the Lord *while* a slave is the Lord’s freedman. Likewise he who is called *while* free is Christ’s slave. ²³ You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. ²⁴ Brethren, let each one remain with God in that *state* in which he was called.” 1 Corinthians 7:20-24

For the escaped slave now being referred to, Moses next says...

¹⁶ He may dwell with you in your midst,

The words continue in the singular, demonstrating that this is the slave of an alien, not one who was enslaved in Israel. He is allowed to dwell within the midst of Israel. No restrictions are placed upon him in this regard, as is seen in the next words...

¹⁶ (con’t) in the place which he chooses

These words further express his freedom. He is given complete freedom as to where he will reside. He is not restricted from any tribe of Israel, nor is he mandated to reside in a particular tribe of Israel. He is to be considered accepted in whatever tribe he settles in, which is...

¹⁶ (con’t) within one of your gates,

Not only is he not restricted to, or from, any tribal inheritance, he is also not restricted from the security of living within a city in any given tribal inheritance. He is to be accepted into the gates of whatever city he chooses.

One must remember that this is a matter of law. Moses has penned it, and therefore, the people must comply in the same manner as any other law. This cannot be denied without violating the very law and covenant that has established them as a people.

To ensure the precept was fully fleshed out, and to avoid any ambiguity at all, he next says...

16 (con't) **where it seems best to him;**

ba'tov lo – “in the good to him.” The decision is at his pleasure alone, and no person was to interfere with it. In essence, he has all the rights of a member of the nation to determine his own place and circumstance. Anything else would be considered a hindering influence upon him, and Moses forbids that, saying...

16 (con't) **you shall not oppress him.**

lo tonenu – “no you shall suppress him.” The word is *yanah*. Most translations say “oppress.” That would mean, “you shall not keep him in subservience.” And that very well may be the meaning. He was a slave, and you shall not place him back into that state.

However, the previous clauses speak of his freedoms in choice: 1) He may dwell with you in your midst; 2) in the place he chooses; 3) within one of your gates; 4) where it seems best to him.

Because of this, I would suggest that this is referring to suppression rather than oppression. They are not to suppress him or stop him from making the choice that suits him best.

Regardless of this, one can see Israel as a type of life in Christ. Outside of Israel, the person is in bondage. A person that comes to Christ (as we saw in 1 Corinthians) is the Lord's freedman.

However, and having that in mind, a person who comes to Israel from slavery is then made a slave to the law. Likewise, a person that comes to Christ, even if the Lord's freedman, becomes a slave to righteousness, as Paul says, “And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness” (Romans 6:18). As already said, one must choose who or what he will be a slave to.

The verse here speaks of eternal salvation as clearly as it can be stated. A person who comes to Christ is to never be sent back his previous master, the devil. As a slave to Christ, he is so forever. He is forever free from the bondage he has been brought out from.

That an escaped slave who comes to Israel becomes a slave to the law is seen in the very next words because they are words that apply to all in Israel, and they are binding upon them...

17 “There shall be no *ritual* harlot of the daughters of Israel,

Here it refers to the *qedeshah*, or harlot. The word speaks of a female devotee. The word is closely tied to the word *qodesh*, meaning “holy,” “sacred,” “set apart,” and so on. The reason is that such a person is set apart to prostitution, quite often in relation to temple prostitution.

No daughter of Israel was to be forced or allowed to be set apart in this manner. It is contrary to purity and holiness, and thus it is forbidden.

The law is holy and righteous, and it says that no person may participate in such unrighteousness. Just as a slave who has joined to Israel is not to engage in such an act of unrighteousness, no person who comes to Christ is to seek after the flesh. Thus, the thought of a Christian being a slave to righteousness is the same as what is seen here.

This does not mean that a person in Israel cannot actually do what Moses forbids here. There are examples later in Scripture of them doing just this. And it does not mean that a Christian cannot do what is forbidden in the epistle. We all know Christians who have followed after the flesh. But the precepts are given. Moses next continues with...

17 (con’t) or a perverted one of the sons of Israel.

Here it speaks of the *qadesh*. It is the masculine of the word just used in the previous clause. It signifies a male who is in the same position. He is set apart to prostitution, and thus a sodomite. As it is closely tied to that which is sacred, it is translated at times as a temple prostitute or cult prostitute.

Just as these were forbidden in Israel, the same is true with what is written in the New Testament epistles.

18 You shall not bring the wages of a harlot

Here it speaks of the *ethnan zonah*, or wages of a harlot. The word *ethnan* is new, coming from *tanah*, signifying “to hire,” but with reference to hiring a prostitute. Thus, the *ethnan* is the wages spent when hiring her out. Along with that...

18 (con't) **or the price of a dog**

u-mekhir kelev – “and price dog.” This is not speaking of an actual dog. Rather, it follows on with the thought of the previous clause. That spoke of the wages of a harlot. Here, a new word, *mekhir*, or price, is joined to that of a dog, meaning the male prostitute of the previous verse. Moses is using parallelism –

ritual harlot (*qedeshah*) / wages of a harlot
perverted one (*qadesh*) / price of a dog

The idea is then the doglike manner in which the perverted one presents himself. This term is later used in Revelation 22:15 –

“But outside *are* dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.” Revelation 22:15

Having said this, because such a person is equated to a dog, it is certain that no price of an actual dog was to be included in this prohibition of being brought...

18 (con't) **to the house of the LORD your God for any vowed offering,**

The idea here is that of the necessity to pay ones *neder*, or vow as was already explained in Numbers –

“Then Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, “This *is* the thing which the LORD has commanded: ² If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.”

-Numbers 30:1, 2

All of Numbers 30 details the subject of vows. Once the vow is made and confirmed, it became an absolute obligation to pay it. However, one could not then use the excuse that the necessity of paying a vow to the Lord would excuse obtaining the means of paying the vow through such sexual perversion. The reason is...

18 (con't) **for both of these *are* an abomination to the LORD your God.**

The sale of a woman's or a man's body is, in itself, abominable to Yehovah. As Yehovah is Israel's God, it cannot be considered acceptable to pay a vow to Him with money that was obtained in a manner which is contrary to His moral nature.

The general tenor of this thought is found in Romans –

“You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? ²² You who say, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? ²³ You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? ²⁴ For ‘the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,’ as it is written.” Romans 2:21-24

This could also be lumped into the thought of Romans 3:8, “Let us do evil that good may come.” As Paul says of those who would say such a thing, “Their condemnation is just.” As such, it is not acceptable to sell oneself (commit evil) in order to bring forth a vowed offering (do what is proper).

¹⁹ **“You shall not charge interest to your brother—**

Here the verb *nashak* is used. It signifies “to bite.” As such, it speaks of interest or usury. In other words, by adding on to the original cost for repayment, it is as if one is biting another. Thus, the words *lo tashik akhikha* could be paraphrased as, “You shall not bite to your brother.” With that, Moses next explains it using the noun form of the same word...

¹⁹ (con't) **interest on money *or* food *or* anything that is lent out at interest.**

The idea of lending without interest has already been stated in Exodus 22 and Leviticus 25. In both instances, it speaks of lending to the poor and not charging interest. For this reason, some scholars see this as only pertaining to the poor.

However, Moses does not qualify it as such. Rather, he says “your brother” without any other qualifications. And more, for strong emphasis, the Hebrew repeats the noun *neshek*, or interest, three times, and then follows up with the verb form: *neshek keseph neshek okel neshek kal davar asher yishak* – “interest silver, interest food, interest anything which is lent on interest (lit: which bites).

The words, if considered in relation to Christ, show the enormity of what He did for us. Not only does He not charge interest on such things, He offers them without any cost at all –

“Ho! Everyone who thirsts,
Come to the waters;
And you who have no money (keseph, silver),
Come, buy and eat (food).
Yes, come, buy wine and milk (anything)
Without money and without price.” Isaiah 55:1

Israel is given a standard, because it is a shadowy anticipation of the greater provision found in Christ towards His people, because they are His people. On the other hand...

²⁰ To a foreigner you may charge interest,

The word translated as “foreigner” is *nokri*. It signifies a stranger or something out of place. It is something that does not belong because the nature of the thing is foreign.

As traders came into or through the land – by ship, by camel, or whatever – they would naturally be willing to lend at interest. As such, it would make no sense to forbid the same towards them. The prohibition is, therefore, only one that pertains to a brother, meaning a fellow Israelite. As Moses again repeats...

²⁰ (con’t) but to your brother you shall not charge interest,

Moses turns around the words already said. “No shall you charge interest to your brother” / “and to your brother no you shall charge interest.” In this, there can be no manipulation of the law. It is clear and unambiguous. And there is a reason for this...

²⁰ (con’t) that the LORD your God may bless you

I’maan yebarekha Yehovah elohekha – “To end purpose may bless you Yehovah your God.” There is an end purpose in not charging interest which is to receive the blessing of the Lord. The implication is that in charging interest, such a blessing would be withheld. For the obedient, the blessing is one which will be...

²⁰ (con’t) in all to which you set your hand in the land which you are entering to possess.

Moses uses the word *mishloakh*, an outstretching. A more literal reading is “in all which you stretch forth your hand upon the land.” One can think of everything prospering and each time the hand reaches out, it brings back abundance.

Thought through logically, it is essentially a promise that in not asking for extra from one’s brother, the Lord will – in turn – provide more than would have been obtained by asking for extra.

This is the third time that Moses has made a contrast between the *nokri*, or foreigner, and *akhikha* or “your brother.” The first was in Deuteronomy 15 concerning the release of debts in the seventh year –

“Of a **foreigner** you may require *it*; but you shall give up your claim to what is owed by **your brother**” Deuteronomy 15:3

The second was in Deuteronomy 17 in relation to setting a king over themselves –

“you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses; *one* from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a **foreigner** over you, who *is* not **your brother**.” Deuteronomy 17:15

This third is in relation to interest –

“To a **foreigner** you may charge interest, but to **your brother** you shall not charge interest.” Deuteronomy 23:20

It is of note that Israel violated all three of these. The first is recorded as being violated in Jeremiah 34 –

“Therefore thus says the LORD: ‘You have not obeyed Me in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother and every one to his neighbor. Behold, I proclaim liberty to you,’ says the LORD—‘to the sword, to pestilence, and to famine! And I will deliver you to trouble among all the kingdoms of the earth.’” Jeremiah 34:17

The second is recorded as being violated in John 19 –

“But they cried out, ‘Away with *Him*, away with *Him*! Crucify Him!’
Pilate said to them, ‘Shall I crucify your King?’
The chief priests answered, ‘We have no king but Caesar!’” John 19:15

The third is recorded as being violated in Ezekiel 22 –

“In you they take bribes to shed blood; you take usury and increase; you have made profit from your neighbors by extortion, and have forgotten Me,” says the Lord GOD.” Ezekiel 22:12

The precepts, clearly laid out by Moses and yet violated by Israel, show the stark contrast to the greatness of Christ who perfectly fulfilled and exceeded these (and all) precepts of the law.

²¹ **“When you make a vow to the LORD your God,**

The words more precisely read, “When vowing a vow to Yehovah your God.” This is a voluntary act and the guidelines for it are laid out in (as noted earlier) Numbers 30. When a vow is made and confirmed, it becomes binding. It must be paid. But more, Moses says...

²¹ (con’t) **you shall not delay to pay it;**

There are, as in any debts or vows, reasons why such things should be paid in a timely manner. There is the possibility that the vower might not be able to pay later.

If he was the victim of an accident, theft, other obligations arising, and so on... suddenly, the priorities may change. But one’s primary responsibility is to personal integrity before and towards the Lord.

It could be that the person will forget the vow was made. It may be that regret creeps in. It may be that the person dies before paying it. But, again, one’s primary responsibility is to personal integrity before and towards the Lord.

The impetus of the law is that any vowed vow should be treated as a priority in one’s life. Solomon, certainly thinking of this law now laid down by Moses, says –

“When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it;
For *He has* no pleasure in fools.
Pay what you have vowed—

⁵ Better not to vow than to vow and not pay.” Ecclesiastes 5:4, 5

As a vow is voluntary, the obligation rests in a very firm manner upon the one who made it to also perform it without fail. Should he fail in this, it shows a deep lack of integrity before the Lord. Thus...

21 (con't) for the LORD your God will surely require it of you,

The Hebrew is emphatic – “requiring, He will require it of you.” The vow has been uttered, and it must be performed. To delay brings in the possibility, and likely state, of nonperformance. In this, Moses then says...

21 (con't) and it would be sin to you.

The idea of sin is that which brings a curse. This is what the Lord rebuked Israel for in the making of a vow –

“But cursed *be* the deceiver
Who has in his flock a male,
And takes a vow,
But sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished—
For I *am* a great King,”
Says the LORD of hosts,
“And My name *is to be* feared among the nations.” Malachi 1:14

To make a vow and then to sacrifice that which is blemished is to not fulfill the vow. The reason is because nothing blemished was to be offered to the Lord in a vow (Leviticus 22:17-23). In all vows, performance was expected, and it was expected in accord with the law.

22 But if you abstain from vowing, it shall not be sin to you.

Paul says, in Romans 4:15 that “the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law *there is* no transgression.” As there is no law mandating a vow, there can be no transgression in not vowing. However, there is a law concerning vows. As such, in vowing and not performing, sin is imputed.

In this, one can see how the law works against a person every step of the way. It is a form of bondage even if it is good and holy. The problem is not in the law, but in man who does not perform the requirements of the law – whatever they may be. As such...

²³ That which has gone from your lips you shall keep and perform,

When the vow is made, and when the lips have uttered forth their words of obligation, then *tishmor v'asita* – “you shall keep, and you shall do.” It is a matter of law and therefore to fail to perform is to sin. And to sin is to thus incur guilt...

²³ (con't) for you voluntarily vowed to the LORD your God what you have promised with your mouth.

The person, in making a vow, places himself under law. This was, like Israel's commitment to the Lord concerning the Mosaic Law, a voluntary act. Until they agreed to the law, it was not binding on them. But upon their agreement to it, they were no longer free from it.

A vow is no different. It is not a point of law until it is spoken with the mouth. But once it is spoken, it becomes a point of law, the stipulations of which must be fulfilled accordingly. And this is what Christ did.

First, He voluntarily placed Himself under the law. God was under no obligation to enter into the stream of humanity and fulfill the Mosaic code. But He did so –

“Sacrifice and offering You did not desire;
My ears You have opened.
Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.
⁷ Then I said, ‘Behold, I come;
In the scroll of the book *it is* written of me.
⁸ I delight to do Your will, O my God,
And Your law *is* within my heart.’” Psalm 40:6-8

The author of Hebrews, as seen in our text verse today, uses these words to show that Christ voluntarily placed Himself into this position in order to fulfill the law, take it away, and thereby establish the New Covenant.

But while under the law, the Lord made His own voluntary vows. That is prophesied in the 22nd Psalm –

“I will declare Your name to My brethren;
In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.
²³ You who fear the LORD, praise Him!

All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him,
And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel!

²⁴ For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;
Nor has He hidden His face from Him;
But when He cried to Him, He heard.

²⁵ My praise *shall be* of You in the great assembly;
I will pay My vows before those who fear Him.

²⁶ The poor shall eat and be satisfied;
Those who seek Him will praise the LORD.
Let your heart live forever!” Psalm 22:22-26

The Lord made vows and promised to pay them, making Himself the surety for their accomplishment. The author of Hebrews explains their fulfillment in Hebrews 2 –

“For it was fitting for Him, for whom *are* all things and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹ For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified *are* all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, ¹² saying:

‘I will declare Your name to My brethren;
In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.’

¹³ And again:

‘I will put My trust in Him.’

And again:

‘Here am I and the children whom God has given Me.’” Hebrews 2:10-13

Thus, where Israel is shown to have failed in their performance of the code, Christ both kept and performed that which He spoke with His mouth.

²⁴ **“When you come into your neighbor’s vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes at your pleasure,**

The final two verses of the chapter convey the same thought. In the first one, it deals with the vineyard. Anyone in Israel was allowed to walk upon the cultivated land at will, even onto someone’s property. It is the Lord’s land, and He – through Moses – indicates as much.

While there, the person is allowed to eat *anavim k'naphshekha saveekha* – “grapes according to your soul your satisfaction.” In other words, there is no prohibition on eating as much as one desires, even to filling, while in another’s field. However...

²⁴ (con’t) **but you shall not put *any* in your container.**

The idea here concerns that what you can eat and nothing more. Nothing beyond that was to be taken from the field. Likewise...

²⁵ **When you come into your neighbor’s standing grain, you may pluck the heads with your hand,**

Moses introduces two new words here. The first is *qataph*, meaning to crop off, cut down or up, or pluck. It will be seen five times, once here, twice in Job, and twice in Ezekiel.

The second word is found only here, *melilah*. It refers to the head of grain. Anyone could pick the heads and eat them at will, just as with the grapes. It is what Jesus, and His disciples, did as is recorded in the gospels –

“At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. ² And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said to Him, ‘Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!’” Matthew 12;1, 2

What they were doing was perfectly legal. It is not the eating that they say isn’t lawful, but the picking of the grain. As this was considered a work, the Pharisees spoke against Him for it.

In turn, Jesus defended Himself by citing accounts from Scripture to demonstrate to them that what they were doing was not without precedent, and then applying such exemptions to Himself. As far as the law of the grain, they were not in violation of the precept. The allowance is given by Moses. However...

*²⁵ (fin) **but you shall not use a sickle on your neighbor’s standing grain.**

Here is the second and last use of the word *khermesh*, meaning a sickle. It comes from *kharam* which is the act of devoting something to God through destruction, exterminating, and so on.

Like filling a vessel with grapes, it was forbidden to cut down stalks of grain which could then be carried out of the field and threshed. One could only pick and eat what was in his hand.

The point of these last two verses is summed up in Jesus' final words to the Pharisees as He responded to their accusations –

“But if you had known what *this* means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless. ⁸ For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.” Matthew 12:7, 8

The law set down by Moses now is one of mercy for the hungry. Though the field is the property of another, the law says that this is not stealing. Therefore, the law is given, in this case, to provide mercy to the hungry. That takes precedent over the eighth commandment. However, to take more would be a violation of the command.

As this is so concerning the law being one of mercy, then the hungry are not disobedient to the Sabbath when they eat what comes to their hand. No violation of the fourth commandment results.

Along with that, as the Sabbath was made for man (Mark 2:27), and as Christ is the ideal Man, and as there was a need to be filled for the Man, then what occurred on the Sabbath could not be considered a violation of the law.

The idea of purity, holiness, and of what is just has been the guiding thought of what is presented in this chapter. Each point was given to Israel to guide their conduct and to maintain them as a holy people before the Lord.

And yet, each point has – in one way or another – anticipated the Person and work of Christ who would come and fulfill both the legal requirements set down for Israel, and also the typology set forth by the Lord in the various precepts.

Again, and again, the law is revealing to us the greatness of what God has done in Christ by leading us to the law, through the law, and into a new place where we can fellowship with Him apart from the condemning influence of the law.

In this, He asks us to have faith in what He has done. It is this simple act of acknowledging His work that brings us into a right relationship with Him. As such, we

can then live for God without the sentence of death hanging over us that has troubled man since our first father.

Let us be wise and accept the Gift of grace by receiving Christ as Savior. This is what God would ask of you today, and it is what I ask you to consider with all of your heart and mind. Reach out and be restored – to the renewing of your soul in Christ our Lord.

Closing Verse: *“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” Romans 10:4*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 24:1-4 *Israel often issued these without considering the Source...* (A Certificate of Divorce) (69th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Holy Conduct Before the Lord, Part II

You shall not give back to his master, this you shall not do
The slave who has escaped from his master to you

He may dwell with you in your midst
In the place which he chooses within one of your gates
Where it seems best to him
You shall not oppress him as this word states

“There shall be no *ritual* harlot of the daughters of Israel
Or a perverted one of the sons of Israel, so to you I tell

You shall not bring the wages of a harlot or the price of a dog
To the house of the LORD your God, such thinking
-----would be flawed
For any vowed offering
For both of these *are* an abomination to the LORD your God

“You shall not charge interest to your brother
This is a command and not a request

Interest on money *or* food
Or anything that is lent out at interest

To a foreigner you may charge interest, but to your brother
You shall not charge interest, so to you I address
That the LORD your God may bless you
-----in all to which you set your hand
In the land which you are entering to possess

“When you make a vow to the LORD your God
You shall not delay to pay it, such you shall not do
For the LORD your God will surely require it of you
And it would be sin to you

But if you abstain from vowing, if this you do
It shall not be sin to you

That which has gone from your lips
You shall keep and perform, as certainly
-----as north is north and south is south
For you voluntarily vowed to the LORD your God
What you have promised with your mouth

“When you come into your neighbor’s vineyard
You may eat your fill of grapes at your pleasure
But you shall not put *any* in your container
Your mouth is to be the sole measure

When you come into your neighbor’s standing grain
You may pluck the heads with your hand again and again
But you shall not use a sickle
On your neighbor’s standing grain

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 24:1-4 (A Certificate of Divorce)

A bit more than a year ago, a member of the congregation sent me the sermon, “God’s Divorce From Israel” given by Chuck Baldwin. I was asked to address it as Baldwin claims that the divorce of Israel means that the people in the land of Israel today are not God’s people, and that they are no longer a part of what God is doing in the world.

As his sermon is openly posted on YouTube for all the world to see, I will not be as gracious as I might otherwise have been. Unsound theology is to be called out – openly and publicly – as Paul reveals in Galatians 2.

To his credit, Baldwin does acknowledge that Jews are a part of the church, but that is as obvious as the nose on one’s face. Any person on the planet who trusts in Jesus is a part of the church, which is the Bride of Christ.

Other than this one sermon, I know nothing about the guy, but this sermon clearly reveals a faulty hermeneutic that completely misses what God is doing in and through Israel in redemptive history. I can’t hold back my disdain for his theology, nor will I.

Such doctrine as his reveals a God that is not faithful to His covenants, and His word is not to be taken at face value. We must remember that man’s unfaithfulness does not negate the faithfulness of God.

In his sermon, Baldwin cites the verses used in today’s passage – well, actually he miscites them – in order to come to an erroneous conclusion concerning Israel of today. He says that these verses in Deuteronomy 24 were as a protection for the women.

That has nothing to do with what Moses is saying. The entire basis for what is said is found only in verse 4, and it has nothing to do with that. He then says that the Lord through the prophets (Isaiah and Jeremiah) is basically saying –

“As you used divorce against your wives, I am using divorce against you. You and I are through. This marriage is over.” Chuck Baldwin

In saying that, he is then implying that the Lord is the wrongdoer because He has divorced His wife who is supposed to be protected as he is noted as saying earlier. The thought process is unclear and convoluted.

If the Lord is the Husband, and the purpose of the law is to protect the wife, then one could only conclude that the Lord failed to protect his wife by divorcing her.

This is the problem with not studying the law properly and, instead, relying on life application and topical sermons. There is no understanding of what the Lord is actually conveying in really important passages of Scripture.

The doctrinal statement on his church's website says, "LF opposes Socialism, Neoconism and Zionism. Accordingly, we do not support the socialistic Welfare State or the Neocon Warfare State. Neither do we believe that the modern Zionist State of Israel represents either historical (Biblical) Israel or prophetic Israel. Accordingly, we reject Scofieldism and dispensational futurism."

In other words, the prophetic words of Ezekiel, Daniel, Revelation, and etc. are not to be taken literally when they speak of Israel the people, and they have no part of God's redemptive plans for the future. That means, 100% and for sure, that he does not believe our text verse for today...

Text Verse: *"I will bring back the captives of My people Israel;
They shall build the waste cities and inhabit them;
They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them;
They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them.
¹⁵ I will plant them in their land,
And no longer shall they be pulled up
From the land I have given them,"
Says the LORD your God." Amos 9:14, 15*

There is no time in human history where this has been literally fulfilled. Israel was pulled up, twice, and so if you don't believe that the people in the land today are who the Lord is speaking of, then you either don't believe the word, or you must say that these words mean something other than what they say. Thus, with his theology, the Bible (the word of God) concerning these verses is 1) wrong, or 2) it must be spiritualized.

This is true with countless other Old Testament (and New Testament) verses which clearly indicate that God is not through with Israel, and that He has planted them back in the land of Israel for His sovereign purposes.

In one of his statements during the sermon, and speaking of the Roman destruction of Jerusalem, he says that "the destruction of Jerusalem was God's writ of divorcement

from Israel.” I’d love to find where in Scripture he gets that idea. But... it’s not there, so he won’t.

He was saying this in relation to the words of Jeremiah 3 (which we will cite today). Jeremiah 3 is at a time *prior* to the *first* temple (along with Jerusalem) destruction, not only the second... oops.

So how can the “divorce,” that Baldwin is speaking of, be the Roman “divorce.” Obviously, the temple destruction does not mean – as he arbitrarily and incorrectly claims – a “divorce.” If it did, there would have been two divorces... oops.

Secondly, as you will see in our words today, the Lord never divorced Judah... oops. That is actually rather important because Judah is the land, and the people group, where the temple (and Jerusalem) is... oops. The Lord was speaking about a divorce with the northern ten tribes (Israel)... oops. But even they are called back by the Lord to Himself, as is clearly stated elsewhere in Scripture... oops.

There are lots and lots of oopsies in his 22 minute and 41 second sermon. So many that I am personally embarrassed for him. A little less golfing (or whatever) and a bit more study will help resolve this. A reliance on a literal interpretation of the word of God, when it calls for it, will help resolve this too. And, learning the *context* of what is being said is always a giant help.

In that sermon, his thoughts are confused, his handling of Scripture is appalling, and his conclusions make no sense at all. As this is the only sermon I have ever seen of his, I will chalk this up to a really bad week, no time to prepare for his sermon, and temporary loss of memory involving important Bible verses as he was speaking.

Otherwise, if this is indicative of his normal theology, those who sit under him are being instructed in a very poor manner by someone who probably should take an extended vacation and do nothing but read the word again and again until it sinks in.

Wonderful truths, such as pleasing God through sound doctrine and proper theology are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. When a Man Takes a Wife (verses 1-4)

The first four verses comprise one sentence, the main subject of which is not found until the fourth verse. Everything before that is given to bring the reader to understand what is forbidden there. Moses' words are stated precisely and with a logical purpose and intent. With that in mind, verse 1 now begins with...

¹**“When a man takes a wife and marries her,**

ki yiqah ish ishshah ubealah – “When takes man wife and has dominion over her.” The word *baal*, signifying to marry or rule over, is used. The idea of being a wife or being married has been seen many times since Genesis 2:4, but the verb *baal* has only been used twice so far, beginning in Genesis 20:3. In both instances, it referred to the authority of the man over the woman.

The noun form, *baal*, has been used a couple times in the same manner. Moses' use of it now shows that he is referring to rule of a man over a woman. In the use of this now, it implies an unequal footing. This is seemingly at odds with what Genesis 2 states –

“And Adam said:

‘This *is* now bone of my bones

And flesh of my flesh;

She shall be called Woman,

Because she was taken out of Man.’

²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” Genesis 2:23, 24

In the words of Genesis 2, it can be argued that it implies an equalness displayed in mutual interaction. There may be differing roles, but they would seemingly work harmoniously together. Only in Genesis 3 does this appear to change –

“To the woman He said:

‘I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception;

In pain you shall bring forth children;

Your desire *shall be* for your husband,

And he shall rule over you.’” Genesis 3:16

Nothing was said of rule until that point, but from that point on it is taken as an axiom that the man will rule over his wife. Even if a oneness is still what occurs, it is a oneness

with an authority and rule within the union. As for this rule of the man over the woman in marriage, in such a state, Moses' continues with...

1 (con't) and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes

v'hayah im lo timsa khi b'नाव – “and it shall be if no she finds grace in his eyes.” This is a conditional clause leading to the purpose stated in the main clause.

Further, Moses is not saying that such will ever happen, but he is simply noting that if it does happen, what actions can be taken, and what things are forbidden based on such action.

The man has assumed authority over a woman through marriage, and now she fails to find grace in his eyes. Grace is getting what one does not deserve. In other words, there is something wrong, and the husband is unwilling to overlook that thing. His favor does not extend to such a point. If this is the case...

1 (con't) because he has found some uncleanness in her,

ki matsa bah ervat davar – “when he has found in her nakedness thing.” In other words, there is something in her that exposes her as unclean, blemished, having some shame, or so on.

The actual meaning is hard to pin down. As such, different sects within the nation arbitrarily decided what it meant, even extending it to any reason at all.

In this, they leaned more on the precept provided now than on the implication of Genesis 2:24, which was the binding of two as one. In other words, they took the union as *one being made of two*, rather than the union of *two as being one*. In this, Moses says...

1 (con't) and he writes her a certificate of divorce,

v'katav lah sepher kerithuth – “and writes to her scroll divorce.” Here, the word *kerithuth*, or divorce, is introduced. It is from *karath*, to cut off or cut down. Thus, it is a cutting of the bonds of marriage.

The word will be seen just four times, twice in this chapter, and then in Isaiah 50:1 and Jeremiah 3:8. All four of these instances are to be cited as we continue in our words today. Divorce will be referred to in the New Testament as well. For now, he...

¹ (con't) **puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house,**

v'natan b'yadah v'shilekhah mibeito – “and gives in her hand, and sends her out from his house.” It is an obvious set of words. The man determined that the woman wasn't right for whatever reason the law tolerated. As the authority over her, the certificate is written, he then puts it in her hand and sends her away.

The woman, because of the bill of divorce, is “presumably” permitted to be married to another. As noted above, the idea of a certificate of divorce is also found in the New Testament. Jesus more perfectly explains this troubling matter –

“Furthermore it has been said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ ³² But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.” Matthew 5:31, 32

Jesus, quoting Moses now, does not say that what Moses said is inappropriate. Rather, he shows that the result of what is written can lead to that which is inappropriate. In other words, He does not say that the divorce itself is sin, but a divorce can lead to sin. Paul further clarifies what this means, saying –

“Now to the married I command, *yet* not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from *her* husband. ¹¹ But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to *her* husband. And a husband is not to divorce *his* wife.”

-1 Corinthians 7:10, 11

Paul shows that a departure means the woman is to remain *unmarried* or to be reconciled to her husband. And more, he says that in the New Covenant a believing husband is not to divorce his wife. He provides no exceptions to this.

He does, however, provide more guidelines and an exemption to one married to a nonbeliever –

“But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. ¹³ And a

woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. ¹⁴ For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. ¹⁵ But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace. ¹⁶ For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save *your* husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save *your* wife?" 1 Corinthians 7:12-16

In all cases, the onus to protect the marriage is placed upon the believer. As far as Jesus' words, it is only later in Matthew that He explains the meaning of His earlier words –

"The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for *just* any reason?'

⁴ And He answered and said to them, 'Have you not read that He who made *them* at the beginning "made them male and female," ⁵ and said, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh"? ⁶ So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

⁷ They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?'

⁸ He said to them, 'Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. ⁹ And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.'"

-Matthew 19:3-9

Jesus shows that what the law permitted does not abrogate what the original intent for marriage is. Despite this, Moses has permitted divorce and the sending away of a woman. Thus...

² when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man's wife,

v'yatseah mibeto v'haleka v'hayetah l'ish akher – "And she goes out from his house, and she has walked, and she becomes to man another." This is still a conditional clause. Nothing has been mandated. There is simply a proposition set forth.

The woman has been given a bill of divorce, she has been sent out, and in her being sent out, she has become wife to another man (*ish*, not *baal* – man, not master). As such, a

new dynamic has arisen for the man who sent her out which begins to be revealed next...

³ if the latter husband detests her

u-seneah ha'ish ha'akharon – “and hates her the man, the latter.” The woman has become a wife to another man (*ish*, not *baal* – man, not master), and he now hates her. As this is still a proposition set forth as a possibility, if such is the case...

^{3 (con't)} and writes her a certificate of divorce,

v'katav lah sepher kerithuth – “and writes to her scroll divorce.” It is word for word and letter for letter exactly the same as what was said of the first husband. The latter husband has written her a scroll of divorce. It is still a proposition of possibility. If such is the case, and he then...

^{3 (con't)} puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house,

v'natan b'yadah v'shilekhah mibeito – “and gives in her hand, and sends her out from his house.” Again, it is a word for word and letter for letter copy of what was said in verse 1. She has been given a scroll of divorce, it has been placed in her hand, and she has been sent out of his house. If such is the case...

^{3 (con't)} or if the latter husband dies who took her as his wife,

o ki yamut ha'akharon asher leqahah lo l'ishah – “or when dies the latter who took her his to wife.” A second possibility that ends the marriage is set forth. The latter husband (*ish*, not *baal* – man, not master) dies. If either of these occurs in this hypothetical situation...

⁴ then her former husband who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife

lo yukal balah ha'rishon asher shalekha la'shuv leqakhtah lihyot lo l'ishah – “No is able her master the first, who sent her, to return to take to be to his to wife.” There is no allowance for the first husband (*baal*, not *ish* – master, not man) to retake the woman as his wife again.

This is the purpose of the entire set of verses. The conditional statements in the proposition set forth have been laid down in order to form a point of law. That is now stated, explicitly. But the reason is not yet given. That only comes in the next words...

^{4 (con't)} **after she has been defiled;**

The Hebrew is precise here. It is a form of verb known as a Hithpael. It is a causative reflexive verb. In other words, there is causation (being defiled), but the action of the verb is both committed and received by the same entity. It says: *akhare asher hutamaah* – “after which she has allowed herself to be defiled.”

It is the woman who has gone astray. This is exactly in line with the words of both Jesus and Paul as seen earlier –

“Furthermore it has been said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ ³² But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.” Matthew 5:31, 32

“Now to the married I command, *yet* not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from *her* husband. ¹¹ But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to *her* husband. And a husband is not to divorce *his* wife.”

1 Corinthians 7:10, 11

Jesus says that when the woman remarries, she has committed adultery. A man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery. In both cases, the *woman* is the cause of the adultery. Paul (speaking of believers) says the same thing.

This is why the term *baal* has been used of the first husband, but *ish* was used of the latter husband. The authority remains with the first husband, because she was one flesh with the husband as the head. In remarrying, she has caused herself to be defiled.

Of these verses, John Lange correctly states –

“The pointing in the original makes it clear that Moses does not institute or command divorce. The pointing in our version implies that he does so. He is merely prescribing limitations or regulations to a prevailing custom, which was not in accordance with the institution of marriage, and was only permitted there in this limited sense, and under these restrictions, ‘for the hardness of their hearts.’” John Lange

In fact, in following the words set forth by Moses, it is clear that the first husband was the head of that woman, even when she marries another. Her obligation remains to him, and in her having another man, she then is the one who brings defilement on herself. As she is defiled at that point, he cannot take her back...

^{4 (con't)} **for that is an abomination before the LORD,**

ki toevah hi liphne Yehovah – “for abomination she before Yehovah.” It is a feminine pronoun indicating “it” or “she.” Most translations say, “for it (meaning “that”) is an abomination before the Lord.” Only the Douay Rheims gets it right saying, “because *she* is defiled, and is become abominable before the Lord.”

The question for translators is, “Is this referring to the act of the man taking her back – ‘it is an abomination’ – or is it referring to the woman who has been defiled – ‘she is an abomination?’” The subject is the act, but the nearest antecedent is the woman. The answer is clearly, “she is an abomination.”

The unusual construction of the verse helps clue into the meaning. It says, “before Yehovah,” not “before Yehovah your God.” In her defiling of herself, she is an abomination before the Lord. Because of this, the action is still wrong because of her state. As such, it will be sin, as Moses next says...

^{4 (con't)} **and you shall not bring sin on the land**

v'lo takhti eth ha'arets – “and no shall you bring sin on the land.” By joining again to a woman who has allowed herself to be defiled, the guilt of sin will be brought upon the land. And with that in mind, Moses again reminds the people that it is the land...

^{*4 (fin)} **which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.**

The land is given to Israel. They are to remain pure, undefiled, and holy before the Lord. In sending away a wife, the woman can – in fact – marry another. However, in doing so, she brings defilement on herself. However, it is the man who allowed this to occur.

The law, through Moses, is not condoning divorce. Rather, it is speaking against it while still permitting it. That could not be any clearer from the context of Moses' words. He has shown that the original husband is the one to whom she is obligated, even when she goes to another man (*baal* as opposed to *ish*). If the first husband was to take her back after being defiled by another man, then guilt would be brought upon the land.

*What is it that the Lord expects of us?
To marry and to stick it out through and through
Let us fix our eyes on the Lord Jesus
And in our times of trouble, He will carry us through*

*Just as the Lord is merciful and forgiving
So should we be to our own husband or wife
Together we should be united in holy living
And let offenses go; not living in strife*

*Just as the Lord has forgiven His people
When they turn and repent at His feet
Let us forgive the spouse we joined 'neath the steeple
And remain united in the bond of love so sweet*

*To the glory of the Lord who died for us
Let us live in harmony before the Lord Jesus*

II. Pictures of Christ

To establish the relationship of the Lord to Israel, one must go back to the covenant made between them – the covenant at Sinai. In that covenant, Israel agreed to the terms – whatever they may be – that the Lord spoke forth.

In those terms as found in Leviticus 26, the Lord promised that Israel would be punished, even to the point of exile, for disobedience. Israel (the northern ten tribes) was exiled by the Assyrians. Eventually, Judah was exiled to Babylon.

Despite the northern ten tribes being exiled, none of those tribes can be considered as “lost.” People from most of those tribes are mentioned later in Scripture, after the record of the exile of those tribes. As long as there are members of those tribes, the tribes cannot be considered as gone.

In fact, Jesus, Paul, and James refer to the twelve tribes of Israel. Both Paul and James refer to them in the present tense, clearly indicating that there were twelve tribes at their time. This is scripturally indisputable.

In Ezekiel 4, the Lord used Ezekiel as a living metaphor for what he would do in regard to the exile of the people. He tells the prophet to lie on his left side for 390 days, in order

to bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. He then told him to lie on his right side for 40 days to bear the iniquity of the house of Judah.

It is to be noted that Ezekiel's prophecy is dated at or after the supposed "divorce" of Israel in Jeremiah 3:8. It is a huge and unexplained problem with Mr. Baldwin's theology.

Together, they total 430 days. In that state, the Lord tells Ezekiel what to do in order to mirror what He would do to Israel. In this, the Lord told Ezekiel that he would be a sign to the people. They would bear punishment a year for every day that Ezekiel lay on his side.

The exile of Judah (that included people of the twelve tribes), lasted for seventy years. In this, there would thus be 360 years (a day for a year) of punishment left. However, in Leviticus 26, the Lord said to the people, "And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins" (26:18).

The correction of exile and punishment did not change the people. In this, the remaining 360 were to be multiplied by 7, thus equaling 2520 years. The decree of King Cyrus, which allowed the people to return to Israel from the Babylonian exile, came in May 536BC.

Using the biblical calendar of 360 days per year and adding 2520 years (907,200 days) to that, one arrives at May 1948, the year Israel was reestablished as a nation. If one accepts this dating, it is obvious that there is yet a purpose for the reestablishment of Israel as a nation.

Countless other dates and events could be added to this list, but that alone is sufficient to demonstrate that the prophecy of Ezekiel has merit in relation to the people of Israel today.

Along with that, another prophecy from Daniel 9 has a bearing on the dating of the coming of Messiah, the second exile of Israel for rejecting the Messiah, and the reintroduction of the law by Israel for another seven years.

It is another study for another time. But it clearly demonstrates that both the dispensation of the law for seven more years, and then final establishment of Israel in the New Covenant, lie ahead for them. In fact, Leviticus 26 refers to exactly this as it closes out –

“*But* if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, and that they also have walked contrary to Me,
⁴¹ and *that* I also have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies;
if their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept their guilt—
⁴² then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember;
I will remember the land.
⁴³ The land also shall be left empty by them, and will enjoy its sabbaths while it lies desolate without them;
they will accept their guilt, because they despised My judgments and because their soul abhorred My statutes.
⁴⁴ Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, nor shall I abhor them, to utterly destroy them and break My covenant with them;
for I *am* the LORD their God.
⁴⁵ But for their sake I will remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God:
I *am* the LORD.” Leviticus 26:40-45

The Lord first appeals to the covenant with Jacob, and Isaac, and Abraham (verse 42). It is a land covenant to the people of Israel. However, the Lord continues by appealing to the Mosaic Covenant in verse 45.

That covenant continues beyond Sinai (Horeb) to the words of Deuteronomy. In that covenant are words already seen that speak of a Prophet like Moses whom the people are to hear, lest the Lord cut them off. That Prophet like Moses was clearly seen to be Christ Jesus.

As that is a part of the Mosaic Covenant, and as the Mosaic Covenant is what the Lord appeals to, then it must be that in appealing to the Mosaic Covenant, the Lord is also referring to the acceptance of the Prophet like Moses – Christ Jesus.

Jesus, speaking to Jerusalem – the leaders of Israel and representative of the nation – even told them that this would be the case, stating that He would return to them when they acknowledge Him as this One Moses spoke of –

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen *gathers* her brood under *her* wings, but you were not willing! ³⁵ See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until *the time* comes when you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’” Luke 13:34-35

Christ will return only when they acknowledge Him as Lord (meaning Yehovah). Confusing though it may be, this needed to be laid out in order to understand what is being pictured in the passage today.

The Lord took Israel as a wife under the Old Covenant. That is explicitly stated in Jeremiah 31 –

“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— ³² not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD.” Jeremiah 31:31, 32

In the sermon by Chuck Baldwin, and in an attempt to deny any connection of Israel today to the Lord as His people, he cites Isaiah 50, claiming it demonstrates that the Lord divorced Israel –

“Thus says the LORD:
‘Where *is* the certificate of your mother’s divorce,
Whom I have put away?
Or which of My creditors *is it* to whom I have sold you?
For your iniquities you have sold yourselves,
And for your transgressions your mother has been put away.
² Why, when I came, *was there* no man?
Why, when I called, *was there* none to answer?
Is My hand shortened at all that it cannot redeem?
Or have I no power to deliver?
Indeed with My rebuke I dry up the sea,
I make the rivers a wilderness;
Their fish stink because *there is* no water,
And die of thirst.

³ I clothe the heavens with blackness,
And I make sackcloth their covering.” Isaiah 50:1-3

Unfortunately, Baldwin completely misunderstood what is being conveyed there. First, the Lord is speaking to Judah, not Israel, but more he never says that he divorced their mother. Isaiah is speaking to the people in the plural about the state of their mother, Judah, whom they issue from.

She had sold herself, putting herself away. The Lord – typologically the Male in the agreement – had not issued a certificate of divorce. That is evidenced in the words –

“Where *is* the certificate of your mother’s divorce,
Whom I have put away?”

It is a rhetorical question demanding a negative answer. Judah had put itself away, but that was not with the Lord’s direction, and thus it could not be binding. This is also what Israel did. The Lord says in Jeremiah 3:1 –

“They say, ‘If a man divorces his wife,
And she goes from him
And becomes another man’s,
May he return to her again?’
Would not that land be greatly polluted?
‘But you have played the harlot with many lovers;
Yet return to Me,” says the LORD.” Jeremiah 3:1

As Jeremiah 3 progresses, the Lord shows that Israel had, in fact, received her certificate of divorce for her transgressions –

Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also. ⁹ So it came to pass, through her casual harlotry, that she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and trees. ¹⁰ And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah has not turned to Me with her whole heart, but in pretense,” says the LORD.

¹¹ Then the LORD said to me, “Backsliding Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah. ¹² Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say:

'Return, backsliding Israel,' says the LORD;
'I will not cause My anger to fall on you.

For I *am* merciful,' says the LORD;
'I will not remain angry forever.

¹³ Only acknowledge your iniquity,
That you have transgressed against the LORD your God,
And have scattered your charms
To alien deities under every green tree,
And you have not obeyed My voice,' says the LORD.

¹⁴ "Return, O backsliding children," says the LORD; "for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. ¹⁵ And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. Jeremiah 3:8-15

The Lord speaks to the people individually (it is plural). Though Israel had received her certificate of divorce, this did not negate individuals returning to Him, which He clearly calls out for them to do, saying, "Return, O backsliding children," says the LORD; "for I am married to you (plural)."

How would this come about? By bringing them to Zion. Thus, Israel would now fall under the umbrella of Judah. Not understanding this, and lumping Israel and Judah together as one, Baldwin said, "...and actually, we ought to say, 'Israel divorced God' because it was the sins of Israel that broke up the marriage."

He is wrong. But more, there is no provision for this in the law. It is the man who issues the certificate. The law never says a woman could do so, and the typology must be maintained.

The entire point of Deuteronomy 24:1-4 is based on the conclusion found in verse 4. But that did not occur between the Lord and Judah. This is why the alternating terms *baal* and *ish* are used. The use of *baal* is directed toward the first husband. He is the head of the woman.

Before getting to that, Baldwin makes a point of saying that the Lord placed upon the people of Israel the name *lo ami* (not my people). He then uses that to justify that Israel is no longer God's people.

When saying that, he doesn't say where the term *lo ami* comes from, but it is from Hosea 1:9. Citing that as a stand-alone thought completely ignores the rest of Hosea,

such as Hosea 2:13-23. It is there that the Lord makes a play on these words that Moses stresses in our sermon verses (*baal* and *ish*). First, he uses the term Baal when speaking of foreign gods, saying –

“I will punish her
For the days of the Baals to which she burned incense.
She decked herself with her earrings and jewelry,
And went after her lovers;
But Me she forgot,” says the LORD.” Hosea 2:13

However, the Lord notes that after their punishment, they would be restored, using the name Baal (the false god) in 2:13 to make a pun on the word *baal* (Master, referring to the Lord) thus showing the intimate connection between the Lord and Israel –

“Therefore, behold, I will allure her,
Will bring her into the wilderness,
And speak comfort to her.
¹⁵ I will give her her vineyards from there,
And the Valley of Achor as a door of hope;
She shall sing there,
As in the days of her youth,
As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.
¹⁶ “And it shall be, in that day,”
Says the LORD,
“That you will call Me ‘My Husband (**ishi**),’
And no longer call Me ‘My Master (**baali**),’
¹⁷ For I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals,
And they shall be remembered by their name no more.
¹⁸ In that day I will make a covenant for them
With the beasts of the field,
With the birds of the air,
And *with* the creeping things of the ground.
Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth,
To make them lie down safely.
¹⁹ “I will betroth you to Me forever;
Yes, I will betroth you to Me
In righteousness and justice,
In lovingkindness and mercy;

²⁰ I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness,
And you shall know the LORD.” Hosea 2:14-20

In this, He said –

“*That* you will call Me ‘My Husband (**ishi**),’
And no longer call Me ‘My Master (**baali**),’

He is returning to the state in Eden where the man and woman would be as one, no longer calling the Lord Master, but Man. As far as the term *lo ami*, or “not my people,” Baldwin completely missed the context of Hosea and of what is stated in the New Testament. In the next verses of Hosea, the Lord says –

“Yet the number of the children of Israel
Shall be as the sand of the sea,
Which cannot be measured or numbered.
And it shall come to pass
In the place where it was said to them,
‘You *are* not My people,’
There it shall be said to them,
‘You *are* sons of the living God.” Hosea 1:10

Anyone can make the Bible say anything if verses are arbitrarily picked out and cited. But when taken in context, they will inevitably bear a completely different meaning. As far as the New Testament, Paul first cites that verse as pertaining to the Gentiles in Romans 9 –

“As He says also in Hosea:
‘I will call them My people, who were not My people,
And her beloved, who was not beloved.’
²⁶ “And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them,
‘You *are* not My people,’
There they shall be called sons of the living God.” Romans 9:25, 26

However, Peter then uses that same thought when speaking to the Jews (meaning after the church age as is in accord with the dispensational model and the layout of the books of the Bible. Peter, the apostle to the Jews, has his epistles placed after Paul’s. Paul is the Apostle to the Gentiles). That is found in 1 Peter 2 –

“But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”

-1 Peter 2:9, 10

Peter’s letter is addressed not to the Gentiles, but to “the pilgrims of the Dispersion,” meaning Jews. Even Hosea gives us this insight as is laid out in a chiasm –

Hosea 1:9-2:23 - “But Me she forgot,” says the LORD.

A Chiasm of Contrasts - Our Unfaithfulness and God's Unlimited Mercy (11/23/07)

a 1:9 You are not my people, I will not be your God.

-----b 1:10 Jezreel (God will sow.)

-----c 2:3 Dry Land, thirst.

-----d 2:5 Wife departs from her husband.

-----e 2:7 Wife returns to her husband.

-----f 2:9 Take away the new wine.

-----g 2:10-12 God punishes Israel.

-----h 2:13 God will punish her.

-----x 2:13 “But Me she forgot,” says the LORD

-----h 2:14a God will allure her.

-----g 2:14b God comforts Israel.

-----f 2:15 Give vineyards.

-----e 2:16 LORD says, “That you will call me ‘My Husband.’”

-----d 2:19 Husband betroths wife.

-----c 2:21, 22 Grain, new wine, oil.

-----b 2:22 Jezreel (God will sow.)

a 2:23 You are my people; You are my God.

While Israel was a people, the Gentiles were without the Lord. When Israel rejected their Messiah, the Gentiles – along with any believing Jews – became the people of God. When the church is raptured (yes, a pre-tribulation rapture is the proper doctrine of the church), the focus will again be on Israel.

The issue of Israel as a nation is separate, but it is still relevant. For Israel, there is individual salvation, and there is collective (national) salvation. Each Jew who is to be saved must come to Christ individually.

However, God made promises to Israel as a nation as well. For Israel as a nation to be saved, they must call on Christ nationally. That will happen when they (the leaders representing the people) call out, just as Jesus said they would and as was cited in Luke 13 earlier.

Who is the Lord's bride? The answer is not a simple "Here she is." The idea of being a bride of the Lord is not a literal Man with a woman next to Him dressed in white. It is a concept of being brought into a right covenant relationship with Him.

The idea of a single betrothal/marriage is not all there is in the redemptive narrative. Believers are individually betrothed to Christ when we believe the gospel.

The church will be presented as the Bride of Christ as stated in Ephesians 5. This will occur at the rapture of the church. Israel was united to the Lord as a bride under the Old Covenant, and they will nationally be again united to the Lord as a bride as is indicated in the many Old and New Testament passages referred to in our sermon today. Finally, there is the general thought of being united as a bride to Christ as is described in Revelation 21.

How is Israel who had (and still has) rejected the Lord brought into a right relationship with God? It is through the death of Christ on their behalf. They are the wife who made herself an abomination before the Lord.

According to the law (the Old Covenant), they could not be brought back to Him once they had been defiled as they were, but through Christ and the New Covenant, it is not only possible, it will come to pass. The New Covenant, the Christ Covenant, was established not with the church but with the House of Israel and the House of Judah.

That is stated, explicitly, in Jeremiah 31, and again in Hebrews 8. How could this come about when both Israel and Judah had been an unfaithful spouse? How could the Lord say to Israel, "Return to Me!" after they had been given a certificate of divorce?

It is because Christ Jesus, the Lord, died to pay their sin-debt. In His death, a New Covenant was established *with them*. The divorce of Israel by the Lord occurred under the *Mosaic Covenant*. The renewing of the betrothal to Israel and Judah occurs under the *New Covenant* in His blood.

Gentiles are not what is going on here. Gentiles are *grafted into* what is going on here. We merely share in the commonwealth of what God has bestowed upon Israel. How

preachers can stand in the pulpit and question the word of God, the promises of the Lord, and the integrity of His covenants is utterly astonishing.

When theology becomes about “us,” it is improper theology. When we reject what God has explicitly stated, we reject Him. His word is a reflection of who He is. For whatever perverse reason, the past two thousand years have been filled with a theology that essentially says, “God cannot be trusted because God has divorced these people and they are no longer His people.”

Yes, Hosea calls that out, but then Hosea turns around and says exactly the opposite only a moment later. God is not fickle, but we are lazy. We form our opinions, and we stop when they are formed, rejecting anything else that will stand in the way of what we have decided. But God has revealed to us what He is doing... and it is marvelous. Christ! It is all about Christ and what He had done for Israel, Judah, and indeed all of the world.

“Concerning the gospel *they are* enemies for your sake, but concerning the election *they are* beloved for the sake of the fathers. ²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God *are* irrevocable. ³⁰ For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, ³¹ even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. ³² For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.

³³ Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* His judgments and His ways past finding out!

³⁴ ‘For who has known the mind of the LORD?

Or who has become His counselor?’

³⁵ ‘Or who has first given to Him

And it shall be repaid to him?’

³⁶ For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, to whom *be* glory forever. Amen.” Romans 11:28-36

Closing Verse: *“But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴ No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” Jeremiah 31:33, 34*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 24:5-22 *And don't forget it, kid!* (Remember what the Lord your God Did) (70th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

A Certificate of Divorce

“When a man takes a wife and marries her
And it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes
Because he has found some uncleanness in her
And he writes her a certificate of divorce, so to you I apprise

Puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house
When she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes
-----another man's wife
If the latter husband detests her
And writes her a certificate of divorce, thus ending
-----their married life

Puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house
Or if the latter husband dies who took her as his wife
Then her former husband who divorced her must not take her back
To be his wife after she has been defiled by her remarried life

For that is an abomination before the LORD
And you shall not bring sin on the land
Which the LORD your God is giving you
As an inheritance, so you shall understand

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise

Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 24:5-22 **(Remember What the Lord your God Did)**

As in other parts of the Mosaic Law, the passage today is filled with laws and commands. And yet, a main premise of what is stated here hinges on the idea of faith. You might ask, “How can that be so? Paul says the law is not of faith but of works.

Yes, he did, and yes, it is. But that does not negate that faith is involved in what is stated here and in almost all the rest of the code that has been, and will be, set forth. If you don’t understand, we will go over that at the end of the sermon. For now, trust me on it.

Until we get there, we have much to evaluate... lots of rules and precepts to consider. Moses continues to lay out precepts for the people of Israel to guide their lives and conduct during the time of the law. And it is during the time of the law that many of the “elders” mentioned by the author of Hebrews lived when he refers to their faith...

Text Verse: *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. ²For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.” Hebrews 11:1, 2*

The author of Hebrews says by “faith” those elders obtained a good testimony. Who are those elders? Well, he refers to Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. “But those were all before the law! What you said doesn’t apply to them, Charlie.”

It’s true, they were not under the law. But Hebrews 11 continues with Moses, the destruction of Jericho, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, the prophets, and a host of others in a brushstroke of the time of the law. He notes that they were all people of faith.

So being under law doesn’t exclude faith. Rather, for the law to mean anything at all of value to a person, it necessitates it. Otherwise, there would be no reason to name and highlight these people, would there?

If boasting is excluded by the law of faith (Romans 3:27), and if works are a point of boasting, then these people of faith had only one place to glory – meaning in the Lord (1 Corinthians 1:31). Try to remember this as we wind through the verses today.

What is it about what Moses says that tells us this is true? For the most part, Israel missed the most important point of all concerning the law. In missing it, they missed what stands as the fulfillment of the law – Jesus Christ.

The law versus faith, where will you place your hat? Be sure to choose the right path, and then develop it in your life. Nurture this precious gift of God to its fullest and to His glory. It's all to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. So You Shall Be Careful to Do (verses 5-13)

⁵ **“When a man has taken a new wife,**

ki yiqah ish ishah khadashah – “When has taken man wife new.” The previous section, verses 1-4, dealt with marriage and divorce and the prohibition of remarrying a woman who was defiled through being married to another. The words now do not necessarily follow after that, as if it is referring to such an instance. However, they do not negate that either.

What is being proposed here is simply a protection and a blessing for a new wife, regardless as to any previous circumstances. Further, there is no qualifier here. It doesn't say, “a first wife,” “a virgin,” or anything else. It speaks of a man taking a new wife.

If he already had one wife, it can be assumed that it doesn't negate the provision now being stated. This is because it is the wife that is being considered in the matter. In whatever case, if a man takes a new wife, then...

^{5 (con't)} **he shall not go out to war**

lo yetse ba'tsava – “no he shall go out in the war.” The explanation for this only comes later, but it can already be assumed that this is so that he doesn't head out and get killed in a battle. But more...

^{5 (con't)} **or be charged with any business;**

v'lo yaabor alav l'kal davar – “and no shall pass over upon him to all word.” Not only was he not to be charged with soldiering, but he was not to be conscripted for any

service that may arise, such as serving in a government tasking and so on. Any edict that went out upon the land that imposed duties on the people was to not pass over upon him. Rather...

⁵ (con't) **he shall be free at home one year,**

naqi yihyeh l'betu shanah ekhat – “clear he shall be to his house year one.” In other words, there shall be nothing imposed upon him. He is to remain clear of any external obligations. With this understood, the reason for the words is finally stated...

⁵ (con't) **and bring happiness to his wife whom he has taken.**

The KJV says “cheer up” his wife. That assumes she is first down, something not implied. Rather, her marriage is already a time of happiness, and it is stating that he is to bring cheer to her during the year. Any external tasking would deprive her of the happy state she should continue to be blessed with.

⁶ **“No man shall take the lower or the upper millstone in pledge,**

The Hebrew reads, “No *man* shall take in pledge millstones and rider.” In other words, “Do not take a pair of grindstones or even the upper millstone as security for a debt” (CSB). The rider would be the top millstone. Taking it would be no different than taking both.

⁶ (con't) **for he takes *one's* living in pledge.**

ki nephesh hu khovel – “for soul he takes in pledge.” Here, the thing (the millstones or the rider) is equated directly to the soul of the person. To deprive him of his millstones is to deprive him of life because the grain was ground each day for bread. In taking the means of making bread, the bread would be denied him.

As this is a precept of the law, and as the law has come from the Lord by inspiration through Moses, it is actually a note of eternal salvation. In other words, the Lord would not impose upon the people something He would fail to provide.

Just as nobody was to be deprived their source of life, the Lord will not deprive any of their Source of life. For those who come to Christ, the Bread of Life, they will never be deprived of Him. The precept can be reasonably presumed from this verse.

7 “If a man is found kidnapping any of his brethren of the children of Israel,

Again, the focus is on the life of the person, using the word *nephesh*, thus tying the thought to the previous verse: *ki yimatse ish gonev nephesh meekhav* – “When is found man kidnapping soul of his brothers.” The words follow after and expand upon Exodus 21:16 –

“He who kidnaps a man and sells him, or if he is found in his hand, shall surely be put to death.”

7 (con’t) and mistreats him or sells him,

The word used is *amar*. It means “to bind sheaves.” Thus, it gives the sense of mistreating because of piling on blows. The person is either abused or sold off...

7 (con’t) then that kidnapper shall die;

The words are emphatic: *u-met ha’ganav ha’hu* – “and shall die the kidnapper the he.” No provision for mercy is granted. He is to be a goner...

7 (con’t) and you shall put away the evil from among you.

Again, Moses uses the word *ba’ar* – to burn or consume – as he has numerous times in Deuteronomy. The evil is to be purged from the land, thus ensuring that such will never be considered again. Paul uses the same expression from the Greek translation of these words in 1 Corinthians 5:13, taking them and applying them in a moral context concerning the sexually immoral.

8 “Take heed in an outbreak of leprosy, that you carefully observe and do according to all that the priests, the Levites, shall teach you; just as I commanded them, so you shall be careful to do.

The words of the previous verse were in the singular, “You Israel shall put away the evil from among you.” Now, they are in the plural, “shall teach you (all),” and “you (all) all shall be careful to do.” Each person is to be responsible to heed. But what is being conveyed? There are two separate and completely distinct translations –

“Take heed in an outbreak of leprosy.” NKJV

“Observe diligently that thou incur not the stroke of the leprosy.” Douay-Rheims

The first and most common translation is that when a plague of leprosy occurs, the people were to then do what the priests instructed. The second is a warning that if one does not obey the priests, a plague of leprosy would result.

The Hebrew reads: *hishamer b'nega hatsaraat* – “Take heed in outbreak the leprosy.” One can argue either translation from that. Further, the priests, the Levites are the teachers of the law. Thus, either translation could be acceptable.

As will be seen, the next verse appears to side with the latter interpretation – as a warning. Also, 2 Samuel 20:10 uses the same construct (“in the sword”) in the same sense. Further, the change to the plural, speaking to every individual, favors the latter as well. Each person is to be accountable for his conduct. To fail in it could easily end in being plagued with leprosy.

What is also of note is that Moses says, “just as I commanded them.” In much of the law, the word went from the Lord *to* Moses. In Deuteronomy, the word goes from the Lord *through* Moses. Either way, Moses is the lawgiver to the people in this regard.

And more, it is the law that takes precedence. The priests, the Levites, were to teach according to the law. If what they said conflicted with the law itself, it was not to be obeyed. The precept holds true for the church. Nothing is to be done, even if instructed by a teacher or pastor, if it is not in accord with the word.

Q: How can you fulfill this precept if you do not know what the word says?

A: You can't. Learn the word!

To see the most likely translation of the previous words, we read...

⁹ Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam on the way when you came out of Egypt!

The Hebrew jumps from the singular to the plural: *zakor eth asher asah Yehovah elohekha l'miryam ba'derek b'tsetekhem mimitsrayim* – “Remember what did Yehovah your (singular) God to Miriam in the way in your (plural) coming out from Egypt.”

It is a warning to each person. Miriam spoke against Moses and was punished with leprosy. As such, it appears most likely that the previous verse is a warning. Pay heed to this law, taught by the Levites, or you (individual) may receive an outbreak of leprosy.

To further solidify this, two examples of someone becoming leprous for disobedience are given in Scripture –

“Then he said to him, ‘Did not my heart go *with you* when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you? *Is it* time to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants? ²⁷ Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your descendants forever.” And he went out from his presence leprous, *as white as snow.*” 2 Kings 5:26, 27

“But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to *his* destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD his God by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. ¹⁷ So Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him were eighty priests of the LORD—valiant men. ¹⁸ And they withstood King Uzziah, and said to him, ‘*It is* not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have trespassed! You *shall have* no honor from the LORD God.’

¹⁹ Then Uzziah became furious; and he *had* a censer in his hand to burn incense. And while he was angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead, before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the incense altar. ²⁰ And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and there, on his forehead, he *was* leprous; so they thrust him out of that place. Indeed he also hurried to get out, because the LORD had struck him.” 2 Chronicles 26:16-20

In these, the Bible explains the precept. Both disobedience to the law (lying to the prophet) and disregarding the instruction of the priests who were upholding the law, resulted in leprosy.

¹⁰ **“When you lend your brother anything, you shall not go into his house to get his pledge.**

The words of the verses of this subject (10-13) return to the singular, but it is not the singular “you Israel.” It is obviously to each person who would be in such a situation. It may or may not come about, but if it does, Moses, through the law, speaks directly to the individual.

A new word is found here, *mashshaah*, a loan. It is found only here and in Proverbs 22:26. Being a noun, the words more correctly read, “When you make a loan of anything.” In this, the loaner was restricted in his actions.

It reads: *la’avot avoto* – “to take in pledge his pledge.” The pledge is not the thing lent. Rather it is the thing that is used as surety for the thing lent. A person was not to go into another’s house and decide, “This is what I want as a pledge for the fifty shekels I lent you.” And this is for several reasons.

First, it is presumptuous to enter into another man’s privacy in order to secure a pledge. Secondly, what the person had in his house was not the lender’s business. And thirdly, if he went in and took whatever he wanted, it may be the one thing that the man needed and could not spare. Because of this...

¹¹ You shall stand outside, and the man to whom you lend shall bring the pledge out to you.

The idea here is of common courtesy, respect, and acknowledging that as the lender, you have voluntarily lent. To go into another’s house would imply that the loan granted rights that actually did not exist. As I said a moment ago, it is presumptuous. Moses forbids such an action in advance. But he then even goes further...

¹² And if the man *is* poor, you shall not keep his pledge overnight.

The next verse shows us that the pledge is a garment. As such, Moses says, “you shall not lie down in his pledge.” This then is a restatement of words found in Exodus 22 –

“If you ever take your neighbor’s garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down. ²⁷ For that *is* his only covering, it *is* his garment for his skin. What will he sleep in? And it will be that when he cries to Me, I will hear, for I *am* gracious.” Exodus 22:26, 27

The people of Israel were found guilty of exactly this, as is recorded in Amos 2:8 –

“They lie down by every altar on clothes taken in pledge,
And drink the wine of the condemned *in* the house of their god.”

It is a great crime because if a man is poor, he has just one thing to cover himself at night. If that item is taken as a pledge, then...

13 You shall in any case return the pledge to him again when the sun goes down,

The words are emphatic: *hashev tashiv lo eth ha'avot k'bo ha'shemesh* – “returning, you shall return to him the pledge according to going the sun.” If the sun is going down, it is time to sleep. There is nothing to be gained by holding the pledge of a sleeping man. Further, the sleeping man needs to keep warm with the coming of night. Thus, the pledge is to be returned...

13 (con't) that he may sleep in his own garment and bless you;

The Bible clearly indicates that words have power. This is but one of innumerable examples of the precept. The obvious notion is that if he is not blessing, he may be cursing, or at least crying out. In such a case, the Lord will hear and repay. However, in his warmth, he will, instead, speak forth a blessing. As such...

13 (con't) and it shall be righteousness to you before the LORD your God.

This is not speaking of justifying righteousness, as if doing a good deed under the law resulted in a declaration of righteousness. Rather, it speaks of the righteousness of the law being expressed in right action, just as there is unrighteousness in not obeying the law. The sentiment was already stated by Moses in Chapter 6 –

“Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the LORD our God, as He has commanded us.”

-Deuteronomy 6:25

*Lord God, we have offended You in so many ways
We have defiled ourselves in Your sight
In this, we have continued on for countless days
Who can purify us and make us right?*

*We have not treated others as we should
We have forsaken Your law, not doing what is right
We have taken the wrong path, forgetting the good
And we have not be faithful in Your sight*

*The poor has been mistreated
The widow and the orphan are shunned as well
Your righteous law, we have unseated*

What a sad story to tell

*Help us to turn and do what is right
For Your marvelous mercy let our voices ring
In faith we call out, so restore us in Your sight
And to You our praises we shall forever sing*

II. Therefore I Command You to Do This Thing (verses 14-22)

¹⁴ “You shall not oppress a hired servant *who is* poor and needy, *whether* one of your brethren or one of the aliens who *is* in your land within your gates.

The word translated as “oppress” bears the sense of defrauding. The idea of being a hired servant is that he lives off his wages. He is not a servant in the household entitled to the food and drink of the house. If one is poor and needy, and regardless as to his affiliation – be it one of Israel or a stranger – he was not to be extorted. This precept has already been stated in Leviticus –

“You shall not cheat your neighbor, nor rob *him*. The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning.” Leviticus 19:13

Such perverse conduct is what Jeremiah, Malachi, and James each write about. As for James, he says –

“Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.” James 5:4

¹⁵ Each day you shall give *him* his wages,

The Hebrew reads: *b’yomo* – “In his day.” In other words, in the day he worked, he is to be paid...

¹⁵ (con’t) and not let the sun go down on it, for he *is* poor and has set his heart on it;

Rather than “set his heart,” the Hebrew says, “lifted (or carried) his soul.” In other words, this is what he needs to simply continue on with. His existence is tied up in the wages.

The going down of the sun was the start of a new day. To say, “I will give it to you in the morning,” was to deprive him of his food and maybe even his bed in the night. What was owed was to be paid. This is seen still in practice at the time of Jesus as is reflected in the parable of the workers in the vineyard in Matthew 20:1-16.

15 (con't) lest he cry out against you to the LORD, and it be sin to you.

This is the exact opposite of the previous lesson. The person who had his garment returned would bless the lender. Moses uses the opposite thought now concerning withholding wages to show that instead of righteousness there would be sin.

16 “Fathers shall not be put to death for *their* children, nor shall children be put to death for *their* fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin.

This is a precept of the law to which the people were bound. The civil authorities had no right to bring the parents into the judgment of their children, nor the children into the judgment of the parents. The precept is not something that the Lord as Judge of Israel was bound to.

If he determined an entire family was to be destroyed, as in the case of Achan in Joshua, that is what was to happen. Ezekiel 18 addresses this issue from the Lord’s perspective as He says, “All souls are mine.” As for the law itself, this exact verse is cited in 2 Kings 14:5, 6 where Amaziah faithfully followed the precept –

“Now it happened, as soon as the kingdom was established in his hand, that he executed his servants who had murdered his father the king. ⁶ But the children of the murderers he did not execute, according to what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, in which the LORD commanded, saying, “Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall children be put to death for their fathers; but a person shall be put to death for his own sin.”

17 “You shall not pervert justice due the stranger or the fatherless, nor take a widow’s garment as a pledge.

The words here are similar to those of Exodus 22 –

“You shall neither mistreat a stranger nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

²² “You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. ²³ If you afflict them in any way, *and* they cry at all to Me, I will surely hear their cry; ²⁴ and My wrath will become hot, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.” Exodus 22:21-24

The addition of not taking a widow’s garment as a pledge is a note of common decency. As a widow, it might be the only possession she had. It is a most tender note of an already tender and caring set of words from Moses. And there is a reason for these terms...

¹⁸ But you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this thing.

Moses has said this same basic thought again and again in Deuteronomy. Each time, the words are carefully chosen to fortify the words of the surrounding thought. In this case, he calls them to remember the slavery in Egypt and the Lord’s redeeming of them from there.

The word *padah*, or “to ransom” is used. Israel was in misery, and the Lord rescued them from it. These people he now mentions are in misery and Moses thus commands that they be treated by Israel in the same manner that the Lord treated them. They are to be rescued from their misery.

The precept, in type, must hold true for us. Egypt pictures bondage to sin. We could not rescue ourselves from that state, but the Lord acted and did so. Therefore, we are to act in the same manner towards the lost. It is utter folly to think that we deserved our redemption, but others do not.

¹⁹ “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 for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow,

This sentiment has been seen twice before, in Leviticus 19 and Leviticus 23. As for Leviticus 19 –

“When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. ¹⁰ And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather *every* grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I *am* the LORD your God.”

-Leviticus 19:9, 10

Both Leviticus 19 and 23 refer to the poor and the stranger. Here, Moses refers to the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. The idea is that whatever is dropped during the reaping process is to be left where it lies. It is not to be picked up, but it is instead reserved for these classes of people.

In this, the poor and the stranger could follow after them and gather the gleanings. To understand this more clearly, and to see it in practice, take a few minutes to read the book of Ruth. What is said there is exactly in accord with Moses' words now, but the champion of the story, Boaz, goes above and beyond the law in this regard. As always, there is a reason for precepts such as this...

19 (con't) that the LORD your God may bless you

I'maan yebarekha Yehovah elohekha – “to end purpose may bless you Yehovah your God.” Not only is it morally right to obey the law, but in following the precepts as set forth, the end purpose is to receive a blessing from the Lord. As such, obviously, to fail to do so would then result in both sin and the Lord's disfavor. As far as the blessing, it is to be...

19 (con't) in all the work of your hands.

The idea is that of abundance and prosperity. Such a blessing of the Lord will rest on the one who willingly complies with the precept. This is stated by Solomon in the Proverbs –

“He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD,
And He will pay back what he has given.” Proverbs 19:17

“He who has a generous eye will be blessed,
For he gives of his bread to the poor.” Proverbs 22:9

As with the harvesting of grain, so it is with that of the olive...

20 When you beat your olive trees,

ki takhvot zetekha – “When you beat your olive trees.” Here is a new word, *khavat*, to beat out or thresh. The purpose of this is to knock the olives from the tree. The practice, using a different word, is described in Isaiah 23 –

“When it shall be thus in the midst of the land among the people,
It shall be like the shaking of an olive tree,
Like the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done.” Isaiah 23:14

One would climb into the tree and shake the limbs by hand or by foot, or he would take a rod and beat on the branches. To see this done both by beating and by shaking, you can watch the YouTube video “How to Pick and Pickle Olives in Nazareth” on the “Sergio and Rhoda in Israel” channel. Either way, the practice caused the olives to fall. During such a process...

20 (con’t) you shall not go over the boughs again;

Once the tree had been beaten, any olives that did not come off because they were missed on the first whacking, or for whatever other reason, they were not to be sought after. Rather...

20 (con’t) it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.

Again, for the second time, the same three categories are mentioned. They are in need, the need can be met by leaving what is commanded, and therefore, the precept is given. And yet again, Moses next says...

21 When you gather the grapes of your vineyard,

It reads, “When you cut off the grapes.” They are cut off in clusters and placed into baskets. From there, the baskets are taken down the rows to carts that are then filled with the grapes.

21 (con’t) you shall not glean *it* afterward;

Here it says, “you shall not glean after yourself.” In other words, once the cutting has been done, the cutter is not to glean anything that was missed. The smaller clusters and single grapes that were missed were to be left alone. Thus...

21 (con’t) it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.

This is the third time in a row these words have been conveyed. Those who did not have their own fields would have no way of tending to themselves, thus the provision is

stated again. They were to be tended to as if the Lord was carefully watching over them. As they are words of law, the Lord was – in fact – doing so.

These precepts follow logically with what the Lord will do after the church age. There will be a time when the harvest has come, but he will leave His witness and His testimony for the people of the world. Those who are left behind will be provided for by Him, if they are willing to seek Him out.

Moses finishes with the same thought he expressed only a few short verses ago...

***22 (fin) And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this thing.**

The stranger, the fatherless, and the widow were in their own type of bondage. They were at the mercy of those among whom they lived, and they were in bondage to their physical needs. The Lord, through the law, provided for them just as He provided for Israel's relief from their bondage, and just as He will continue to provide for those in bondage after the church age.

There is no time when the Lord's mercies are not on full display and there is no time when He is not attentive to the plight of His people – those who will submit to Him through faith in His provision.

It must be remembered that the law is not of faith, but of works. Paul repeats that in various ways in Romans and Galatians. However, there could still be a sense of faith even for those under the law. One had to believe that the Lord is truly God in order to even care in his heart about observing the law.

Said differently, a person may observe the law because he was scared of the repercussions of not doing so – being arrested, stoned, or whatever, and yet he might not believe that the Lord was actually the Lawgiver through Moses.

On the other hand, a person may honestly believe – without the evidence of seeing the Lord – that the Lord truly is the Lawgiver. In this, he would delight in the law, and he would pursue fulfilling the law because of the faith he possessed in the Lord. In this, his works would be works of faith.

This is no different than us today. There are countless people that go to church who don't really believe in the Lord. They do the things they were told by the church, and they are obedient to the precepts, but they are not living by faith.

In the end, they may do really wonderful things – for whatever reason – but they will receive no approval from the Lord for their actions. In our verses today, we have seen the following statements spoken forth by Moses –

Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam on the way when you came out of Egypt!

...and it shall be righteousness to you before the LORD your God.

...lest he cry out against you to the LORD, and it be sin to you.

...and the LORD your God redeemed you from there

...that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands

All five of these, although being said by Moses in the law, are statements that require faith to be believed. Unless a person truly believes that the Lord is God, everything about the accompanying precepts is simply a body of law that governs the society and “the Lord” is simply inserted into what is said for intimidation.

Remember this as you read the Old Testament and mentally interact with the words and people the Lord has placed in there. Which are people of faith? Which are people lacking faith?

And then, of those who had faith, which acted on that faith, and to what degree was it so? As you read the gospels and Acts, do the same. Think on the actions of the people, observe their attitudes, and then consider which are acting in accord with the will of the Lord, and to what measure are they doing so?

And then, when you read the epistles, place yourself into what is stated. These are our directives for life under the New Covenant. How are your life's actions being conducted in accord with what those writers present? Are you more of a David or more of a Manasseh? Are you more like Nicodemus or Caiaphas?

Gauge yourself according to what is presented and then develop what is lacking. The closer you are to the Lord, the more intently you will seek to please Him. The closer you are to the Lord, the more you will desire to see Him glorified.

And the closer you are to the Lord, the more fearful you should be of disappointing Him – not because He might cast you into hell. If you are in Christ, that will not happen. But fearful that you will discredit Him and His glory through your actions and in the eyes of others.

What is it that you truly believe? Whatever you believe about the Lord, develop that. Moses presents his laws to the people, but he did it under the authority and inspiration of the Lord. This is the word of God. Though the law is of works, the fundamental truth is that faith is a dividing line of people even under the law.

How much more is that so for those in Christ! Let us be people of faith. When Genesis 1 says the Lord created in six days, what is your reason for accepting or denying that as literal truth? When Genesis 7 and 8 tell us of a worldwide flood, do you take that as literal history or simply a fairytale?

The Bible says Christ Jesus came. Do you believe that? Do you believe Him? He speaks of a literal creation and a literal flood. So, what “Jesus” are you following? Be people of faith and be people-pleasing to the God who has presented Himself to you in the pages of Scripture. This is what I would ask of you today.

Closing Verse: *“By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.” Hebrews 11:7*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 25:1-10 *What a wonderful story he has to tell...* (A Brother in Israel) (71st Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Remember what the Lord your God Did

“When a man has taken a new wife
He shall not go out to war or be charged with any business
-----to his wife care he shall be makin’
He shall be free at home one year
And bring happiness to his wife whom he has taken

“No man shall take the lower or the upper millstone in pledge
For he takes one’s living in pledge, that is his financial hedge

“If a man is found kidnapping any of his brethren
Of the children of Israel
And mistreats him or sells him, then that kidnapper shall die
And you shall put away the evil from among you, so to you I tell

“Take heed in an outbreak of leprosy, that you carefully observe
And do according to all that the priests, the Levites who...
Shall teach you; just as I commanded them
So you shall be careful to do

Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam
------(for she was to blame)
On the way when out of Egypt you came!

When you lend your brother anything
You shall not go into his house to get his pledge, to this precept
-----you must be true
You shall stand outside
And the man to whom you lend shall bring the pledge out to you

And if the man is poor, you shall not keep his pledge overnight
You shall in any case return the pledge to him again
-----him you shall not defraud
When the sun goes down, that he may sleep in his own garment
-----and bless you
And it shall be righteousness to you before the LORD your God

“You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy
Whether one of your brethren among whom you live
Or one of the aliens who is in your land within your gates
Each day you shall him his wages give

And not let the sun go down on it
For he is poor and has set his heart on it
Lest he cry out against you to the LORD
And it be sin to you; sin you did commit

“Fathers shall not be put to death for their children
Only the offender shall be a has-been
Nor shall children be put to death for their fathers
A person shall be put to death for his own sin

“You shall not pervert justice due the stranger or the fatherless
Nor take a widow’s garment as a pledge; guilt that would bring
But you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt
And the LORD your God redeemed you from there
----- therefore I command you to do this thing

“When you reap your harvest in your field
And forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it
-----such you shall not do
It shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow
That the LORD your God may in all the work of your hands
----- bless you

When you beat your olive trees
You shall not go over the boughs again, so I say
It shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow
For their sustenance after that day

When you gather the grapes of your vineyard
You shall not glean it afterward
It shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow
As you have now heard

And you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt the land
Therefore I command you to do this thing
-----therefore you must understand

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise

Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 25:1-10 (A Brother in Israel)

When I started typing this sermon on Monday morning, I had the same thought I have every Monday – “How am I ever going to get anything out of this passage that will be edifying to the church?”

The first verses seem very lawish, and other than knowing that they are directly or indirectly referenced in the New Testament, I wasn't sure how doctrinally edifying they would be for you. The last six verses are obviously typologically anticipating something, but I had no idea what.

Eight plus hours later, I still had no idea. I had to sit and really try to think things through. Unfortunately, the phone rang – right on Monday when I wish people would leave me alone – and I lost 20 or 30 minutes of thought.

It was getting time to walk the dogs and so I did that. In coming in, I got back to thinking and eventually developed what I feel they are telling us. It is a lesson said many times already in various ways. And that should not be surprising. Paul explains this lesson many times and in various ways as well.

And yet... people still do not get it, and they keep trying to merit God's favor apart from what He has done in Christ. What a sad place to be! God does the work, God offers the reconciliation, and we keep trying to do better than what He has done. Indeed, what a sad place to be.

Text Verse: *“knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.” Galatians 2:16*

Along with some thoughts about the law and grace, a couple other rather incredible doctrines are seen in our ten verses today. Maybe some of you, hopefully all of you, know what imputation means. There is another similar, but lesser-known, subject that we will mention today as well, impartation.

Do you know the difference between imputation and impartation? Is the difference that substantial? If so, how and why? Trust me on this, people will write volumes about which they believe Paul is referring to at times in his writings.

Just a little bit off in one's analysis, and all of a sudden you are heading down the completely wrong theological path. When that happens, everything else goes askew as well. We won't go into any great detail on this, but it's good to be aware of the difference, so pay heed.

The Bible is a wonderful treasure filled with the most precious of doctrines for the faithful student. So, pick it up and read it! Learn to love this beautiful masterpiece of God's wisdom. Great, great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Forty Blows He May Give Him (Verses 1-4)

¹“If there is a dispute between men,

The NKJV rightly places this first verse as conditional. Verse 1 is the condition, while verse 2 is the concluding matter based on the condition – In other words, “If this, then this.”

The word *riv*, or dispute, comes from a root signifying “to toss,” as in grappling. Two people are contending or quarreling over a matter as people do. If such is the case, and no remedy has been found, then the matter is elevated...

^{1 (con't)} and they come to court,

v'nigesu el ha'mishpat – “and they come unto the judgment.” The idea here is that of seeking out a set and recognized tribunal for a decision. This would first be at the gates of the city where such matters were to be judged.

Wherever the case ultimately is decided though, the point is that there is a disagreement. Either both think they are right, or one knows that he is wrong, but he thinks he can effectively win the case. As in any such matter, to know you are wrong and to know that you could not win such a case, it would be pointless to go to the judges. Jesus speaks of such a situation in Matthew 5:25, 26 –

“Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. ²⁶ Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.”

Such is not the case here. Neither side will budge, and so the matter is taken to the judgment to be settled. This is so...

¹ (con't) **that *the judges* may judge them,**

u-shephatim – “and they have judged.” The condition of the first verse continues. The dispute was taken to the judges, and the judgment has been rendered upon them by the judges. When this occurs...

¹ (con't) **and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked,**

The translation is correct. The word *ha'tsadiq*, or “the righteous,” and the word *ha'rasha*, or “the wicked,” are terms referring to the state of the individuals in relation to the case. One is just in his case while the other is not. Charles Ellicott is thus right when he says –

“It should be noticed that *justify* is here used forensically, not meaning to make righteous, but *to treat as righteous.*” Charles Ellicott

It is what the Lord said in Exodus 23 concerning judgment –

“You shall not pervert the judgment of your poor in his dispute. ⁷ Keep yourself far from a false matter; do not kill the innocent and righteous. For I will not justify the wicked.” Exodus 23:6, 7

This may be more clearly seen in the Proverbs –

“He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just,
Both of them alike *are* an abomination to the LORD.” Proverbs 17:15

It is obvious from Solomon’s words that he is speaking of treating a wicked man as righteous. Thus, it cannot mean “making righteous,” even if the person who is justified deludes himself into believing this.

This is an important point for us to consider. In Christ, we are justified before God. We are “treated as righteous,” but that does not mean that we are now righteous in and of ourselves, even if the arrogant Christian acts as if he is.” Adam Clarke then rightly evaluates this in relation to Paul’s words in his epistles –

“The word צדק *tsadak* is used here precisely in the same sense in which St. Paul sometimes uses the corresponding word δικαιωω [*dikaioó* – to show to be righteous; declare righteous, C.G.], not to justify or make just, but to acquit, declare innocent, to remit punishment, or give reasons why such a one should not be punished; ... using the same word with St. Paul when he speaks of a sinner's justification, i. e., his acquittance from blame and punishment, because of the death of Christ in his stead.” Adam Clarke

This highlights the difference between imputation and impartation. To be imputed righteousness means to ascribe as righteous. To be imparted righteousness means to bestow the quality of righteousness. The difference is worlds apart for the believer.

We are treated (imputed) as righteous by God because of what Christ has done, we are not righteous (imparted) in and of ourselves now because of Christ. Hence, we cannot look down on others because of our own righteousness. We can only pity them in relation to Christ and strive to bring to them what we have now been granted.

In such a case as is being evaluated now, whoever is decided in favor of the case is righteous while the one who lost the decision is unrighteous – in a legal, not necessarily a moral sense. Such is the case with humanity before God. When a decision is made for those in Christ, we are deemed legally righteous. When we are not in Christ, we are legally unrighteous.

As for the one not justified, in this case in Israel...

² then it shall be, if the wicked man deserves to be beaten,

The Hebrew bears an idiom: *v'hayah im bin hakot ha'rasha* – “and it shall be if son of beating, the wicked.” In other words, it is as if he is a son deserving of being beaten. In such a case, it shall be...

^{2 (con't)} that the judge will cause him to lie down and be beaten in his presence,

The Hebrew reads *l'phanav* – “to his face,” and thus before the face of the judge. The GNT incorrectly translates this as, “If the guilty one is sentenced to be beaten, the judge is to make him lie face downward and have him whipped.”

In other words, they take the words “to his face” as meaning, “with his face to the ground.” That is not the intent, even if that is what the man does. The words “to his face,” mean “before him,” or “in his presence.”

The judge was to personally watch over the beating to ensure that it was carried out as determined. Otherwise, he could be overbeaten, mistreated in how the beating was given, not punished enough, and so on. With it conducted before him, and because he was the one who made the judgment, it would be...

² (con't) **according to his guilt,**

kede rishato – “according to sufficiency of his wickedness.” In other words, enough to punish but no more and no less. One might say, “exactly as he deserves.”

² (con't) **with a certain number of blows.**

b'mispar – “in number.” This is the “sufficiency” of the previous clause. The number is to be in accord with his wrongdoing. However, the judge was to be limited in how much he determined what “in number” could be...

³ **Forty blows he may give him *and* no more, lest he should exceed this and beat him with many blows above these,**

The Hebrew is very precise, saying, “Forty blows he may give him, no he add lest he add, to beat him above these blows great.” In other words, anything beyond forty would be considered too great a punishment for any offense.

It obviously became an accepted rule in Israel to take away one blow as the maximum penalty in order to ensure the law was never violated. In other words, if the maximum of forty was the sentence, and the punisher miscounted, he would violate the law. Hence, the maximum number of thirty-nine was set to avoid this ever occurring.

Although this precept is not stated explicitly in Scripture, it is to be inferred from Paul’s words of 2 Corinthians 11:24, where he says, “From the Jews five times I received forty *stripes* minus one.”

With this stated, and with the precept understood from the New Testament, we find hints of the work of Christ. Forty, according to Bullinger is the number associated –

“...with a period of probation, trial, and chastisement... It is the product of 5 and 8, and points to the action of grace (5), leading to and ending in revival and renewal (8).” EW Bullinger

This is obviously the case with the man being punished. He is chastised. The maximum number set by the law is grace, and it is intended to lead to his renewal within the community for justice served. The removal of one blow would then be the maximum punishment, leading to renewal.

And this is what the Bible reveals in the coming of Christ. The body of law, the Old Testament, is thirty-nine books. That leads to the fortieth book where Christ is introduced.

The law, with its provisions for reconciliation to God, is grace leading to revival and renewal in Christ. Thus, the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament, meaning the law, are as blows to Christ in His fulfillment of them.

God gave Him that, and no more, to complete His work. If one adds in the fortieth book which first reveals His completion of them, then He has perfectly fulfilled the period of probation, trial, and chastisement. It is a beautiful picture of God's grace, leading to and ending in revival and renewal.

As far as the law itself for the disobedient man, any more than what the law prescribes would result in something quite negative...

^{3 (con't)} **and your brother be humiliated in your sight.**

v'niqlah akhikha l'enekha – “and dishonored your brother in your eyes.” The idea of calling him a “brother” here is that of shared humanity. This is a person and to beat him beyond a set measure would be comparable to treating him like an animal. It was not to be condoned.

Before going on, it needs to be noted that this precept of the law is not the punishment given to Christ during his Passion. The scourging He received was at the hands of Romans who were not bound to the precepts of the law. He would have been beaten relentlessly by them before He was led to the cross.

So, in a sense, Christ took much more of the humiliation spoken of here for His people than God would ever have allowed for them under their law. What God was willing to do for us in Christ goes far beyond that. Thank God for Jesus.

And more, it must be remembered when looking at the typology that Christ did no wrong. The wicked one in this passage is us, and yet Christ is the one who took the

blows on our behalf. Our guilt; His punishment. With that, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us. Thank God for Jesus.

With this matter now complete, Moses turns to a new precept...

⁴“You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out *the grain*.”

lo takhsom sor b'disho – “No you shall muzzle ox in his treading.” Two new words are found here, *khasam*, to stop up or muzzle, and *dush*, meaning to tread or thresh.

A question arises as to why this is stated here at all. A friend of mine sent me an analysis of this verse quite some time ago from Justin Taylor of the Gospel Coalition. I saved that until arriving here. The title was, “Do Not Muzzle the Ox: Does Paul Quote Moses Out of Context?”

The reason this is an important matter to settle is because Paul does, in fact, quote this verse two times. In his quoting, he says –

“Do I say these things as a *mere* man? Or does not the law say the same also? ⁹ For it is written in the law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.’ Is it oxen God is concerned about? ¹⁰ Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this is written*, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. ¹¹ If we have sown spiritual things for you, *is it* a great thing if we reap your material things? ¹² If others are partakers of *this* right over you, *are we not even more?*” 1 Corinthians 9:8-12

“Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. ¹⁸ For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,’ and, ‘The laborer *is* worthy of his wages.’” 1 Timothy 5:17, 18

Paul says that this was written for our sakes. If this is so, then as the analysis notes, it brings up all kinds of questions. They give examples –

- Is Paul saying that Moses never meant this to be applied to literal oxen?
- Is he merely referring to the ultimate intention of the passage?
- Is he focusing on contemporary application rather than original meaning?
- Is he quoting this verse out of context?

Based on this, and in order to show that the law is still to be taken literally, and yet also to justify that Paul is right as well, Mr. Taylor goes into lengthy analysis of showing that this must be speaking of a borrower of an ox.

To simplify the entire article, my friend brought it down to its basics, and then he paraphrased the intent, saying –

“In the case of an owned ox, it would be in the interest of the owner to have the ox eat some of the grain as it’s threshing the floor — so that the ox stays healthy and well fed.

But in the case of a borrowed ox — the borrower might not care for the ox as much, and wants to have maximum grain yield. So, he might put a muzzle on the ox so that it does not eat his grain. But in such a case the ox might get weaker and will not be in a good condition. But the borrower wouldn’t care because it’s not his ox.”

As my friend neither agreed nor disagreed with the analysis, but simply sent it on, I am sure I won’t offend him by disagreeing with it. The logic from that analysis is that all of the surrounding verses deal with human rights, and as this suddenly introduces the care of an ox, it doesn’t fit. Therefore, Paul must be right.

As he is, then it must be speaking of the rights of the owner of the ox, and hence, the ox is owned by another. As such, the passage is still referring to human rights – meaning, taking care of the owner’s property.

I disagree, and that does not logically follow. And, if it was the case, Moses would have identified it as a borrowed ox, just as the law speaks of such things elsewhere like in Exodus 22 –

“And if a man borrows *anything* from his neighbor, and it becomes injured or dies, the owner of it not *being* with it, he shall surely make *it* good. ¹⁵ If its owner *was* with it, he shall not make *it* good; if it *was* hired, it came for its hire.”

-Exodus 22:14, 15

If one has to infer a precept in the law of Moses in this manner, then the law is not clear. But clarity of the law is the absolute intent for the people. We have seen that time and again. Things are both repeated and restated to ensure there is nothing vague or ambiguous in the law.

Having said that, the precept is set. It is for the protection of the ox. And yet, it is still a precept dealing with human rights, just not the rights of an owner of an ox that the law never refers to.

Rather, the reason it is placed here is because it adds importance to the law just stated in the previous verse. If an ox is to be tended to, even though it is an ox, how much more should a man not be degraded as if he were an animal by beating him beyond what is decent.

Understanding that, and then understanding the context of Paul's words, both the law as written, and what Paul says in the epistles, come into clarity of focus.

Paul takes an actual verse about an ox, a matter of law – but which is placed carefully after a passage about human dignity – and he then says that it is not the ox that God is concerned about, which is true. It is the state of the *brother of the previous verse* that He cares about. Paul then elevates the precept of the ox to that of human dignity in his epistles, exactly as the passage about the ox intends.

*You shall beat Him with forty blows and no more
It is sufficient to the offense at hand
Anymore and everyone knows – 'forshore'
He will be dishonored more than I had planned*

*And you have done right by making it forty minus one
It is proper to not go beyond that, so I say
There are thirty-nine blows laid upon My Son
Thirty-nine books filled with debt that He would pay*

*And in the fortieth, there is now fellowship so sweet
The grace leading to revival and renewal is found
In Him, all that was necessary is now complete
In Him restoration with Me is found*

II. To Raise Up a Name to His Brother (verses 5-10)

⁵ **"If brothers dwell together,**

The stipulation here does not necessarily mean "in the same house." This is evidenced from the same use of the term in Genesis 13:6 and 36:7 where it refers to dwelling

together in the same land. The matter is one of what is reasonable concerning proximity. As such is the case...

^{5 (con't)} **and one of them dies and has no son,**

The translation is literally correct, son. But the passage is cited in the New Testament and there it refers to offspring –

“The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, ²⁴ saying: ‘Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. ²⁵ Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. ²⁶ Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh. ²⁷ Last of all the woman died also. ²⁸ Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her.’”

-Matthew 22:23-28

The son is the one to carry on the name of the father, but a provision was made in Numbers 27:1-11 for it to continue through daughters as well in a certain circumstance. Regardless of this, it is generally the son that carries the name of the father.

For now, the man died having no offspring, therefore...

^{5 (con't)} **the widow of the dead man shall not be *married* to a stranger outside *the family*;**

The word *zur*, or stranger, means anyone who is another. In other words, the brother has already been identified in the first clause, and thus anyone else is “another.” The focus is on this brother and the widow of his brother. In this case...

^{5 (con't)} **her husband’s brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife,**

Here is a new noun, *yavam*, meaning a husband’s brother. It is only to be found here and in verse 7. The verb form, *yavam*, was seen in Genesis 38:8 and it is then only seen again here in Scripture (in the next clause) and in verse 7. This was a cultural precept as carefully detailed in Genesis 38 and which is now being written into the Mosaic code.

The code is silent on whether this brother is already married or not, and so reading into it that he must be single is therefore not a reliable thought. It simply states as a point of law that a brother in such a matter is to perform this function.

Although there may be an exception, such as is found in Ruth concerning a near kinsman, it appears that the wording here refers to an actual brother in this passage. No matter what, it next says...

⁵ (con't) **and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her.**

In this, there is the requirement that such a brother is to perform the duty (*yavam*, the verb) of a husband's brother. This is with the explicit intent of giving her a child.

As this same verb was used in Genesis 38, it shows that the precept was already a custom in Israel, but it is now being codified into the law to ensure it would continue. The purpose of this rite is next stated...

⁶ **And it shall be *that* the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother,**

The Hebrew reads that the firstborn son: *yaqum al shem akhiv ha'met* – “shall rise over name brother, the dead.” The verse says nothing of a female child. It is certainly referring to a firstborn son who will rise to be over the name of the father who had died, thus being in charge of (over) his inheritance.

The same general phrase is used in Ruth 4:10, saying *l'haqim shem ha'met al nakhalato* – “to raise name the dead over his inheritance.” All of this is so...

⁶ (con't) **that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.**

This is the purpose of the rite – the perpetuation of the name of the dead. Thus, it is the genealogical record that is being highlighted. The estate of the dead would obviously be involved, but it is the name that is given first consideration.

Despite this being a precept of law, Moses does not make it mandatory. On the other hand, he does make the consequences for not following through with it repugnant enough so that a person in such a position would carefully consider the repercussions...

⁷ **But if the man does not want to take his brother's wife,**

Here is another new word, *yebemeth*, meaning a sister-in-law. It will be seen three times in this passage and only twice more, in Ruth 1:15. As can be seen, the law clearly makes this a voluntary action. He can turn down the duty he is called to according to the law.

The brother has no delight to take her as his wife. The word used, *khapets*, means to be pleasing or to delight in. He is not so inclined to fulfill this law. If such is the case...

7 (con't) then let his brother's wife go up to the gate to the elders,

It is the place of judgment. She will argue for a judgment against him because he is unwilling to perform the duty as directed by law. There at the gate, she will come to the elders...

7 (con't) and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to raise up a name to his brother in Israel; he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother.'

In this, she uses both the noun and the verb form of the word *yavam* – *yevami* (my husband's brother) will not *yavemi* – (perform the brother-in-law's duty).

In other words, there is a responsibility attached to who he is in relation to the dead. The reason why he won't fulfill the duty is irrelevant. He may not like her, he may not want the child she bears to have his brother's name, or whatever.

This is similar to what Judah's son Onan did in Genesis 38, but not the same. He did take his brother's wife, but he didn't allow his seed to pass onto her. The proposition set forth here is that he simply will not take her as his wife. She wants this, but he refuses it. And she has a right to this, even if it cannot be forced. As such...

8 Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him.

The law is written, the culturally accepted norm has been codified into the law, and the terminology given to describe him in this fashion lays weight on the matter that this is his obligation, even if he can turn it down. This is what they convey to him, asking him to be reasonable in the matter...

8 (con't) But if he stands firm and says, 'I do not want to take her,'

He uses the same word as was just described of him, *khaphets*. He does not delight to take her. In refusing the taking of her, he is refusing to take delight in the law which instructs him to do this thing. As such, the law now gives her a right to humiliate him...

9 then his brother's wife shall come to him in the presence of the elders,

The man has been counseled by the elders, he still refuses to agree to accept the responsibility of the custom, and thus he has disgraced both his brother and her. Therefore, she is given the right to bring disgrace upon him for failing to accept his responsibility. In this, she is to...

⁹ (con't) **remove his sandal from his foot,**

The sandal is a symbol of authority over the place where it rests. This is seen, for example, in Psalm 60 where David claims authority over Edom –

“Moab *is* My washpot;
Over Edom I will cast My shoe;
Philistia, shout in triumph because of Me.” Psalm 60:8

In the casting of his shoe (it is the same word translated as sandal here) David was demonstrating that he delighted in taking possession over Edom. In Ruth, the near kinsman handed his shoe to Boaz as a resignation of the right to take possession of Elimelech's estate.

However, here the woman is given the right to forcibly take off his shoe, demonstrating first that her hand now has the power over his right. Secondly, it is a contemptible way of saying that he no longer has any claim to, or right in, the matter henceforth.

And more, to be unshod is a sign of a miserable and shameful existence. This is seen several times elsewhere –

“In the year that Tartan came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and took it, ² at the same time the Lord spoke by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, ‘Go, and remove the sackcloth from your body, and take your sandals off your feet.’ And he did so, walking naked and barefoot. ³ Then the Lord said, ‘Just as My servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot three years *for* a sign and a wonder against Egypt and Ethiopia, ⁴ so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians as prisoners and the Ethiopians as captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.’” Isaiah 20:1-4

“So David went up by the Ascent of the *Mount of Olives*, and wept as he went up; and he had his head covered and went barefoot. And all the people

who *were* with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they went up.”

-2 Samuel 15:30, 31

Along with this degrading act, she will...

^{9 (con't)} **spit in his face,**

The word is *yaraq*, to spit. This is its third and last use. It was used twice in Numbers 12:14 where it is clearly recognized as a sign of derision –

“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘If her father had but spit [spitting, had spit] in her face, would she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut out of the camp seven days, and afterward she may be received *again*.’”

Due to his unwillingness to perform his duty, he would thus be degraded before the elders by a woman. Along with that is one more note of unworthiness...

^{9 (con't)} **and answer and say, ‘So shall it be done to the man who will not build up his brother’s house.’**

The actions speak for themselves, but after performing them, she then has the right to make him a comparative form of execration. In essence, “What I have done to him is what any person unwilling to perform this duty deserves.” Upon completion of this, the man would never be released from the shame of that act. As it says...

^{*10 (fin)} **And his name shall be called in Israel, ‘The house of him who had his sandal removed.’**

v’niqra shemo b’yisrael beit khaluts ha’naal – “And shall be called his name in Israel house him who had removed the sandal.”

The word *shemo*, or “his name,” is explained by the words “the house of him.” In other words, his house and his legacy are together one of disgrace. It is both a symbol of his disgrace, and it is also a continuous reminder of it. The idea is, “Because he would not build up his brother’s house, his house is one of disgrace.”

*It is your job and your duty to perform this law
Without it, there will be no heir for the name of your brother
Don’t shirk your responsibility; don’t have such a flaw*

Don't pass on what you should do to another

*You are counseled to perform as is expected of you
And if you will not, your authority you will lose
Do that which is your responsibility to do
But... you also know that you can refuse*

*What woman would ever want something of you
When you would fail to act as you are told
By the woman, you will be rejected – so she will do
Any integrity of yours will be forever sold*

III. The Unwilling Brother

The precept here predates the Law of Moses. A brother was to step in and to perform the duty of the *yavam*, the brother-in-law. What we have here is a short review of the inability of the law to bring forth children.

Man, once connected to God, is the dead husband, typified by Adam. The woman represents humanity. A son in this, would indicate a spiritual reconnection to God. Adam, the man who was once spiritually alive, died and left her no such children.

Even prior to the law, the precept of the *yavam* was already seen. The purpose of Genesis 38 was to set that idea as a precedent. The story there is one which anticipates the restoration of this spiritual connection to God. That is presented in a manner as clearly as it could be, as was shown in that particular sermon.

As this is so, life under the Law of Moses is typologically given as this brother. It is, ostensibly, available to give children to the woman as a *yavam*, or brother-in-law. As it says in Leviticus 18 –

“You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I *am* the LORD.” Leviticus 18:5

However, “being under law” does not delight in the woman, and is – in fact – a state that is at enmity with her. Paul states that explicitly in Ephesians 2 –

“For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, ¹⁵ having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the

law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace.” Ephesians 2:14, 15

In this case, life under the law typologically will not perform the duty to give the woman a son. Hence, she performs the rite of disgracing him and stripping him of any authority to ever have right to her again. However, Christ is of the woman, meaning humanity. And of Him, it says in the law itself –

“Then I said, ‘Behold, I come;
In the scroll of the book *it is* written of me.
⁸I delight [*khapets*] to do Your will, O my God,
And Your law *is* within my heart.’” Psalm 40:7, 8

Because life under the law would not perform the duty, as is evidenced in the 1400+ years of it bringing no one to restoration with God, Christ came to do it. He delighted to do the will of God, and He performs what life under the law was unwilling to perform.

In this, He – as a member of humanity – took away the authority of the law and brought it to its end. Thus, life under the law is “The house of him who had his sandal removed.”

This is certainly indicated in Paul’s words to those at Corinth, saying, “The first man Adam became a living being.” The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit” (1 Corinthians 15:45). God in Christ is the nearer brother who could, and who did, give a Son, His Firstborn, to the barren woman. From there, life is restored to any who come to Him.

The lesson: There are no born-again children in humanity through life under the law, not before, nor will there ever be. Only in Christ is there a delight in bringing children to God through humanity. In this Son then comes a new family, among whom Christ Jesus is the Firstborn.

It is a beautiful passage, found in the law, that conveys to us the insufficiency of the law, apart from Christ, to do what it was given for. That thought is perfectly expressed by Paul in Romans 3 –

“But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,²² even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe.” Romans 3:21, 22

The law itself witnesses to what God was going to do in Christ. Righteousness is now imputed to those who simply reach out to God through Him, by faith, and accept what He has done.

If you have friends or family stuck in some law-observant church, keep pecking away at them. Their time is short, and they have an infinitely high hill to climb going that route. They won't make it. For anyone listening today, I ask you to trust in Christ, rest in Christ, and put away your futile attempts at pleasing God through any other avenue except Jesus Christ.

He is the answer to the problem that separates us from God. And surprisingly, the law itself testifies to that fact. Thank God for Jesus Christ.

Closing Verse: *"Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law."* Romans 3:32

Next Week: Deuteronomy 25:11-19 *Use your brain cells; be sure they are set...* (You Shall Not Forget) (72nd Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

A Brother in Israel

"If there is a dispute between men
And they come to court, that the judges may judge them
And they justify the righteous
And the wicked they condemn

Then it shall be, if the wicked man deserves to be beaten
That the judge will cause him to lie down; ground facing nose
And be beaten in his presence, according to his guilt
With a certain number of blows

Forty blows he may give him and no more
Lest he should exceed this, something not right
And beat him with many blows above these

And your brother be humiliated in your sight

“You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain
How does this law fit with the other laws? Can I ask again?

“If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son
The widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger
-----outside the family
Her husband’s brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife
And perform the duty of a husband’s brother to her; so shall it be

And it shall be that the firstborn son
Which she bears will succeed to the name, as to you I tell
Of his dead brother
That his name may not be blotted out of Israel

But if the man does not want to take his brother’s wife
Then let his brother’s wife go up to the gate to the elders, and say
“My husband’s brother refuses to raise up a name to his brother
-----in Israel
He will not perform the duty of my husband’s brother
-----to this very day

Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him
But if he stands firm and says, ‘I do not want to take her
-----so he does convey
Then his brother’s wife shall come to him in the presence
-----of the elders
Remove his sandal from his foot, spit in his face
-----and answer and say

“So shall it be done to the man
Who will not build up his brother’s house; so he shall be reprovved
And his name shall be called in Israel
‘The house of him who had his sandal removed

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You

May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

Deuteronomy 25:11-19 (You Shall Not Forget)

The passage today is actually divided into three separate sections of law and of what is expected of and from the people of Israel. But each deal in typology as well.

The first section probably seems a bit bizarre and unrelated to anything else, but it is actually closely related to the verses from our sermon last week. The second section is a close repetition of earlier words given in Leviticus, and its principles will be cited several times later in Scripture.

And the final section suddenly comes forth without any seeming connection at all to what comes before it. And yet, they all follow a logical and orderly path in how Israel is instructed, and thus how we are to be instructed.

As I said, these are also given as typological hints of that which will come later in redemptive history. In them, there is the underlying truth that Christ is the fulfillment of the law, and that we are obligated to come to Him in order to be right before God.

Once we are right with Him because of our relationship to Him in Christ, we are then given the ability to conduct ourselves properly before Him, advancing on and destroying the enemies of the Lord's people as we go.

Text Verse: *"You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ² And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. ³ You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. ⁴ No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier."*

-2 Timothy 2:1-4

Only the third passage in our verses today really anticipates warfare, but for the believer in Christ, all three are to be understood from the perspective that we are in a war, and that we must use the implements of our warfare properly in order to win the battles we are to face.

In all, the verses and words before us are interesting, and they continue to confirm positive truths for Israel as well as us. Also, they are to be taken as warnings for Israel as well as admonitions for us. The Lord does not waste words, and when He can convey two or three or even more ideas in a single passage, He will do so.

Thus, going through the law is to be an exciting adventure where we learn words of law while at the same time we can learn about the grace of God in Christ in relation to the same law. It is a marvelous journey we are on.

On the day I typed this sermon, my friend Sergio emailed me that he had been to an excavation site to record something for one of his YouTube videos. I told him I had been excavating as well. With that, he sent back a question mark, asking what I meant. I told him I had been digging out treasures – excavating – from the word.

That is what we are to do. Dig, search out, and bring forth treasure. And there is so very much treasure to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Your Eye Shall Not Pity (verses 11 & 12)

The previous section, detailed last week, dealt with the issue of raising up a son for the name of a dead husband by a brother of the husband. In that, he did not want to fulfill the duty and thus he denied her dead husband the right to have his name continue.

In this, she was allowed to openly rebuke him and publicly disgrace him for his unwillingness to act as the law provided. The first verse of the passage today will now take that precept and move it from the man who is the wrongdoer to the woman. This is evidenced with the first words of the passage...

¹¹ **“If *two* men fight together,**

ki yinatsu anashim yakhda ish v’akhiv – “When fight men together, man and brother.” This then could be referring to two Hebrew men, herein called brothers, and this is how most translations state it – “one and another,” or “a man and his countryman,” or such.

But, if it meant any man, that could just as easily be said in the Hebrew. Both the Aramaic Bible and the Greek translation stick with “brother.” Based on the fact that the previous section dealt with interactions with a brother, it seems that is probably the intent of the Hebrew. Two men, brothers, are striving together...

^{11 (con’t)} **and the wife of one draws near to rescue her husband from the hand of the one attacking him,**

This would be a natural reaction for a wife. Her husband is getting pounded on, and she wants to protect him. But being the weaker sex and knowing that she has a limited ability to do so, she looks to gain an advantage in the matter...

11 (con't) and puts out her hand and seizes him by the genitals,

Nothing is said of the woman defending her husband in some other way. If she were to hit the man over the head with a broom, the law is silent on that. But in her actions, she reaches out and grabs what the Hebrew calls the *mabush*. It is a word coming from *bosh*, meaning to be ashamed. Thus, it describes that which is hidden.

The reason for highlighting this is twofold. First, this is where the life of man is transferred from. To act in such a manner then is to threaten life itself, even if not his personally. This is similar to the principle seen in Exodus 21 –

“If men fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman’s husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges *determine*.²³ But if *any* harm follows, then you shall give life for life,²⁴ eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,²⁵ burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.”
-Exodus 21:22-25

In such an instance, life is threatened. What happens to the child is to also be the penalty imposed upon the man. Likewise, for simply attempting to subdue the man in such a way, it was a threat against the life that issues from him and it was not to be tolerated.

But secondly, the word itself provides another reason for the prohibition. It is the hidden, or shameful, part of the man. She has no right to pry into what is his in this way, even in the protection of her husband. Therefore, if she presumes to act in such a manner...

12 then you shall cut off her hand;

v’qasotah eth kappah – “And you shall cut off her hand.” Two words are used to describe a hand, *yad* and *kaph*. *Yad* indicates the arm/hand, while *kaph* refers to the palm of the hand or the sole of the foot. It is thus the part of the arm reserved for describing that which has the fingers and the palm.

The specificity is probably to ensure that only the hand is cut off and no extra liberty, such as cutting off up to the elbow, is taken by the one detailed to carry out the punishment. But even chopping off a hand is a stiff penalty to inflict on another. Thus, Moses says...

^{12 (con't)} **your eye shall not pity her.**

To modern senses, this probably seems like an intolerant set of verses and an archaic and unacceptable way of handling the situation. However, if it is not taken as a stand-alone, but is taken in the context of the previous verses that spoke of the brother who would not fulfill his duty to raise up a son in the dead husband's name, it no longer seems that way.

Such a man was publicly disgraced for his actions, and his house was to continue on in that disgrace. Here, the woman has purposed to attack the very part of the brother that was to be used to raise up his children, or – ostensibly – her children, if such a need arose.

It doesn't matter whether that right would ever be needed or not. In principle, because of the law of the *yavam* – or “husband's brother” – seen in the previous verses, she was as much attacking the authority of her own husband as anything else.

As far as what this is typifying, if the typology is to remain the same as the previous passage, as it certainly does, then you have the wife representing humanity, and the brother (her brother-in-law) represents life under the law.

It is typologically representative of humanity reaching out to grasp life under the law at the point where life issues from. In other words, we are seeing a picture of humanity attempting to obtain life through the law. One could look to Leviticus 18:5 to understand this –

“You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I *am* the LORD.” Leviticus 18:5

However, though life issues through a man's private parts, so does sin. And Paul explains that in relation to the law –

“Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.” Romans 3:20

That this is dealing with the law, and the transfer of sin, the terminology of the passage makes it perfectly clear. The Hebrew word indicates that the man's private parts are being highlighted as the spot of shame. This is evidenced in Genesis 2:25 where the word *bosh* is first used, saying, "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."

After the fall, the shame was introduced. In grabbing for the law, one grabs for shame. It is Christ alone who is sufficient to bring life without shame. Hence, Paul says in Romans 10 –

"For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.'" Romans 10:10, 11

In reaching out for the law one will only find shame and being cut off. But in reaching out to Christ, who is the fulfillment of the law, one finds righteousness and no shame. It is in Him alone that this can come about.

*There is shame of face before the Lord in what we do
We who have turned and done wickedly in His sight
And yet, the Lord remains Faithful and True
And He has promised that He will make all things right*

*Will we reach out and grab that which brings shame?
Or will we reach out for the Offer He has made?
Will we look to exalt our own name?
Or will we look to Christ, and accept the offered trade?*

*We must choose which way we will go
What we reach for will reveal our heart
The Lord has made His offering, and so...
Let us choose the good path; let us choose that better part*

II. Differing Weights and Differing Measures (verses 13-16)

¹³ **"You shall not have in your bag differing weights,**

lo yiyeh lekha b'kisekha even va'aven – "No shall you have to you in your bag stone and stone. The KJV translates this as "divers weights." Nowadays, "diver's weights" refer to

the lead that divers use to keep them weighed down while under water. A newer translation is always a giant help in understanding meaning.

In these words, there is a new word, *kis*. It is a bag or purse, coming from *kos*, a cup. Hence, it is a bag for money or measuring weights, or even a cup. In such a container, the measuring weights were not to be...

¹³ (con't) **a heavy and a light.**

Here it says, “a great and a small.” The idea is that of a dealer who pulls one weight out of a bag to make something look lighter than it is, and then pulls out another to make something look heavier than it is. He is a scam artist.

As such, he would use the greater weight for purchases – “See how small this is! I’ll give you two shekels for it, and I’m getting jipped on the deal for sure.” He would then use the small stone for sales – “Look at how much you are getting! And this is at the low, low cost of 7 shekels. Such a bargain for you. I’ll go broke at these rates!” Such is deceitful and is to be rejected because it is contrary to what is just and right. This is expressed in Proverbs 20 –

“Diverse weights *are* an abomination to the LORD,
And dishonest scales *are* not good.” Proverbs 20:23

Having a standard measurement has already been seen in Exodus where the “shekel of the sanctuary” is mentioned in relation to silver. But merchant weights were often made of stone according to a set standard. Such a standard is noted in 2 Samuel 14:26 –

“And when he cut the hair of his head—at the end of every year he cut *it* because it was heavy on him—when he cut it, he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels according to the king’s standard.”

As there was a set standard, the weights of those who conducted business were to be compared to that set standard. But anybody can make their own false stone that looks close enough to the standard to pass as genuine and yet be far enough off to enrich its owner. It is comparable to today’s loading of the dice.

Along with that, another closely related concept is next conveyed to Israel by Moses...

¹⁴ **You shall not have in your house differing measures,**

lo yiheh lekha b'betekha ephah v'ephah – “No shall you have to you in your house ephah and ephah.” The idea is the same as before, but instead of weights, it is measures of volume – an ephah. This is also mentioned, along with weights, in Proverbs 20:10 –

“Diverse weights *and* diverse measures,
They *are* both alike, an abomination to the LORD.” Proverbs 20:10

As the ephah is a set measurement, it was not to be falsified to cheat those who came to one's house to buy or sell grain. It was to be the standard size only and not...

14 (con't) a large and a small.

It is the same words as in the previous verse. Having a large ephah would benefit when buying. If a standard ephah was worth 10 shekels, but he used a larger ephah, then he could get 11 shekel's worth for the set 10 shekels. Having a smaller ephah would benefit when selling. Using the smaller ephah would mean the buyer would get 9 shekels worth for the 10 he paid.

It is not a good thing that has taken place, but observant Orvie knew that crooked Craig uses a dishonest ephah, so he filed off the edges of his shekels enough to offset the loss. Such is life under the law. Neither should occur. Rather...

15 You shall have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure,

In contrast to what has just been said, Moses commands what is full, perfect, friendly, and just. The positive command is to counter the negatives –

* “You shall not have in your bag differing weights.”
“You shall not have in your house differing measures.”

~~~

\* “You shall have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure.”

And, as always, there is a reason for Moses' words. It is the constantly repeated promise and warning...

**15 (con't) that your days may be lengthened in the land**

*l'maan yaariku al ha'adamah* – “to end purpose may be prolonged your days upon the ground.” Moses ties in longevity upon the ground with doing what is right in this regard.

The implication is that in not doing what is right, Israel's time there will not be prolonged. This is because it is the ground...

<sup>15</sup> (con't) **which the LORD your God is giving you.**

It is the Lord who is giving the land to Israel. In giving it, there are conditions and responsibilities that must be met and maintained. If they do not uphold their part of the bargain, they can expect nothing less than exile from the land to which they have been brought. These commands are based on the same sentiment spoken directly by the Lord in Leviticus 19 –

“You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume. <sup>36</sup> You shall have honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin: *I am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.”

-Leviticus 19:35, 36

The Lord noted that it is He who brought Israel out of Egypt. As such, Israel was brought from bondage and was to be delivered to freedom, at least freedom from Egypt.

In His justice in keeping His promise to the patriarchs, He expected the same justice of those who descended from them. They were to be a holy people to the Lord, and to reflect His just, perfect, and truthful character.

In not acting in accord with the law of just weights and just measures, they would prove they were not worthy of what He had bestowed upon them. In this, they would receive the same measure as they used against one another.

And this is a precept that Jesus continued to relay to them when He came. While speaking to Israel, under the law, He said just this –

“Judge not, that you be not judged. <sup>2</sup> For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.”

-Matthew 7:1, 2

The Lord, in His relationship with Israel under the law, dealt to them what they dealt toward others. Their punishment and exile resulted in a perfectly just sentence against their unrighteousness. This wasn't something hidden from them. Rather, it is that which was spoken forth, in advance, as a warning by Moses...

<sup>16</sup> **For all who do such things, all who behave unrighteously,**

The Hebrew is more precise, repeating the word “do” and using a noun rather than an adjective: *kal oseh eleh kol oseh avel* – “all who do these; all who do unrighteousness.” It is the works that define the person. And it is the law that judges the works.

Thus, it is the sentiment repeated several times by the Lord to Israel. Though speaking of false prophets, it is the idea of the fruits of one’s deeds that Jesus speaks of in Matthew 7 –

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. <sup>16</sup> You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? <sup>17</sup> Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. <sup>18</sup> A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. <sup>19</sup> Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup> Therefore by their fruits you will know them.” Matthew 7:15-20

He then speaks in similar words to the leaders of Israel concerning the fruits of their doings –

“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by *its* fruit. <sup>34</sup> Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. <sup>35</sup> A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. <sup>36</sup> But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. <sup>37</sup> For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” Matthew 12:33-37

The issue is the heart, whether the outward display is found in unjust weights and measures or in what is spoken forth with the mouth. A measure is set forth which determines the fate of the one who acts in such a way, or the nation that acts in such a way. The unjust heart is revealed in the unrighteous doing. And all who act in such ways...

<sup>16</sup> (cont) **are an abomination to the LORD your God.**

The words are actually the first clause of the verse: *ki toavat Yehovah Elohekha* – “For the abomination of Yehovah your God” are such people. In a literal fulfillment of these words from Moses, and in the same vein as those who Jesus referred to whose words reflect the state of their hearts, Micah says this concerning Israel –

“Are there yet the treasures of wickedness  
In the house of the wicked,  
And the short measure *that is* an abomination?  
<sup>11</sup> Shall I count pure *those* with the wicked scales,  
And with the bag of deceitful weights?  
<sup>12</sup> For her rich men are full of violence,  
Her inhabitants have spoken lies,  
And their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.” Micah 6:10-12

Though these verses may hardly seem Christological to you, they bear the same stamp of Messiah as does the rest of the law. Here we have verses that speak of honest weights and honest measures. Jesus then noted (thus confirming Moses’ words concerning their living in the land being dependent on their conduct) that the measure they used under the law, so it would be measured to them.

However, there is another measure that is handed out for those who are no longer under the law. It is Christ who fulfilled the law, and who not only fulfilled it, but who took the full measure of the penalty of the law upon Himself. In this, a new measure is given to those who trust in Him and what He has done. Paul explains it in Ephesians 4 –

“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift.<sup>8</sup> Therefore He says:

‘When He ascended on high,  
He led captivity captive,  
And gave gifts to men.’

<sup>9</sup> (Now this, “He ascended”—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? <sup>10</sup> He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

<sup>11</sup> And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; <sup>14</sup> that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by

the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,<sup>15</sup> but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head— Christ—<sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

-Ephesians 4:7-16

What Christ offers is not a law of works in an attempt to be righteous, nor a law of works that says, “When you fail, you are unrighteous.” In the law, there are set standards – weights and measures – that must be maintained.

Rather than that, what Christ offers is a gift of righteousness. And that then provides what He measures forth in order to bring us to the measure of the stature of the fullness found in Him.

The contrast is complete. One approach says, “Do this to be righteous,” even though it is not possible to do it. The other says, “Because I have made you righteous, do this to demonstrate it.”

This is the marvel of what God has done for us in Christ. He has taken away the law that stood opposed to us, and He has given us what the law could not bring to us. Thank God for Jesus Christ through whom God has done these things.

*A perfect and just weight, this is good in the Lord's sight  
A perfect and just measure, this is good in His eyes  
Let us strive to do that which is right  
And let us fix our eyes upon the Prize*

*May our actions be open for all to see  
And may we deal justly with others always  
A perfect measure and a perfect weight shall be  
The standards by which we fill our days*

*To the glory of the Lord who watches over us  
And to the glory of Him who is pleased in what is right  
May we always emulate the Lord Jesus  
In this, we will be pleasing in God's sight*

### **III. Blot Out the Remembrance of Amalek (verses 17-19)**

From noting those who are an abomination before the Lord for their conduct towards others in the misuse of weights and measures, Moses next turns to those who acted unrighteously against Israel when they were in a weakened state.

In both, there is the knowledge that the Lord is aware of the wrongdoings, and that He will take corrective action. The transition between the two then is evident and made smooth because of this.

**<sup>17</sup> “Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt,**

Just as in Deuteronomy 24:9, and using the same construction of the sentence, Moses jumps from the singular to the plural: *zakar eth asher asah lekha amaleq ba’derek b’tsetekhem mimitsrayim* – “Remember what did to you (singular) Amalek in the way in your (plural) coming out from Egypt.” Notice the two side by side –

“Remember what the LORD your (sg) God did to Miriam in the way in your (pl) coming out from Egypt!”

“Remember what Amalek did to you (sg) in the way in your (pl) coming out from Egypt.”

One can see that Moses is referring to Israel as the Lord’s people here without saying it. The Lord (Israel’s God) took action against Miriam as the people were coming out of Egypt. Likewise, Amalek came against Israel (the Lord’s people) as they were coming out of Egypt.

Miriam offended the Lord and was punished. Amalek has harmed Israel, and they are to be punished. Both are being used as examples for Israel to see and to learn by. Thus, what will be stated about Amalek is as much of a warning to Israel as it is a command to act by Israel.

**<sup>18</sup> how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks,**

Using a new word, *zinev*, the Hebrew reads “How he met you in the way and tailed in you.” The verb *zinev* means “to extend or to tail out.” Thus, the phrase means that Amalek attacked the tail of the people, cutting them off. The words are comparable to the English when we “skin an animal.” The noun, skin, is made into a verb that describes the task of removing the skin.



What Moses says here is not recorded elsewhere, but he states it as a fact that is to be remembered. While Israel was going forth, Amalek took advantage of the weakest of them who were at the rear of the formation which he notes were...

**18 (con't) all the stragglers at your rear,**

*kal ha'nekheshalim aharekha* – “All the enfeebled behind you.” Here is a word used only once in Scripture, *khshal*. It refers to those who are weary or enfeebled. Thus, it speaks of those who just couldn't keep up. They languished behind, resting and trying to recover, and Amalek took advantage of them. This was...

**18 (con't) when you were tired and weary;**

There is an emphasis in the words: *v'atah ayeph v'yagea* – “and you, faint and weary.” Another new word is given, *yagea*. It signifies to be wearisome.

The entire congregation was in need of water (see Exodus 17) which the Lord provided, and they were worn out and depleted. In this state, Amalek was able to take full advantage of those at the rear ranks. It would be probable that this occurred before the Lord provided Israel water.

Not knowing they had been given water and were refreshed, Amalek thought they could come and defeat all of Israel. Instead, they were defeated in battle at Rephidim. What was evident from their conduct is that...

**18 (con't) and he did not fear God.**

The general term for God, *Elohim*, is used here. It neither says, “the Lord,” nor is there an article before God, as in “the God.” What this means is that Amalek had pushed away even the general understanding of God that is written upon the heart of man.

They had suppressed the knowledge of Him to the point that there was no fear of Him in any respect at all. In such a state, there could be no remedy for them. As such...

**19 Therefore it shall be, when the LORD your God has given you rest**

It reads, “And it shall be, in resting Yehovah your God to you.” In other words, Israel was on a journey, and they were weak and weary. Their journey is not yet complete, nor will

it be until the land before them is subdued. But there is a time coming when the Lord will have given them rest...

**19 (con't) from your enemies all around,**

The word “all” is stated twice – “from all your enemies all around.” In other words, all of their enemies in every direction around them will have been pushed back or defeated enough to allow them rest. There will be nothing to distress them when they are called to the action at hand, which is...

**19 (con't) in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance,**

The land is the promise, it is to be given to Israel by the Lord, it is to be their inheritance, and it will be possessed. These are all stated as axioms by Moses. These things will come to pass. When the state promised in that land, meaning being given rest, is realized, it is then...

**19 (con't) that you will blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.**

This is Moses' reminder to Israel of what was stated in Exodus 17:14 after the battle at Rephidim –

“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Write this *for* a memorial in the book and recount *it* in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.’”

If you noticed, in Exodus 17, the Lord said that *He* would utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek. However, here Moses tells them that *they* are to do so. They are to be the instrument of the Lord's judgment upon Amalek.

It is the synergistic (working together) relationship that is so often seen in Scripture, be it in the conduct of warfare by Israel, or in the process of salvation where God does the work to procure salvation, the church does the work of carrying the message forth, and the sinner accepts what God has done.

The Lord uses His people to accomplish His purposes. As such, Israel has a responsibility to fulfill the Lord's will. Understanding this, Moses emphatically states...

**\*19 (fin) You shall not forget.**

*lo tishkakh* – “No shall you forget.” Israel was to remember their responsibility and to perform it according to the Lord’s will and directive. This mandate was slowly and carefully carried out. Gideon faced Amalek along with the Midianites.

Saul faced them, but disobeyed the Lord in his encounter, thus causing him to lose the kingship. David faced Amalek several times during his reign as well. And the book of Esther describes the destruction of Haman who descended from Amalek also.

But Amalek is used in Scripture in typology as well. Their name is derived from the word *am*, or people, and from the word *malaq* which gives the sense of wringing off the head. They are The People who Wring Off.

In type, and as was seen in the Exodus 17 passage, they are those who are disconnected from the body and strive to disconnect the body. Thus, they represent false teachers, heretics, and other unregenerate people who are constantly attacking the weakest of the flock. They are those Paul warns of in Colossians –

“Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in *false* humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,<sup>19</sup> and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase *that is from God.*” Colossians 2:18, 19

The Lord promised that He would destroy Amalek, but Moses then said that Israel would do so. In type, the Lord has given us His word to stand on and to use both offensively and defensively. He has commissioned His people to be the means of destroying the doctrine of those who attempt to wring off His people from the body.

This is the reminder that Moses now emphatically gives to Israel – “You shall not forget.” And it is the admonition that we too are given. We are to remember proper doctrine, and we are to continue to fight against those who come against the enfeebled of the body.

But we cannot fulfill this calling if we do not know and rightly apply the word that has been given to us. The lesson of Amalek is brought forward by Moses to remind us again that doctrine matters.

The word is about Christ and what He has done. If we keep that in its proper place, and if we trust in the grace of God without trying to add to it or lead people away from it, we will do well.

This word is far too valuable a gift to allow it to be twisted, manipulated, or distorted by others. And we should hold it in such high value that it is placed as our highest priority to search out each day. We cannot know God without knowing Jesus Christ, and we cannot know Jesus Christ without this precious gift that speaks of Him.

And so let us be responsible stewards of the trust placed into our care. May it be so, to the glory of God.

**Closing Verse:** *“These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. <sup>14</sup> But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”*

*-1 Corinthians 2:13, 14*

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 26:1-11 *It’s more important than showing up in a three-piece suit...* (The First of the Fruit) (73<sup>rd</sup> Deuteronomy sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **You Shall Not Forget**

“If two men fight together, and the wife of one draws near  
To rescue her husband from the hand of the one attacking him  
-----if this does occur  
And puts out her hand and seizes him by the genitals  
Then you shall cut off her hand; your eye shall not pity her

“You shall not have in your bag differing weights  
A heavy and a light  
You shall not have in your house differing measures  
A large and a small; this wouldn’t be right

You shall have a perfect and just weight  
A perfect and just measure too  
That your days may be lengthened in the land  
Which the LORD your God is giving you

For all who do such things  
All who behave unrighteously  
Are an abomination to the LORD your God  
Such things as this shall not be  
“Remember what Amalek did to you  
On the way as you were coming out of Egypt  
How he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks  
All the stragglers at your rear; the ranks he stripped

When you were tired and weary on the path you trod  
And he did not fear God

Therefore it shall be, when the LORD your God  
Has given you rest from your enemies all around  
In the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess  
As an inheritance – that wonderful bit of ground...

That you will blot out the remembrance of Amalek  
From under heaven. You shall not forget. You shall give him heck

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## **Deuteronomy 26:1-11 (The First of the Fruit)**

A friend of mine emailed me a few days before typing this sermon and found the words of a Christian author that he normally liked hard to understand. He was sure that the guy taught eternal salvation, but he wasn't syncing on what the guy was saying in one particular point. The author is AW Tozer and he said –

“We are saved by accepting Christ as our Savior.” “We are sanctified by accepting Christ as our Lord.” “We may do the first without doing the second.” What a tragedy that in our day we often hear the gospel appeal made in this way: “Come to Jesus! You do not have to obey anyone. You do not have to give up anything. Just come to Him and believe in Him as Savior!” The fact that we hear this everywhere does not make it right! To urge men and women to believe in a divided Christ is bad teaching-for no one can receive a half or a third or a quarter of the divine Person of Christ!”

Tozer is right, but it does not negate that some people are saved and are not obedient to Christ. Belief in the gospel saves. Obedience to Christ comes at a different level for every person who has ever been saved. My response was –

- 1) We are saved by believing the gospel. It is done (1 Cor 15:3, 4 / Eph 1:13, 14 & so on).
- 2) After salvation we should live as if we are saved because Christ is our Lord. (Eph 4:1 / 1 Thess 2:12 & so on).

I concluded the email with the words, “When we don't believe the gospel, we have not been saved. When we are saved and don't live for Christ as Lord, we are not being obedient to the word.”

With that understood, we will talk about confessing Jesus as Lord today. That is a different issue than being obedient to Jesus as Lord. One is referring to His deity – Jesus is the Lord, Jehovah. The other is referring to His position of authority over us. Jesus is the Lord (Master) over us.

It's an important distinction because people tend both to under and overthink Romans 10:9, 10. As such they misunderstand what Paul is saying, and they can get off on some odd tangents in doing so.

**Text Verse:** *“The LORD has made bare His holy arm  
In the eyes of all the nations;  
And all the ends of the earth shall see  
The salvation of our God.” Isaiah 52:10*

The words of Isaiah are relevant to today’s passage as well. The arm of the Lord signifies what the Lord is reaching out to do. In the end, what God does in Christ is what the Lord is reaching out to do. Keep that in mind.

As far as our passage today, one of the verses refers to a confession made about the Israelite’s father. One clause of that verse is quite widely translated, and I thought I would give you a few of the different possibilities as to what is being said –

My father was a wandering Aramean. NIV  
My father was a Syrian, about to perish. NKJV  
My father was led to Aram. Aramaic  
My father abandoned Syria. Brenton Septuagint  
My ancestor was homeless, an Aramean. CEV  
The Syrian pursued my father. Douay-Rheims  
My ancestor was a wandering Aramean. GNT  
My ancestors were wandering Arameans. GWT

These, and several other possibilities, have been given for this clause. The Hebrew is just three words, and yet there is this much disagreement on what is being conveyed. If you ever wonder why translations vary so much, it is because the Bible is a big, complicated book.

Not only the words themselves have to be evaluated, but what the words may be referring to do as well. Remember this as you do your studies, and don’t just go with the first translation. And, also, don’t just go with the first commentary. There is a lot involved in what the Bible is telling us.

If we can have such a divergence on three seemingly simple words, just imagine how difficult the greater doctrines set forth in the word can be argued over. Hence, we have 8 billion different denominations – all claiming they have the answer. Be careful what you accept and be sure to have the basics right.

We will see the very basic of the basics, the first of the fruit of our life in the Lord, referred to in today’s passage. Great things are to be found in His superior word. And so,

let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. I Declare Today to the Lord (verses 1-11)**

**<sup>1</sup>“And it shall be, when you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you**

The words of this first verse are not unlike many other verses already seen in Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. In Leviticus and Numbers, the Lord repeated the words in the first person again and again –

“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you have come into the land you are to inhabit, which I am giving to you.’” Numbers 15:2

Moses gives the same general thought in Deuteronomy 18:9, stating it in the third person –

“When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations.”

Introducing this expression at the beginning of the chapter sets the tone for everything that follows. Israel is not yet in Canaan, and yet they are promised that they will enter the land, a land being given to them by the Lord.

They were brought out of bondage, they were given the law, they were conducted to the door of Canaan and yet they faithlessly turned away from it, they were sentenced to exile in the wilderness because of their faithlessness, and yet they have been cared for by the Lord through the many years of exile for disobedience.

Now, at the end of their time of exile, right on the banks of the Jordan, they are promised they will – in fact – enter the land. The inheritance was promised to their fathers and to them. They will possess the land, and the Lord will see them through to the satisfactory completion of His promise.

In this, and because it’s been a while since the typology has been considered, all of what occurred has been a picture of Israel’s rejection of Christ. In Numbers 14, Israel refused to enter Canaan. It was a perfectly clear picture of Israel’s rejection of Jesus.



From there, they were led into exile in the wilderness. All of that time in the wilderness has been typical of Israel's exile over the past two thousand years. And just as He brought Israel through the years of wandering and to the door of Canaan once again, so He has brought Israel back to the land in preparation of their coming to their Messiah.

Through their constant faithlessness towards the Lord, He has remained steadfastly faithful to Israel – both in the historical account recorded in the Pentateuch and in the historical account of their time since the Roman exile.

The words now spoken by Moses are reminding them that entrance into the promise is not because of anything they have done. Rather, it is based on the granting of it by the Lord – “And it shall be, when you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you.” It will be the land given...

<sup>1 (con't)</sup> **as an inheritance,**

*nakhlah* – “an inheritance.” One inherits an inheritance. Thus, it is given by another and not earned. This is the state of the land in which the Israelite is to live, and it is in this state – and from this reference point – that the rite to be explained is mandated.

As for Israel as a nation, they have not yet come to Christ who is the anticipated true inheritance. He is what Canaan only anticipates. That life is still ahead of them. Someday they will enter, just as Moses says Israel will enter. It is this time that is being anticipated. Understanding this, Moses says...

<sup>1 (con't)</sup> **and you possess it and dwell in it,**

*v'rishtah v'yashavta bah* – “and you possess and you dwell in it.” Again, Moses speaks of these things as a certainty. They shall inherit the land, they shall possess it, and they shall dwell in it. For Israel on the banks of the Jordan, the anticipation is Canaan. But for Israel without Christ, the anticipation and the promise is Christ.

As surely as they rejected God's offer and turned from Canaan, they rejected God's offer and turned from Christ. And as surely as they will enter Canaan, they will – someday – accept Christ.

The denial of both the Jews who still reject (and many curse) His name, as well as the denial of those in the church who say God is finished with Israel, are both denials that ignore the typology clearly seen in the words of Moses.

But more, they reject the words of the prophets, and they continue to reject the words of the apostles and of Jesus Himself that assure us reconciliation is yet ahead for Israel.

Regardless of that, the typology is set, the promises will come to pass, and Israel will both enter Canaan as stated by Moses, and they will come to Christ as noted in Scripture. As such, Moses has a word for the people when they enter and possess the land. It is...

**<sup>2</sup> that you shall take some of the first of all the produce of the ground,**

*v'laqakhta m'reshit kal peri ha'adamah* – “and you shall take from first all fruit the ground.” Because of the use of “from” the words are a bit confusing. This is not referring to the Feast of Firstfruits, but rather of the first of all the produce. In Exodus 23, we read–

“Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year: <sup>15</sup> You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (you shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt; none shall appear before Me empty); <sup>16</sup> and the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you have gathered in *the fruit of your labors from the field.*” Exodus 23:14-16

That is then further defined saying –

“The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the LORD your God.” Exodus 23:19

The *bikkurim*, or firstfruits, signifies the first of the harvest cycle, and it is the time when the second pilgrim feast was conducted. Of that harvest of firstfruits, a portion was presented to the Lord. That is the *reshit bikure*, or “first of the firstfruits.”

It is that, and any other firsts, that are certainly referred to here. In other words, that was one harvest, but there will be harvests of barley, wheat, figs, grapes, olives, pomegranates, and whatever else is grown by the people. Deuteronomy 8:8 gives a good summary of such things. But these “firsts” would also include that of the fleece of the sheep as well. This was stated in Chapter 18 –

“The firstfruits of your grain and your new wine and your oil, and the first of the fleece of your sheep, you shall give him. <sup>5</sup> For the LORD your God has chosen him out of all your tribes to stand to minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons forever.” Deuteronomy 18:4, 5

The first from each of these, whatever they may be, was to be brought forward...

<sup>2</sup> (con't) **which you shall bring from your land that the LORD your God is giving you,**

The repetition concerning the land is not unnecessary. It is an added reminder that not only did He give them the land, but he also is the One who gives them what comes from the ground in the land.

Therefore, just as He can give them the land and remove them from it, He can also provide from the ground or withhold what comes from it. They will be explicitly reminded of this, in minute detail, in Chapter 28.

As this is so, they are obligated to give of the first of the fruits that come from the ground. No amount is stated, and thus it is according to the generosity of the heart of the giver to decide. Whatever amount it is, they are to collect it...

<sup>2</sup> (con't) **and put *it* in a basket**

Here is a new and rare word, *tene*. It signifies a basket, coming from a root probably meaning “to weave.” Thus, it is a woven basket of willows or the like. It will be seen four times between now and Deuteronomy 28:7.

<sup>2</sup> (con't) **and go to the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide.**

In other words, the presentation is to be brought to the place of the tabernacle at the times of the pilgrim feasts. This would probably be something that happened at all three of the feasts, bringing forth whatever crop came ripe at that time.

<sup>3</sup> **And you shall go to the one who is priest in those days,**

This simply refers to whatever priest is on duty at the time, be it the high priest or whatever priest was in attendance. The number of people coming to the pilgrim feasts would make it impossible for the high priest alone to meet and then accept the offering of every family that came. Thus, they were to come to one of the priests...

<sup>3</sup> (con't) **and say to him, 'I declare today to the LORD your God**

The word *nagad* is used. It is variously translated as declare, profess, acknowledge, testify, show, and so on. It is a general word that gives the sense of "to be conspicuous." One might say, "I openly proclaim today..."

In saying "today," it has been passed on that this proclamation would be made only once a year. That does not logically follow. If one is to bring the first of the fruits, it would be much more logical for them to be presented as they became ripe. Hence, one would expect this to be done at each pilgrim feast, despite what Jewish commentators state.

By saying, "*Yehovah elohekha*," or "to Yehovah your God," it is demonstrating that the priest is acknowledged as the mediator between the people and the Lord. The profession is to be a constant reminder before the Lord. As such, he is to then say...

<sup>3</sup> (con't) **that I have come to the country which the LORD swore to our fathers to give us.'**

The Hebrew more specifically says, "swore to our fathers to give **to us**." It is not to all of Israel, but that a particular generation would receive the promise. The rest could only anticipate what these people, standing before the priest, would actually receive.

Thus, in saying this, and in providing the fruit at this time, it is a tangible proof that the Lord had fulfilled His oath. The Lord had sworn, and the Lord fulfilled. And more, the presentation of the fruit not only proved they possessed the land, but that the land was productive and fruitful.

Therefore, it is to be understood by them that even the fruit from the land, meaning their continued existence, was from the hand of the Lord. The presentation was to then be considered an offering of both thanks and praise for what it represented in the greater harvest they had received.

Whatever work they did to bring forth the fruit was only possible because they had been given the land, and the land itself was productive enough to bring forth from their labors. This is all tied up in the presentation of the fruit. As such...

<sup>4</sup> **"Then the priest shall take the basket out of your hand and set it down before the altar of the LORD your God.**

The priest, as the mediator, takes the offering and transfers it to the place before the altar, meaning the altar of sacrifice in the courtyard. Thus, the offering is considered as a sacrifice. In placing it before the altar, it is then representative of having been received by the Lord. As such, an acknowledgment of the Lord's hand in this is to be proclaimed...

**<sup>5</sup> And you shall answer and say before the LORD your God:**

The translation is right, "answer and say." The first statement was made, the basket was taken from the hands and placed before the altar. It is as if the Lord (through the priest) has said, "I accept your offering." With that accomplished, the person responds to the acceptance of the offering, saying...

**<sup>5</sup> (con't) 'My father *was* a Syrian, about to perish,**

*arami oved avi* – "Aramean, wandering, my father." Translating as "Syrian" is for our benefit. Although there are several unique ways of translating these words, the reference is surely to Jacob. He was born in Canaan, but he was not a Canaanite. Abraham was from Ur of the Chaldeans, and thus considered under Syria.

And more, his mother Rebekah was an Aramean. He also lived for twenty years in Paddan-Aram, his wives were from there, and his children were then reckoned as such as well.

Concerning the word *avad*, it can mean perishing, wandering (as in a lost animal), and so on. If "perishing" is intended, that would indicate the many times in his life when his existence was threatened, such as when Esau was of a mind to kill him, when he toiled under his father-in-law, Laban, when he feared being killed by the Shechemites of Canaan in Genesis 34, and when the great famine came which caused them to go to Egypt.

If "wandering" is intended, it is because he owned none of his own land but remained a nomad and a pilgrim throughout his life. As the word signifies both thoughts, it is probably intended to mean both, as a pun. He was a perishing and wandering Aramean.

The reason for this is because of the proclamation now being made by the presenter of the fruits. He is neither perishing nor wandering. He has both a possession and he has abundance – testified to by the basket. What the Lord promised this Aramean in his humbled state has been realized for his descendants.

<sup>5</sup> (con't) **and he went down to Egypt and dwelt there, few in number;**

Again, both thoughts, perishing and wandering, fit the narrative here. There was no food in Canaan, and they thus wandered from Canaan to Egypt. There was nothing firm or stable in their existence, and they were a small clan, as Jacob himself acknowledged in Genesis 34:30.

The family number at the time of entering Egypt was 70 souls...

<sup>5</sup> (con't) **and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous.**

That was recorded first in Exodus 1:7 –

“But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.”

But in their massive growth, affliction, not prosperity, resulted...

<sup>6</sup> **But the Egyptians mistreated us, afflicted us, and laid hard bondage on us.**

Again, it is seen in Exodus 1 –

“Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. <sup>9</sup> And he said to his people, “Look, the people of the children of Israel *are* more and mightier than we; <sup>10</sup> come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and so go up out of the land.” <sup>11</sup> Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses. <sup>12</sup> But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel. <sup>13</sup> So the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor. <sup>14</sup> And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage—in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made them serve *was* with rigor.”

-Exodus 1:8-14

Each thing that is being answered by the presenter of the basket is to remind him of his own state before the Lord. “This is where I have come from, and without the Lord, this is where I – as an Israelite – would still be.” Such is evidenced in the next words...

**<sup>7</sup> Then we cried out to the LORD God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and looked on our affliction and our labor and our oppression.**

This is referring to the words of Exodus 2 & 3 (and elsewhere) –

“Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage. <sup>24</sup> So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. <sup>25</sup> And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged *them*.”

-Exodus 2:23-25

“And the LORD said: ‘I have surely seen the oppression of My people who *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. <sup>8</sup> So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. <sup>9</sup> Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. <sup>10</sup> Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.’” Exodus 3:7-10

In their affliction, labor, and oppression, the Lord heard their cry and acted accordingly, demonstrating his power and sovereign authority over Egypt. As Moses says...

**<sup>8</sup> So the LORD brought us out of Egypt**

*v'yosienu Yehovah mimitsrayim* – “And brought us out, Yehovah, from Egypt.” Israel was in bondage. Israel cried out to the Lord. And the Lord brought Israel forth from the bondage of Egypt...

<sup>8 (con't)</sup> **with a mighty hand**

*b'yad khazaqah* – “in hand mighty.” It is the same words spoken to Moses in Exodus 6:1–

“Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a **strong hand** he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land.”

It speaks of the Lord's effectual power to accomplish what was necessary to bring the mighty nation of Egypt to its knees in order to bring about the release of Israel.

**8 (con't) and with an outstretched arm,**

*u-bizroa netuyah* – “and in arm outstretched.” Again, it is a repeat of Exodus 6:6 –

“I *am* the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.” Exodus 6:6

This speaks of the effectual reach of the Lord to accomplish the delivery. When a man desires to show His strength or to defeat an enemy, he will stretch his arms out. In this one stance, he will both defend some and work against others.

**8 (con't) with great terror**

*u-b'mora gadol* – “and in terror great.” The effects of the Lord's powerful workings against Egypt can only be described as terrifying.

**8 (con't) and with signs**

*u-b'othoth* – “and in signs.” The *othoth*, or signs, are things given to represent something else. The Lord gave Moses three signs to give to Israel – the rod which turned into a snake, the leprous hand, and the water which turned to blood. He also gave signs to Pharaoh concerning what would come upon them as the Lord accomplished His work. Also...

**8 (con't) and wonders.**

*u-b'mophtim* – “and in wonders.” The *mophtim*, or wonder, comes from *yaphah*, or beautiful. Thus, it speaks of that which is conspicuous and amazing. The word “wonders” gives us the right sense. It speaks of the plagues which came upon the land. And yet, it also speaks of the fact that Israel was spared at the same time. While Egypt was destroyed, Israel survived through the plagues – each time it was a wonder in itself.

The Lord fought the battles, it was His strength that worked against Egypt, it was His reach that devastated them while Israel remained safe, and it was His actions that brought terror upon the foe.



The words of this verse are a general summary of what occurred in the time of the plagues upon Egypt and during the exodus from there. They are a close repeat of Moses' words of Deuteronomy 4:34 –

“Or did God *ever* try to go *and* take for Himself a nation from the midst of *another* nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?” Deuteronomy 4:34

And in bringing Israel out of Egypt, the Lord safely conducted Israel through the many years of disobedience, right to the shores of the Jordan. As such, he is to next acknowledge...

**<sup>9</sup> He has brought us to this place and has given us this land,**

In acknowledging the Lord's power over Egypt, it is an acknowledgment that their possession of the land was only because of the Lord. There would have been no exodus without the effectual working of the Lord's power, and there would, thus, be no land for Israel to receive the abundance from what they now possessed. Everything is tied up in what the Lord has done, and what the Lord has given them, it is...

<sup>9</sup> (con't) **“a land flowing with milk and honey”;**

This is the third of six times this particular phrase is used in Deuteronomy, this time speaking as if he were an Israelite standing before the Lord. The abundance and blessings are realized and confirmed in his words. The word for “land” is *eretz*. It speaks of the land as a whole, of which he is a partaker of.

Jacob was a wandering (and ready to perish) Aramean, and this Israelite now avows that he is the recipient of a land of fertility – all because of the Lord's care of him. In acknowledgment of that...

**<sup>10</sup> and now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land which you, O LORD, have given me.'**

*v'atah hineh heveti eth reshit peri* – “and now, behold, I have brought the first fruit.” As in verse 2, it is not the *bikurim* or “firstfruits,” but “the first fruit.” Unless the distinction is made, actual points of theology concerning Christ can be easily confused.

This is the first ripe fruit of whatever the land produces. As such, the Israelite is standing before the Lord acknowledging that. For it to not be what is claimed would then be tantamount to lying to the Lord. Also, the word translated as “land” here is the same as in verse 2, *ha’adamah*. It should be translated as “the ground.” It is what the ground produces that is being referred to.

<sup>10</sup> (con’t) **“Then you shall set it before the LORD your God, and worship before the LORD your God.**

*v’hinakhto liphne Yehovah elohekha* – “And you shall set it before the Lord your God.” What happens here seems confusing. In verse 4, it said that the priest was to take the basket out of the hand of the offeror, and to then place it before the altar. Since then, nothing has been said of the basket, and yet it says he is to set it before the Lord.

Some take this as the priest setting the basket before the altar, signifying it is a sacrifice to the Lord. From there, it was then returned to the offeror, who would then make his proclamation before the Lord over the sacrifice. After that is done, he then sets the basket before the Lord, meaning it is the priest’s portion who is the representative of the Lord.

Others see this as simply a continuation of verse 4. But that doesn’t seem to fit because the priest is said to have taken the basket. Rather than the word “then” which is used in verse 4 and verse 10, both times it simply says “and.”

What may be the case is that the words, “And you shall set it before the Lord your God,” are speaking of the entire process. One might paraphrase it for understanding as, “This is how you are to set it before the Lord your God.”

While that is being accomplished, he is also bowing and making his proclamation, here called “worship.” The whole process is then summed up in this verse. It is one act of presentation that includes bowing as it is conducted. When this is complete, Moses says...

<sup>\*11</sup> (fin) **So you shall rejoice in every good *thing* which the LORD your God has given to you and your house, you and the Levite and the stranger who *is* among you.**

This builds upon what has already been said several times in Deuteronomy, such as –

“There you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, and all your choice offerings which you vow to the LORD. <sup>12</sup> And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your sons and your daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levite who *is* within your gates, since he has no portion nor inheritance with you.” Deuteronomy 12:11, 12

In other words, this is a part of the same process that is referred to for each of the pilgrim feasts. Though it is mentioned later, this is an integral part of what the people were to do at each such feast.

Once this rite is complete and the first of the fruit has been presented, only then would the people go about eating their tithes and offerings and rejoicing before the Lord. There would be relaxing, eating of meat, and drinking of wine – feasting and celebration.

There would be meeting up with old friends and making new ones. The intent of the pilgrim feasts was for the people to rest in the presence of the Lord, acknowledge His goodness toward them, and to praise Him for each and every blessing they had received.

The annual marking of these pilgrim feasts was a rite that was only failingly observed by the people, and even when they were observed, they were quickly forgotten again. As such, the words of Jeremiah – words that closely mirror much of our passage today – speak of the judgment upon the people for their failings –

“Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You. <sup>18</sup> *You* show lovingkindness to thousands, and repay the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them—the Great, the Mighty God, whose name *is* the LORD of hosts. <sup>19</sup> *You are* great in counsel and mighty in work, for Your eyes *are* open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings. <sup>20</sup> You have set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, to this day, and in Israel and among *other* men; and You have made Yourself a name, as it is this day. <sup>21</sup> You have brought Your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with great terror; <sup>22</sup> You have given them this land, of which You swore to their fathers to give them—“a land flowing with milk and honey.” <sup>23</sup> And they came in and took possession of it, but they have not obeyed

Your voice or walked in Your law. They have done nothing of all that You commanded them to do; therefore You have caused all this calamity to come upon them. Jeremiah 32:17-23

*What will I proclaim, what will I profess?  
What will I declare to the Lord my God?  
Is there an exalted name, one I can confess?  
One that the heavenly host will applaud?*

*And when I make my solemn profession  
Will it be about something I have done?  
Or will my mouth's holy confession  
Be about what God had done in Christ, His Son?*

*It is He who brought about the victory for us  
And so, it is His name alone that I will confess  
I shall proclaim "The Lord is Jesus!"  
Yes. This is what my mouth shall profess*

## **II. Life in Christ**

Like the Feasts of the Lord, because this is a part of the conduct of those feasts, the passage today looks to life in Christ. The land the Lord promised is typical of our life in Christ. Israel was given the land; the church is given Christ. Israel was to inherit the land; Christ is our inheritance. Paul speaks of life in Christ as such –

*"For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise." Galatians 3:18*

Paul shows that the inheritance is of God and is not obtained through works of the law. As we noted, one inherits an inheritance. Thus, it is given by another; not earned. Further, Paul expressly states that the inheritance is obtained already by faith in Christ. It is also something promised with a guarantee in Christ –

*"In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, <sup>12</sup> that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. <sup>13</sup> In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of*

promise, <sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” Ephesians 1:11-14

It is this guarantee that fulfills the words of our passage today “and you possess it and dwell in it.” We, even now, possess the inheritance and we have obtained the inheritance, even if it is not realized in us yet.

In this state, we see a reflection of Paul’s word of Romans 10 in the next verses. The Israelite is told to take the first of every fruit and put them in a basket and take them to where the Lord is.

Good fruit in the New Testament is that which is pleasing to the Lord. It is the outworking of the faith that is possessed. What is the first of the fruit of the Lord? It is to acknowledge the Lord. As we saw in the passage today, the word *nagad* was used.

It is variously translated as declare, profess, acknowledge, testify, show, and so on. It is a general word that gives the sense of “to be conspicuous.” One might say, “I openly proclaim today...” The first of the fruit of our salvation is what Paul refers to in Romans—

“that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Romans 10:9, 10

People try to claim that “confessing” is a work and that Paul has it all wrong. That is nonsense – as is seen right here in Deuteronomy. It is an acknowledgment of the work of the Lord – an open declaration.

Just as Israel was to declare “*Yehovah elohekha*,” or “to Yehovah your God,” the Christian is to profess the Lord Jesus. The priest of Israel was the mediator who only anticipated Christ the Lord, our Mediator.

With the profession made by the Israelite, the priest was to take the basket and set it before the altar of sacrifice. That is typical of our profession of Christ, acknowledging Him as our sacrifice. “I was born of Adam, like him, I am set to perish and to wander until my days are ended. In that state, I was in Egypt, in the bondage of sin, but as the redeemed of the Lord, we called out in our agony, and You looked on our affliction and delivered us.”

This is all implied in 1 Corinthians 15. Christ died for our sins. Christ was buried. Christ rose. He did all of the work with His mighty hand (His effectual power to accomplish what was necessary to redeem us from the devil), and by His outstretched arm (His effectual reach to accomplish the delivery).

He stretched out His arm, He died on the cross, He accomplished the victory! In Him death is defeated. He worked against the powers of darkness, and He worked for His people.

This is what is being pictured in the passage today – a reminder of a person’s first moments in Christ. How can anyone say that to confess the Lord is a work? Who can BUT confess the Lord! He did the work; we are asked to simply acknowledge that.

Confession is more than the audible words which occur with the mouth. To “confess” is almost synonymous with to “profess.” However, one can confess a lie; one only professes the truth.

The audible confession stands because of the inward profession. This is why Paul says in Romans 8 that “the word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart.” It is as close to us as the air which enters and exits our mouth and fills our lungs, and it is both audible in tone and truthful to the heart.

The reason for the audible profession is obvious. No one would hide their true belief in the Lordship of Jesus. If He is, in fact, Lord, then He is alive. If He is alive, then He triumphed over the cross. If He did this, then He was without sin because “the wages of sin is death.” If He is without sin, then He is God because “all have sinned and all fall short of the glory of God.”

As you can see by logically thinking this through, the incarnation of Jesus Christ – being the God/Man – is inextricably tied up in the confession of “the Lord Jesus.” One cannot deny His Lordship, meaning His deity, and be saved. This is the heart of what God has done in the stream of time for the redemption of mankind.

Therefore, confession “with your mouth” is the making of an open profession that Jesus is God, thus denying all other gods. One must make the confession which is a true profession as is seen in the words “and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead.”

Paul directly ties the resurrection to Jesus' Lordship. One cannot honestly call on a dead savior and so acknowledging His resurrection returns us to the thought that He was sinless in His life and death.

The priest, taking the basket out of the hand of the Israelite is also a picture of Christ's deity. Just as the first of the fruit of Israel was taken by the priest and placed "before the altar of the Lord your God," meaning the altar of sacrifice, the first of the fruit of the believer is taken by Christ, our Mediator, who places it before the altar of the Lord, meaning His own sacrifice.

Everything is tied up in what Christ has done – everything. With that understood, the passage ended with the thought of rejoicing in every good thing that the Lord has given to the person, and to his house, and which is to also include "the Levite and the stranger who *is* among you." The entire thought is beautifully reflected in the words of our closing verse today.

For now, let each of us be thankful for what God has done. We were wandering through life. We were perishing and destined for a bad end, we were kept in the shackles of sin, and it is Christ who delivered us from those things. By His mighty hand, and by His outstretched arm we have been brought home to God's heavenly inheritance.

Let us rejoice in this. Let us be grateful to God for this. And let us, now and forever, magnify that great and exalted Name which is above every name. Let us exalt JESUS!

**Closing Verse:** *"Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. <sup>16</sup> But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."* Hebrews 13:15, 16

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 26:12-19 *Properly explaining these words will leave many pastors a'writhing...* (The Third Year – The Year of Tithing) (74<sup>th</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **The First of the Fruit**

"And it shall be, when you come into the land

Which the LORD your God is giving you as  
-----an inheritance all around  
And you possess it and dwell in it  
That you shall take some of the first of all the produce  
-----of the ground

Which you shall bring from your land  
That the LORD your God is giving you, where you will reside  
And put it in a basket and go to the place  
Where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide

And you shall go to the one who is priest in those days  
And say to him, 'I declare today to the LORD your God thus  
That I have come to the country  
Which the LORD swore to our fathers to give us

"Then the priest shall take the basket out of your hand  
And set it down before the altar of the LORD your God  
And you shall answer and say  
Before the LORD your God (with an acknowledging nod):

'My father was a Syrian, about to perish  
And he went down to Egypt and dwelt there  
Few in number; and there he became a nation  
Great, mighty, and populous – so you shall declare

But the Egyptians mistreated us, afflicted us, and laid  
-----hard bondage on us  
Then we cried out to the LORD God of our fathers –  
-----calling out our confession  
And the LORD heard our voice and looked on our affliction  
And our labor and our oppression

So the LORD brought us out of Egypt  
With a mighty hand, after our Egyptian plunders  
And with an outstretched arm  
With great terror and with signs and wonders

He has brought us to this place and has given us this land



“A land flowing with milk and honey  
And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land  
-----in your hand  
Which you, O LORD, have given me

“Then you shall set it the LORD your God before  
And worship before the LORD your God  
-----worship and praise, and so much more

So you shall rejoice in every good thing  
Which the LORD your God has given to you and your house  
You and the Levite and the stranger who is among you  
And be sure to bring along your spouse

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## **Deuteronomy 26:12-19** **(The Third Year – The Year of Tithing)**

The passage before us details the final uses of the concept of the tithe to be found in the books of Moses. The first mention was in Genesis 14:20 where it says Abram gave Melchizedek a tithe of all. The passage prescribes nothing. It simply describes what occurred, and nothing more.

Further, it must be noted one last time that there is no proper doctrine known as “the law of first mention.” The reason that term was made up was certainly because some studious soul went to his pastor and said, “Why are we tithing as we are? We are a New Testament church and are not bound to the Law of Moses, are we?”

In a panic at being called out for his transgression of putting his New Testament congregation back under the law, thus being called a “heretic,” while at the same time not wanting to lose out on beating ten percent out of his congregants every chance he could get, he immediately conjured up a non-existent law, the “law of first mention” in order to justify continuing with “tithing.”

In the same chapter of Genesis where Melchizedek is mentioned, Abram’s nephew – Lot – was captured. It then says that Abram armed his servants and pursued and overtook Lot’s captives attacked them, and rescued Lot and all his goods.

If the law of first mention were true, we would then be obligated to do exactly the same for any relative of ours who found himself in a similar pickle. We would also be obligated to circumcise our male children on the eighth day of their lives, to have a party for a child on the day it was weaned, to slaughter a calf when strangers showed up at our door, to offer our virgin daughters in place of guests in our house if the guests were threatened with being raped, and so on.

Each of these, and countless other precepts predate the Law of Moses, and they could arguably be put on the exact same level as that descriptive passage about Abram giving a tithe to Melchizedek. The thinking is perverse, and it is unsound theology – all designed to impose upon people something that would then violate other precepts found in the New Testament, such as...

**Text Verse:** *“So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.” 2 Corinthians 9:7*

Mandating tithing does not lead to cheerful givers, trust me on this. For every cheerful tither, there are one thousand more that cheat on the precept, ignore the precept, feel overwhelmed by the precept, are angry about the precept, and so on.

If you are in a church where tithing is mandated, it is your responsibility to talk to the leadership and provide the proper instruction to correct this horrifying abuse of Scripture that is pounded into the heads of people who are supposed to be free in Christ from the demands of the law, and who are not to be duped into the false teaching known as “the law of first mention.”

If your pastor holds to the law of first mention, ask him if he had his son circumcised on the eighth day, because ONLY on the eighth day is it allowed. If he doesn't have a son, ask if he has preparations for his daughter to be wedded to her husband's brother if her husband dies. That is a precept that predates the Law of Moses.

If he doesn't have any children, there are plenty of other things you could ask if he is doing that are recorded in Genesis and early Exodus that he should be doing. It is unsound, it is hypocritical, and it should not be tolerated within the church.

As for tithing under the law, we will briefly evaluate that one last time in our passage today. If a pastor is adamant in shoving his congregants back under the law to tithe, then he needs to abide by what the law says. We'll see if that is a tenable option for him today as well.

Great things such as “NO TITHING FOR NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVERS” are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. The Holiness (verses 12-15)**

<sup>12</sup> **“When you have finished laying aside all the tithe of your increase**

*ki tekaleh laser eth kal masar tebuatexha* – “When you complete to tithe all tithe of your increase.” Notice the lack of any article before “tithe” – “all tithe.” The use of the article has been precise and meticulous in all of the tithing verses found in the previous sections that dealt with this issue.

Moses is instructing the people concerning “tithes.” It is a precept that was mandated for the people of Israel. Every year, the people of Israel were to set aside a tenth, a tithe, of their increase. That was first noted, within the law, in Leviticus 27 –

“And all the tithe of the land, *whether* of the seed of the land *or* of the fruit of the tree, *is* the LORD’s. It *is* holy to the LORD.” Leviticus 27:30

In that verse, no article is used. “And all tithe of the land.” It is this that is “holy to the Lord.” Nothing was said of what should be done with it. It simply says that tithes were holy to the Lord. Numbers 18:21-32 then details how tithes, the tithes which they offer up as a heave offering to the Lord (Numbers 18:24), are to be apportioned to the Levites, and from that a portion (a tithe of the tithe) is to be given to the priests.

The use of the article, or the lack of it – in each instance – is expressive of what is to occur. Tithes are to be set aside as holy to the Lord. Those offered as a heave offering are to be given to the Levites. But Numbers does not say what is to happen to those not offered up as heave offerings to the Lord. That is only explained later, in Deuteronomy.

It is in Deuteronomy 14:22-29 that the disposition of those not offered up as a heave offering is noted. For a bit of comical relief and as a poke at “tithing” pastors, we will journey there one last time and read that passage –

“You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year. <sup>23</sup> And you shall eat before the LORD your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil, of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks, that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always. <sup>24</sup> But if the journey is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry *the tithe*, *or* if the place where the LORD your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, when the LORD your God has blessed you, <sup>25</sup> then you shall exchange it for money, take the money in your hand, and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses. <sup>26</sup> And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink, for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat there before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household. <sup>27</sup> You shall not forsake the Levite who *is* within your gates, for he has no part nor inheritance with you.” Deuteronomy 14:22-27

It is clear and precise – party time has arrived, and the tithes are the means by which it will come about. The Lord provided the tithes, and it is His will that they be used to

glorify Him through rejoicing in His provision. With that stated, the chapter closed out with these words –

“At the end of *every* third year you shall bring out the tithe of your produce of that year and store *it* up within your gates. <sup>29</sup> And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who *are* within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.”

-Deuteronomy 14:28, 29

It is that final passage of Deuteronomy that Moses now readdresses one last time, hoping that in the dispensation of grace that was to come in Christ, pastors wouldn't make the galactically huge error of reimposing tithing on their congregation, but if they did, they would at least do it in accord with the law and not in accord with their own corrupt agenda. As he next says...

12 (con't) **in the third year**

*ba'shanah ha'shelishit* – “In the year, the third.” Now, there is a distinction being made between the first two years and the third year. All tithes are to be laid aside, but in the third year, there are specific provisions to be adhered to. It is this third year that is...

12 (con't) —**the year of tithing**—

Almost all translations state it this way, and such a translation would cause a contradiction to occur. Every year is a year of tithing. That has already been made explicit. A tithe was to be set aside every year as holy to the Lord. The Hebrew says: *shenat ha'maaser* – “year the tithe.” The article is again expressive.

This clause and the previous clause are in apposition, restating and explaining the other. The Greek translation adds in the words, “the second tithe,” which are not found in the Hebrew. This was certainly translated by rabbi Reuben who didn't want to lose out on milking his synagogue of any of his desired portion. The word “second” cannot even be inferred in the Hebrew.

Even Cambridge notes that, saying, “a reading which even after the vocalic changes which it involves in the Heb. results in an impossible construction.” Rather, the text has been very clear with each stage of the development of the tithing guidelines.

Of this tithe, the third-year tithe, Moses next says words that are in accord with the words of Deuteronomy 14, repeating them to ensure clarity concerning the precept so that it is understood...

**12 (con't) and have given *it* to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow,**

The thought is substantially repeated from Deuteronomy 14:29, saying, “And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who *are* within your gates...”

Moses is taking care to make it understood that these people, who had no ability to otherwise take care of themselves, would be tended to according to the riches of the blessings of the Lord upon the people of Israel. They were in deprivation, and the year of the tithe was given...

**12 (con't) so that they may eat within your gates and be filled,**

Again, the words follow after verse 14:29, where a blessing is included for the people when they observe the precept. There it says, “may come and eat and be satisfied, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.”

In this, they will be observant of the command already set forth. And they are then to acknowledge that the reason was for exactly that purpose. It is not a single purpose, as has already been defined, but for the purpose of the tithe in general, meaning all three years of the tithe. That cannot be misunderstood when the next verses are properly considered. As Moses first notes...

**13 then you shall say before the LORD your God:**

This would be at the pilgrim feasts.

**13 (con't) ‘I have removed the holy *tithe* from *my* house,**

*biarti ha’qodesh min ha’bayit* – “I have burnt away the holiness from the house.” The word *ba’ar* is used. It is the same word used when speaking of purging away evil and purging away guilt. The tithe is holy and thus it is to be considered as such. It would be evil to use it for non-holy purposes.

The words “from my house” are clear. The tithes were kept there until they were to be dispensed with. Two years it was for magnificent partying in the presence of the Lord, and the third year it was to be transferred to the storehouses for the care of those to whom it was set apart for. The latter of those two uses is again stated by Moses...

**13 (con't) and also have given them to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow,**

It is the explicitly stated and now repeated mandate for the third-year tithe. But it is not the whole mandate for the three years of tithes. This third-year mandate is for the care of those to whom it is designated. With that again understood, the proclamation of the Israelite continues with...

**13 (con't) according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me;**

The translation is exactly correct. What is notable, is that the commandments for the tithe are almost all given by Moses, and yet the acknowledgment to the Lord is that they are commands *asher tsivitani*, or “which You [the Lord] have commanded me.” It once again speaks of the process of divine inspiration. What Moses has put forth is, in fact, the revealed word of God.

**13 (con't) I have not transgressed Your commandments, nor have I forgotten them.**

*lo avarti mimitsvotekha* – “no have I passed over from your commandments.” The word *avar* is closely associated with the word *ivrim* or Hebrew, and this is certainly why Moses says this. A true Hebrew would not cross over the laws of the Lord, but would stay on the side of them that he belonged. He would remember them and not forget.

With that stated, we come to the words of the next verse which clearly and unambiguously reveal to us that there was not a “second” tithe, and that the “holy *tithe*” mentioned here is the same as that referred to in Leviticus 27:30, the one tithe of Israel which is said to be “holy to the Lord.” The Israelite continues, saying...

**14 I have not eaten any of it when in mourning,**

*lo akalti b'oni mimenu* – “No I have eaten in my affliction from it.” The very fact that Moses brings up eating the tithe in affliction (mourning) means that, at times, the tithe was to be eaten by the individual. If it was not ever to be eaten, Moses would have

simply said, “I have not eaten any of it.” What he is referring to is what it says in verse 14:26 –

“...you shall eat there before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household.” Deuteronomy 14:26

They are commanded to rejoice in the presence of the Lord. This clause now acknowledges that the person has done so. If he were in mourning, he would not be allowed to eat of the tithe. This is what is alluded to in Hosea 9 –

“They shall not offer wine *offerings* to the LORD,  
Nor shall their sacrifices be pleasing to Him.  
*It shall be like bread of mourners* to them;  
All who eat it shall be defiled.  
For their bread *shall be* for their *own* life;  
It shall not come into the house of the LORD.” Hosea 9:4

The bread of mourners is that of eating at a funeral. It is a time of loss and despondency. The tithe was not to be used for such a purpose because the tithe anticipates Christ.

The tenth is the Lord’s claim on the whole. To eat this holy portion in mourning would be equivalent to a Christian being in mourning over being saved. The thought would be confused, contradictory, and quite possibly Calvinist – but there is no place for it in the faith. Christ is the Victor over death. In His presence is to be joy and rejoicing forevermore. Next, he is to say...

14 (con’t) **nor have I removed *any* of it for an unclean *use*,**

*v’lo viarti mimenu b’tame* – “and no have I burnt it in unclean.” It is the same verb just used in verse 13, *ba’ar* – to burn away. This is still referring to the person using his own tithes in the first two years. An unclean person was not to enter the presence of the Lord. If he were unclean according to Levitical law, he could not legally participate in the festivities where the tithes were consumed.

14 (con’t) **nor given *any* of it for the dead.**

It does not say, “the dead.” It says: *v’lo nathathi mimenu l’met* – “and not I give from it to dead.” This is not speaking of offering it to dead people as some scholars claim. That would always be forbidden, and it is unnecessary to be stated here.



Rather, it is referring to providing it for those who are in mourning for the dead, such as is seen in Jeremiah 16 where no article is used before “dead,” despite the translation –

“Both the great and the small shall die in this land. They shall not be buried; neither shall men lament for them, cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them. <sup>7</sup> Nor shall *men* break *bread* in mourning for them, to comfort them for the dead; nor shall *men* give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or their mother.” Jeremiah 16:6, 7

The tithe is not symbolic of a consolation for dead people. It is representative of Christ, the Victor over death, and of His claim upon those who come to Him. The typology must be maintained. In all of this, the Israelite is to acknowledge...

**14 (con’t) I have obeyed the voice of the LORD my God, and have done according to all that You have commanded me.**

The tithe was to be used two years in a row at times of thanks, rejoicing, holiness, and purity in the presence of God. In the third year, it was to be presented to those to whom the Lord, through Moses, designated. In obeying these rules, the Israelite could then be satisfied that he had met the commandments accordingly, and could then petition the Lord for blessing...

**15 Look down from Your holy habitation,**

*hashqipha mimeon qadshekha* – “Look down from habitation your holy.” Here is a new word, *maon*, or “habitation.” It signifies a dwelling place. It can refer to the dwelling place of the Lord, the home of a man, the den of an animal, and so on. The words of this clause are then explained by the next...

**15 (con’t) from heaven,**

*min ha’shemayim* – “from the heavens.” The Lord is above, even if his tabernacle is among Israel – be it in Shiloh, Nob, Gibeon, or Jerusalem. He dwells in the heavens, and the request is for Him to look down from there and notice the obedience of His people and to respond...

**15 (con’t) and bless Your people Israel**

The way the words are structured, it both unites the two objects while having one define the other: *u-barekh eth amekha eth Yisrael* – “and bless [in the direction of] Your people, [in the direction of] Israel.” Thus, it is affirming that “Your people” are, in fact, “Israel.” And more...

<sup>15</sup> (con’t) **and the land which You have given us,**

*v’eth ha’adamah asher nathatah lanu* – “And [in the direction of] the ground which You have given to us.” This is a specific request for blessing upon the ground, meaning the soil.

In other words, “You have blessed us with the produce of the ground. We have divided out the holy portion, and we have handled the holy portion according to the instructions You have provided. As such, we ask that you bless the ground from which it came, so that we can then repeat the process according to Your goodness...”

<sup>15</sup> (con’t) **just as You swore to our fathers, “a land flowing with milk and honey.”**

This is now the fourth of six times this particular phrase is used in Deuteronomy. The word here is different than the preceding clause. There, it spoke of the ground. Here it speaks of the land, meaning the territory, which comprises Israel’s inheritance. The petition is for the ground to prosper in the land in which the Lord said it would prosper.

The Lord promised a land of blessing and abundance, that has been received, and in their obedience to the word, it is petitioned for continued blessing from the land. With that, the long, detailed, and meticulous words concerning the tithes of Israel come to a close. If you missed the previous sermons which built up to this section, it would be worth your time to go back and watch each in order.

So now, you are fully versed on the matter. If you have a pastor (Chinsy Chadwick) who pushes tithing, you are to tell him it is an Old Testament, Law of Moses, precept. If he says, “But tithing predates the law and thus falls under the law of first mention,” you are instructed on how to correct his thinking.

And if he still insists on tithing, then tell him that he must only expect ten percent every third year, and you will think of him and toss him a bone while you are partying with your other two years of tithes. Or, better, find a church where grace is taught in all matters and forget those who pick and choose what they will and will not teach that is in accordance with proper doctrine.

*I will rejoice in the Lord my God  
I will bless His holy name at all times  
Giving thanks to Him along life's path I tread  
Blessing Him in my heart, with songs and rhymes*

*I will offer my offering as is just and right  
And I will do so without compulsion, but with joy in heart  
My hand will be open, not shut up tight  
Praises and blessings and honor to Him, and that is just the start*

*How the Lord has blessed my soul  
And I shall forever be grateful to Him for this  
Towards Him shall I all of my praises roll  
And never a chance to praise Him shall I miss*

## **II. His Special People (verses 16-19)**

**<sup>16</sup> “This day the LORD your God commands you to observe these statutes and judgments;**

The words are more precise, saying, “the statutes, these, and the judgments.” He has carefully set forth the two as being required but being different things.

As far as the term, “this day,” Moses has used it numerous times already in Deuteronomy. Each speaks of the timeframe of the giving out of the laws he set forth, not necessarily any single day.

The words now sum up the body of law that has been given so far by him. A new flavor of words, and a new direction in what is stated will come forth starting in Chapter 27, and so what Moses says here serves as a closing thought to this section.

In saying, “This day the Lord commands you,” it is not merely saying, “Ok, today the Lord is telling you these things.” Rather, it is a way of saying, “This is your law. Each day that you live under it, you are commanded to observe what is herein stated.”

Taken from the hearer's perspective, it isn't just, “Moses told us while we were by the Jordan to do these things.” Rather, it is “Moses is telling us, right now, to do these things.” This is why the prophets could speak of the law as “right now” when they spoke to Israel. And this is why Jesus spoke to the people in the same manner –

And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

<sup>26</sup> He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading *of it?*"

<sup>27</sup> So he answered and said, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'"

<sup>28</sup> And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live."

-Luke 10:25-28

The law was given, and it continued to be given from itself to the people. As such...

<sup>16</sup> (con't) **therefore you shall be careful to observe them**

The words now refer back to "the statutes, these, and the judgments" of the previous clause. Moses says, "and you shall keep, and you shall do." The statutes are to be kept, and the judgments are to be obeyed.

But, as seen elsewhere, this is not just rote observance that Moses is calling for. There is to be both an appreciation of who gave them, and a willingness to observe them because of who He is. As such, Israel is to keep and do them...

<sup>16</sup> (con't) **with all your heart and with all your soul.**

One can love in varying degrees. What the Lord calls for is to love Him entirely, both with the intellect and reason, and also with that which animates the person in his walk before the Lord.

To be fully obedient to the law with one's intellect (meaning the heart) but without the soul (that which animates him), reveals a person who sees the law as a means to an end. "I will obey the law as it is written, and it will be my means of salvation, even if I don't excel at it. I will just do what is necessary."

To be obedient to the law with one's soul (that which animates the person in deed and action) but not with the heart (the intellect) reveals a person filled with pride concerning his accomplishment of the law, even without any true regard for the Lord. His deeds are rote observance and legalistic. He crosses every i and dots every t... wait, switch that. And because he is so good at doing it, he can look down on others. He is like the Pharisee.

A person who observes the law with the heart and the soul is a person who is both in love with the law, and who desires to live out the law because of the One who gave him the law.

Such a person, because he both wants to do the law, and who aggressively tries to do the law, will also be the person who knows he fails in fulfilling the law. But, in his knowledge of this, he knows that his efforts are not futile because the law provides for his failings.

**17 Today you have proclaimed the LORD to be your God,**

The translation by the NKJV is possible, but more likely the words are causative: *eth Yehovah he-emarta ha'yom lihyot lekha l'elohim* – “Yehovah you have caused to say today to you to be to God.” In other words, “Today, you have caused Yehovah to say to you that He will be your God.”

This doesn't mean they actually caused it, but by agreeing to the covenant, it has brought them into a legal standing with Him to be their God. As a consequence of this, the obligation then rests on Israel to meet their obligations to Him...

**17 (con't) and that you will walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments, and His judgments, and that you will obey His voice.**

It more precisely reads in three successive thoughts, “[1] and to walk in His ways, [2] and to keep His statutes and His commandments and His judgments, and [3] and to hear His voice.” To walk in His ways is to emulate Him, e.g. – “You shall therefore be holy, for I *am* holy” (Leviticus 11:45).

To keep His statutes, commandments, and judgments, is to be obedient to Him, e.g. – “You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fall down along the road, and hide yourself from them; you shall surely help him lift *them* up again” (Deuteronomy 22:4).

To hear His voice is to hearken unto what He says, e.g. – “Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place’” (Jeremiah 7:3).

Each aspect is a part of the expected whole. The covenant begins with Moses, but it does not end with Him. Thus, the words here are wholly dependent on the coming of Messiah. The Lord has spoken the words wholly in the singular – “you Israel.”

Because of this, and because the word is new every day to the people, the words must be fulfilled *every day*. Any day they are not so fulfilled is the failure of Israel to meet the demands of this verse – meaning they never could, ever. As such, the anticipation is the True Israel – Messiah – who would do what Israel is unable to do.

That is more assuredly evidenced in the next words...

**<sup>18</sup> Also today the LORD has proclaimed you to be His special people,**

Again, the words are causative: *v'Yehovah he-emirekha ha'yom lihyot lo l'am segulah* – “And Yehovah has caused you to say today to be to Him to people possession.” In the agreement of the covenant, the people are caused to agree to the Lord – “We are your special possession.”

The word is *segulah*. It signifies possession or property, coming from an unused root meaning “to shut up” as in wealth. One would take something precious, like treasure, and shut it up and keep it close by. Thus, it is variously translated as peculiar treasure, possession, jewels, special possession, and so on.

As far as the translation, the Lord “caused” you to say, it’s not that the Lord actually made them say it, but in the offer of the covenant, and in its acceptance, the statement is affirmed. This idea of being His possession was first promised in Exodus 19 –

“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine.” Exodus 19:5

It was then restated in Deuteronomy 7 –

“For you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.” Deuteronomy 7:6

To get what is being said, and it is complicated, you would need to review the Deuteronomy 7 sermon. Israel is a holy people, even if they act in an unholy manner. God has set them apart as holy, that does not change. But they still must be holy, a state that is dependent on their actions. That is then seen in the next words...

**<sup>18 (con't)</sup> just as He promised you, that you should keep all His commandments,**

More precisely: “According to which He spoke to you, and to keep all His commandments.” The covenant was made, Israel was caused to be His people, just as the Lord spoke to him, which is based upon 1) His declaration of them as a holy (set apart) people, and 2) the keeping of the commandments.

But Israel consistently failed to keep the commandments, even to this day they fail to do so. In order to be set apart as holy, and to be actually holy, Israel must keep the commandments. But in failing to do so, there is a disconnect.

That disconnect remained and remains without Messiah. But in Messiah, that disconnect no longer exists. This is not because of their keeping of the commandments, but because of His. That final and glorious state is seen in the final verse of the Chapter...

**<sup>19</sup> and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made,**

*u-l'titekha elyon al kal ha'goyim asher asah* – “And He will set you uppermost above all the nations which He has made.” It is not that Israel will just be above the nations, but at the very top of them.” The word Moses uses, *elyon*, is used to describe the Lord God at times, *el elyon*, or “God Most High.”

As this has never been fulfilled, then it is a messianic verse which anticipates what lies ahead, even now. Its fulfillment is prophesied by Isaiah –

“Now it shall come to pass in the latter days  
That the mountain of the LORD’s house  
Shall be established on the top of the mountains,  
And shall be exalted above the hills;  
And all nations shall flow to it.  
<sup>3</sup> Many people shall come and say,  
“Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,  
To the house of the God of Jacob;  
He will teach us His ways,  
And we shall walk in His paths.”  
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,  
And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.  
<sup>4</sup> He shall judge between the nations,  
And rebuke many people;  
They shall beat their swords into plowshares,

And their spears into pruning hooks;  
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
Neither shall they learn war anymore.” Isaiah 2:2-4

The fact that Christ has come, and that He has called for Himself a special people in the church, does not negate a literal fulfillment of these prophecies. The promises are to Israel, and they will be fulfilled. This is not for their sake, but for His toward them...

<sup>19</sup> (con't) **in praise, in name, and in honor,**

*lithilah, u-l'shem, u-l'tipharet* – “to praise, to name, to beauty.” Jeremiah uses these same words, saying –

“For as the sash clings to the waist of a man, so I have caused the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah to cling to Me,’ says the LORD, ‘that they may become My people, for renown, for praise, and for glory; but they would not hear.’” Jeremiah 13:11

The covenant was made, and the Lord bound Israel to it, like a sash upon Himself. But despite His efforts, they would not do exactly as is conveyed in these words of Deuteronomy.

Thus, there is the need for something new, something better, in order to resolve the dilemma. Israel could not help but to fail. The infection of sin is too deep. But the promises will be fulfilled, not through their effort, but through His. We can look back on this and know it now, but for them – even to this day – it is all about them...

<sup>\*19</sup> (fin) **and that you may be a holy people to the LORD your God, just as He has spoken.”**

Jeremiah shows that Israel failed in this. Peter, speaking to the Jews who have come to Christ, cites a combination of the words of verses 18 and 19 in his first epistle, saying –

“But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; <sup>10</sup> who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”

-1 Peter 2:9, 10



Paul uses the same word in Ephesians 1:14 concerning the Gentiles who have been brought into the commonwealth of Israel. We have become a possession of the Lord through obedience to, meaning calling on, Christ. More directly, however, Paul uses the phrase in Titus 2 –

“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, <sup>12</sup> teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, <sup>13</sup> looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup> who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works.” Titus 2:11-14

These words of the New Testament clearly show that the church fills a special role, but it does not necessarily follow then that the church has replaced Israel. The church – those of Jews and Gentiles – are received as a people, but Israel – the nation – has been selected as a special people.

The church has a mission to perform during this dispensation, but Israel still has the right to the prophecies spoken to her that will come to pass in their due time. The Gentile-led church is grafted into the commonwealth of Israel, but it does not replace the nation in the process. We simply share in the good that has been promised to them.

When Israel, as a nation, calls out to Christ, that promised day will come, and the words of these verses, and of the prophets to come, will come to pass. As far as when this will take place, that is at the Lord’s discretion and the matter belongs to Him alone. But because the people have been rejoined with the land, that day is closer than most probably realize.

Those who understand the times in which we live can look to Israel and know that God has it all under control. Christ Jesus is the key to the entire scenario, both the current state of things as well as the prophetic scenario that is waiting to be unfolded and realized in its fulness.

The wonder and marvel of both sections of our verses today is that God is doing something wonderful in the world – reconciling man to Himself through the offering of His Son. The types, patterns, covenants, and promises are all based on this thought.

The glory of God in Christ is the glory of God above, in, and through creation. All of the glory of God that we can, or ever will perceive, is because of what He has done through Him. Praise be to God for Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Closing Verse:** *“At that time I will bring you back,  
Even at the time I gather you;  
For I will give you fame and praise  
Among all the peoples of the earth,  
When I return your captives before your eyes,  
Says the LORD.” Zephaniah 3:20*

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 27:1-10 *To build this is a lot of work... grunts and groans (An Altar of Stones) (75<sup>th</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)*

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **The Third Year – The Year of Tithing**

“When you have finished laying aside  
All the tithe of your increase in the third year  
-----the year of tithing, so it is billed  
And have given it to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless  
-----and the widow  
So that they may eat within your gates and be filled

Then you shall say before the LORD your God:  
‘I have removed the holy tithe from my house, as told to do  
And also have given them to the Levite  
To the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow too

According to all Your commandments  
Which You have commanded me  
I have not transgressed Your commandments  
Nor have I forgotten them, as you can see

I have not eaten any of it when in mourning

Nor have I removed any of it for an unclean use  
-----nor given any of it for the dead  
I have obeyed the voice of the LORD my God  
And have done according to all that You have commanded me  
-----just as You have said

Look down from Your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless  
Your people Israel and the land which You have given us  
Just as You swore to our fathers  
'A land flowing with milk and honey  
-----blessings and blessings and plus, plus, plus

"This day the LORD your God commands you  
To observe these statutes and judgments, not in part but in whole  
Therefore you shall be careful to observe them  
With all your heart and with all your soul

Today you have proclaimed the LORD to be your God  
And that you will walk in His ways and keep His statutes  
----- such has been your choice  
His commandments, and His judgments  
And that you will obey His voice

Also today the LORD has proclaimed you  
To be His special people, just as He promised you  
That you should keep all His commandments  
So you are to do

And that He will set you high above all nations  
Which He has made, in praise, in name, and in honor  
----- such shall be the token  
And that you may be a holy people to the LORD your God  
Just as He has spoken

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## Deuteronomy 27:1-10 (An Altar of Stones)

The day for typing this sermon started with some problems between a couple folks that I have some influence over in my life. Fortunately, by the time I got up, they were resolved. It's good, because you probably know what a disciplinarian I am. Oh my.

Well, the sermon passage today shows a problem exists among the people as well. It isn't perfectly evident. More than anything, it just looks like something Moses has planned for the people when they were to enter into the land of promise.

But that is just it. The first time the people didn't go in, way back in Numbers 14, it was specifically stated that they did not enter because of unbelief. That is confirmed in Hebrews 3 –

“For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, *was it* not all who came out of Egypt, *led* by Moses? <sup>17</sup> Now with whom was He angry forty years? *Was it* not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? <sup>18</sup> And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? <sup>19</sup> So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.” Hebrews 3:16-19

As this is so, it must be that entering this time would be because of faith in the Lord. But because the author of Hebrews clearly indicates that Israel did not receive what Canaan only anticipated, meaning entering into God's promised rest, what we will see when they do enter is only typical of what will happen to them someday future to us now.

This is certain from today's passage, because they will build an altar containing the words of the law on it, and they will sacrifice on it. But they already have a tabernacle and an altar to sacrifice on. Thus, this is a clear note that what we are seeing today is given in typology.

Sacrifices imply a need for a sacrifice. And words of law mean the imputation of sin for violating the law. Thus, there is a problem that needs to be corrected.

God is quite a disciplinarian. He will not tolerate sin. And so, He must judge and punish it. How will that be done? It depends on how one approaches Him. For His redeemed, it is anticipated in this passage today.

**Text Verse:** *“Then I will go to the altar of God,  
To God my exceeding joy;  
And on the harp I will praise You,  
O God, my God.” Psalm 43:4*

Though the psalmist’s words are referring to the altar in Jerusalem, the altar of God is ultimately wherever God meets with His people in sacrifice. As far as the passage, it is very complicated – even extremely so. I had to lay it out on a separate document to make it understandable to me just to keep track of what is going on.

As I put the extra time into that, I hated to just delete it with the completion of the sermon, so I included it in this introduction. That will make my introduction typing much easier as I will have to think of less after typing the sermon to fill up a page. Bonus.

Keep all the commandment (*ha’torah*) which I command you

\* When you (**p**) cross over the Jordan

You (s) shall set up large stones and you shall plaster them with plaster

You (s) shall write on them all the words of the law

\* When you (s) have crossed over

That you (s) may enter the land which the Lord your (s) God is giving you

A land flowing with milk and honey

Just as the Lord God of your (s) fathers promised you

\* When you (**p**) have crossed over the Jordan

On Mount Ebal you (**p**) shall set up these stones which I command you (**p**) today

And you (s) shall plaster them with plaster

\* And you (s) shall build an altar to the Lord your God

An altar of stones

You (s) shall not use iron on them

You (s) shall build with whole stones the altar of the Lord your (s) God

And you (s) shall offer burnt offerings on it to the Lord your (s) God

You (s) shall offer peace offerings and you (s) shall eat there and rejoice

Before the Lord your (s) God

\* And you (s) shall write very plainly on the stones all the words of this law (*ha’torah*)

As you can see, there is repetition in the passage, there are changes from the singular to the plural, and so on. Along with these, there is not much agreement by scholars on what several of the verses are saying. Oh my.

Monday started with a problem that was thankfully resolved, and it then continued on with problems that needed to be resolved. I hope and pray that the evaluation you will be given is correct, in line with what the Lord intends for us to see, and not stretching or abusing any point or precept. May it be so.

Great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. You Shall Set Up These Stones (verses 1-10)**

**<sup>1</sup>Now Moses, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people,**

*v'sav Mosheh v'ziqne Yisrael eth ha'am* – “And commanded Moses, and elders of Israel, the people.” The words are unique in Deuteronomy. It is the only time that the elders are specifically said to join with Moses in commanding the people. The *zaqen*, or elders, will be mentioned five more times in Deuteronomy, but never again in this particular way.

The reason for including them now is that what will be presented in the coming verses are words that do not include Moses in their performance, only in their direction. He will not accompany Israel into Canaan. As such, the elders are included to ensure that the duty will be performed accordingly.

It appears that these “elders” are referring to the priests as will be seen in verse 9. In this united manner, together they are...

<sup>1 (con't)</sup> **saying: “Keep all the commandments**

The translation is incorrect. It is singular: *lemor shamor eth kal ha'mitsvah* – “to say ‘keep all the commandment.’” The verb is stated as an imperative. In essence, “You are certainly to keep all the commandment.”

Of this, John Lange states, “The whole commandment is the following command for the erection, plastering, and inscribing, etc., in all its compass.” Keil agrees with this, saying the imperative verb “indicates at the very outset the purpose for which the law written upon stones was to be set up in Canaan.”

I disagree, as will be explained as we continue. Rather, this is the same thought as has been repeatedly stated by Moses in Deuteronomy, such as –

“For, if keeping you keep all the command, the this, which I command you to do.”  
-Deuteronomy 11:22

Those words were in their own imperative form as well. It wasn't just speaking of what he was about to state, but of everything he had and would continue to state in Deuteronomy. What is to follow now is a command, but it is only a part of the entire command that is to be kept. As such, it is a command...

<sup>1 (con't)</sup> **which I command you today.**

*asher anokhi matsaveh etkem ha'yom* – “Which I (singular) command you (plural: all) the day.” It is the first reason why it is referring to the entire command, and not just what is about to be commanded. Only Moses speaks to all of the people. As such, the words *ha'yom*, translated as “today,” refer to the entire time of Moses giving out this body of law on the shores of the Jordan as they so often have in Deuteronomy.

Included in that body of law comes another requirement which is set forth, along with the elders because Moses will not be present to see the task completed...

<sup>2</sup> **And it shall be, on the day when you cross over the Jordan**

*v'hayah ba'yom asher taavru eth ha'yarden* – “And it shall be in the day you (all, plural) cross over the Jordan.” It reads, “in the day,” not “on the day.” It is referring to the timeframe, not a specific day.

Israel was to cross the Jordan. But the act of crossing the Jordan doesn't mean that they will be able to perform the actions commanded in the words to come. In fact, this will not come about until after the destruction of both Jericho and Ai, as is recorded in Joshua 8.

<sup>2 (con't)</sup> **to the land which the LORD your God is giving you,**

Now, the pronouns turn to the singular – “you, Israel.” Here, speaking of the general timeframe of crossing the Jordan, not the exact day that they cross, Moses again notes what he has repeatedly said in Deuteronomy. It is the land the Lord is giving to Israel (the pronoun is singular) as a united people.



As always, the implication is that what the Lord gives, He has the right to take away, meaning the right to use it, as has already been clearly explained to them, and as will be explained again, quite clearly, in Chapter 28. The land is Israel's. When they are obedient, they may dwell in it. When they are not, they may not. But the land is given to Israel. To ensure that continues, Moses says to Israel...

<sup>2 (con't)</sup> **that you shall set up for yourselves large stones,**

*va'haqemota lekha abanim gedoloth* – “and you shall set up to you stones large.” Again, the words are in the singular, “you, Israel.” The purpose of this is explained in the next verse, but the idea here is that a structure is to be built, and the stones should be large enough to endure and not simply fall apart with the changing of the seasons. Thus, they were to be large. After that...

<sup>2 (con't)</sup> **and whitewash them with lime.**

*v'sadta otam ba'sid* – “and plaster them in the plaster.” Both the verb and noun form of the word are introduced here. The verb form will only be seen here and in verse 27:4. The noun will be in both verses and also in Isaiah 33:12 and Amos 2:1.

In Isaiah and Amos, it refers to burning, as by lime or into lime. Thus, many translations say, “whitewash them with lime.” That may be the case, but it seems more likely that the rocks will be plastered over to make a smooth surface.

To simply whitewash them would make the accomplishment of the words of the next verse much harder, and also less noticeable. That verse now says...

<sup>3</sup> **You shall write on them all the words of this law,**

All of verse 3 is in the singular, “you, Israel.” As far as the words here, there are various views on what this means, such as –

“i.e. all the purely legislative parts of the Mosaic institute.” Cambridge

“i. e. all the laws revealed from God to the people by Moses, regarded by the Jews as 613.” Barnes

“It might be, as some think, the Decalogue; but a greater probability is that it was ‘the blessings and curses,’ which comprised in fact an epitome of the law (Jos 8:34).” JFB

“Not the whole book of Deuteronomy, as some think, at least not the historical part of it, only what concerns the laws of God; and it may be only a summary or abstract of them, and perhaps only the ten commandments.” Gill

“I am fully of opinion that the (תורה torah) law or ordinance in question simply means the blessings and curses mentioned in this and in the following chapter; and indeed these contained a very good epitome of the whole law in all its promises and threatenings, in reference to the whole of its grand moral design.” Clarke

The words *ha'torah*, or “the Law.” Can be construed in various ways. The Ten Commandments are a short summary of the Law. Deuteronomy is called the Book of the Law of Moses in Joshua 8:31. However, “the Law,” is a phrase that includes all five books of Moses at times. This is perfectly evident from Paul’s words –

“Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?”<sup>22</sup> For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman.” Galatians 4:21, 22

What Paul refers to is found in Genesis, and yet he calls it “the law.” I would personally favor the meaning to be “The five books of Moses,” but that does not mean this is correct. However, without understanding what is said in Genesis and Exodus, the rest of the law lacks cohesion.

In understanding how sin was introduced, the consequences of a world living in wickedness, the grace of God towards Noah, the call of Abraham, and so on, one can then begin to understand what the law was intended to do, at least in the short term.

<sup>3</sup> (con’t) **when you have crossed over,**

*b'averekha* – “in your (singular, Israel) crossing over.” Compare the words of this and the previous verse –

“in the day you (all, plural) cross over the Jordan.” (2)

“in your (singular, Israel) crossing over.” (3)

The idea is that as soon as it is possible, they are to do what they are instructed. It isn’t that they can just set a future day and plan on it, but they are to make a concerted effort to do it as soon as possible. This is so...

<sup>3</sup> (con't) **that you may enter the land which the LORD your God is giving you,**

*l'maan asher tavo el ha'arets asher Yehovah elohekha noten lekha* – “to end purpose which you (s) may enter into the land which Yehovah your (s) God gives you (s).” There is an end purpose, a designed intent, for doing as they are instructed. It is so that Israel may enter the land.

And yet, they are already in the land at the time they are to accomplish the task. This, then, is the second reason that what Moses said in verse 1 is referring to all of the Law of Moses, and not just to the command to build this edifice and inscribe the words of the law on it.

They are being told that in order to enter the land, a land that they have already entered, they need keep all of the commandment that Moses commanded. It would make no sense to have them build an edifice and write out the laws that they were instructed to obey if it were only a part of the commandment.

The words are instructional: “You have crossed over the Jordan. You are in the land. Here is what you need to do in order to enter the land.” It is...

<sup>3</sup> (con't) **‘a land flowing with milk and honey,’ just as the LORD God of your fathers promised you.**

This is now the fifth of six times this particular phrase is used in Deuteronomy, but the last time it is actually spoken by the Lord to Moses. This time, Moses adds in the words “just as the Lord God of your fathers promised you.”

This takes Israel all the way back to Exodus 3 where twice in that chapter the Lord told Moses to speak to the people of Israel about how He would deliver them from Egypt and bring them into the land (Exodus 3:8 & 3:17). This was at the time of his commission, and since that time, the anticipation has been this land.

<sup>4</sup> **Therefore it shall be, when you have crossed over the Jordan,**

*v'hayah b'averekem eth ha'yarden* – “And it shall be in your (plural) crossing over.”  
Again, the words should be compared –

“in the day you (all, plural) cross over the Jordan.” (2)

“in your (singular, Israel) crossing over.” (3)

“in your (plural) crossing over.” (4)

<sup>4 (con't)</sup> **that on Mount Ebal you shall set up these stones, which I command you today,**

In verse 2, it said, “you (singular, Israel) shall set up to you (singular).” Now, it says, “and you (plural, you all) shall set up stones, the these, which I command you (plural, you all) today.”

As far as Mount Ebal, the name Ebal comes from an unused root meaning to be bald. Probably signifying the bald appearance of the mountain. Thus, it means something like Bare or Heap of Barrenness.

<sup>4 (con't)</sup> **and you shall whitewash them with lime.**

The words are identical to the final clause of verse 2, except the word *otam*, or “them” is spelled with an additional letter, a vav, even though it is pronounced the same. The words are in the singular, “you, Israel.” It is the last time the verb form of this word, whitewash, is used in the Bible.

<sup>5</sup> **And there you shall build an altar to the LORD your God,**

It is not agreed whether or not this is the same structure as has been described in the previous verses. Many scholars adamantly state they are not the same. However, Joshua 8 appears to combine the two as one –

“Now Joshua built an altar to the LORD God of Israel in Mount Ebal, <sup>31</sup> as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the Book of the Law of Moses: “an altar of whole stones over which no man has wielded an iron *tool*.” And they offered on it burnt offerings to the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings. <sup>32</sup> And there, in the presence of the children of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written.”

-Joshua 8:30-32

It is hard to see how the two could not be the same based on these words from Joshua. But, because of seemingly different terminology now to be introduced, some find it to signify two things, not one. To them, that is seen in the next words...

<sup>5 (con't)</sup> **an altar of stones; you shall not use an iron *tool* on them.**

Nothing is said of the size of the stones as in verse 2. And these stones are specifically spoken of in accord with the law previously set forth by the Lord in Exodus 20:24-26 –

“An altar of earth you shall make for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In every place where I record My name I will come to you, and I will bless you. <sup>25</sup> And if you make Me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stone; for if you use your tool on it, you have profaned it. <sup>26</sup> Nor shall you go up by steps to My altar, that your nakedness may not be exposed on it.”

The words of this verse, and the words they are based on from Exodus 20, do not negate that this is one thing rather than two. In Moses’ instructions, he specifies “iron.” In Exodus, it simply spoke of a cutting instrument. Moses, however, defines that with the word *barzel*, or iron. Rather than using any such instrument...

**<sup>6</sup>You shall build with whole stones the altar of the LORD your God,**

The translation is not correct. It says “altar,” not “the altar.” By including “the,” translators will cause the reader to assume it is, in fact, a separate thing from what was previously stated. Without the article, it could just as easily be referring to the same edifice.

Either way, it is an altar, and it is therefore not to have the work of human hands to defile it. Rather, the stones are to be whole, meaning uncut in any way. As such...

**<sup>6 (con’t)</sup> and offer burnt offerings on it to the LORD your God.**

*v’haalita alav olat l’Yehovah elohekha* – “And you shall cause to ascend burnt offerings to Yehovah your God.” The idea here is that of appeasing for sins. Though not at the tabernacle, the words of law written all over the stones are enough to demonstrate this.

The burnt offerings are those that are wholly burnt to the Lord. The instructions for them are predominately found in Leviticus 1. No part of them is eaten, but the entire animal ascends in smoke as an offering of appeasement to God. Only after the burnt offerings are noted are the next offerings then mentioned...

**<sup>7</sup>You shall offer peace offerings,**

The law of the peace offering is predominantly detailed in Leviticus 3. It is an offering where a part is offered to the Lord and then the offeror participates in it as well. Thus, it signifies peace is established between the two. This is why it is also translated as “fellowship offerings.” It is also why Moses next says...

<sup>7</sup> (con't) **and shall eat there, and rejoice before the LORD your God.**

In the eating, there is a sense of fellowship and participation with the Lord God. Thus, there is to be a state of rejoicing before Him. These peace offerings are made for exactly this reason – communion and fellowship between the Lord and His people.

<sup>8</sup> **And you shall write very plainly on the stones all the words of this law.”**

The words “very plainly” are *baer hetev*. They are very specific and direct. The first is a rare word, *baar*. It is a verb meaning to make distinct or plain. It comes from a primitive root which signifies to dig, and so by analogy, it means to engrave. The word was seen only once before, in Deuteronomy 1:5. It will only be seen one more time, in Habakkuk 2:2 –

“Then the LORD answered me and said:  
‘Write the vision  
And make *it* plain on tablets,  
That he may run who reads it.’” Habakkuk 2:2

The second word, *yatav*, gives the sense of doing well, being good, pleasing, and so on. Both verbs are infinitives, and thus are being used adverbially. And so, “very plainly” will satisfy the translation. Though this has already been stated, it is restated at the end in order to highlight the importance of what is said.

The law is to be presented in a perfectly open, clear, and easily identifiable manner. With that stated, the account next says...

<sup>9</sup> **Then Moses and the priests, the Levites, spoke to all Israel, saying,**

The words simply say, “And spoke,” not “Then spoke.” As such, it seems that the “elders” mentioned in verse 1 is now explained as, “the priests, the Levites.” It is these that jointly convey the words of the people, saying...

<sup>9</sup> (con't) **“Take heed and listen, O Israel:**

Here is a word found nowhere else in Scripture, *sakath*. It comes from a primitive root meaning to be silent. Thus, by implication, it signifies to observe quietly, and therefore, to take heed.

Literally, it says “Be silent and listen.” Mouths are to be closed; ears are to be open. As such, attention is to be directed to what is said, and obedience is to be the result. Understanding this, they next say...

<sup>9</sup> (con't) **This day you have become the people of the LORD your God.**

This takes us back to the end of Chapter 26 where the two thoughts were expressed by Moses in verses 17 and 18 –

“Today, you have caused Yehovah to say to you that He will be your God.”  
“And Yehovah has caused you to say that you will be His special people.”

In this, they have become the people of Yehovah. Hence...

<sup>\*10</sup> (fin) **Therefore you shall obey the voice of the LORD your God, and observe His commandments and His statutes which I command you today.”**

Again, the thought returns to verse 17 of the previous chapter –

“...and that you will walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments, and His judgments, and that you will obey His voice.”

This verse also explains the thought expressed in verse 1. The commandment (singular) is to be kept. Moses’ words now, the commandments and the statutes, are the makeup of that commandment. Israel is to do these in order to keep the commandment.

*An altar of stone you shall make for Me  
You shall make it according to My word  
Large stones and plaster, so shall it be  
Follow the instructions just as you have heard*

*Make it on the mountain of the curse  
And set it up just as I have commanded you  
Not a point I have stated shall you miss, that would be perverse  
Everything I have said, you are certainly to do*

*The typology must be maintained carefully  
So that what it anticipates will be clearly understood  
Do just what you have been instructed by Me  
And you will have done just as you should*

## **II. Pictures of Christ**

Moses makes a point of three times saying, “when you have crossed over.” Twice, he specifies this as “the Jordan.” The words *ha’yarden*, or “the Jordan,” mean “the Descender.” It is consistently used as a picture of Christ. He descended from heaven to earth, and then even to death. He then rose from the dead and ascended back to heaven.

The Jordan is typologically a picture of Christ’s incarnation in His first advent. When one crosses over (or through) the Jordan, it is typologically a picture of passing through Christ from death to life. The words “cross over” are closely associated with the word Hebrew, or, one who crosses over.

There were carefully alternated uses of the singular and the plural in the passage. It is instructive in itself. This is to show that the same people (all) are the collective (Israel) that are being referred to. This is then a typological foreshadowing of the time when Israel as a people come to Christ, rather than as individual Jews do.

There is a time when the nation will realize who Christ is and will individually and collectively pass through Christ unto life. As an anticipatory picture of this, they are shown what that means in advance by building this altar.

I would argue, especially based on Joshua 8, that the stones set up with plaster, and inscribed with the law, are one and the same as the altar on which the offerings are made. To understand the significance of the altar, one should return to the Exodus 20 sermon entitled “The Earthen Altar.”

Quite clearly, that altar pictures Christ in its every detail. The reason for building this altar without any tool is because the unhewn stone is something that God created.

If man were to shape the stone, then it would include man’s efforts in it. Thus, it would lead to either idolatry of the altar which man had made in order to fellowship with God, or it would lead to idolatry of self because the man had erected the place where God and man fellowshiped.



Either way, it is a picture of works-based salvation. It is man attempting to reconcile himself to God by his efforts rather than accepting God's provision in the process of reconciliation.

Obviously, Israel had to build the altar, or no altar would be built. But the hewing of the stones provides the typology – it is God's work, not man's effort, that is the basis for the altar.

God made the stones. For man to add his effort into what He had made would then be contrary to the premise of the Bible. Man is saved by grace, not by works.

The erection of the altar itself cannot be equated to a work any more than the compilation of the Bible can be. God gave the words, man recorded the words, and through the words man meets with God. Likewise, God made the earth and the stones, man simply arranges them into an altar, and God then meets with man.

And more, that altar anticipates Christ in that God made man (the building block of humanity) without any human efforts, and humanity has then moved itself around in order to reproduce, eventually leading to Christ. The fact that Israel assembled the stones does not in any way damage the picture of Christ. Rather, it enhances it.

Using *even*, or stone, provides its own picture of Christ's humanity. He is the fulfillment of this altar where man comes to fellowship with God. Stone is used to speak of the Lord and of the Messiah in Scripture, such as –

"I will praise You,  
For You have answered me,  
And have become my salvation.  
<sup>22</sup> The **stone** *which* the builders rejected  
Has become the chief cornerstone.  
<sup>23</sup> This was the LORD's doing;  
It *is* marvelous in our eyes.  
<sup>24</sup> This *is* the day the LORD has made;  
We will rejoice and be glad in it." Psalm 118:21-24

This verse is then cited six times in the New Testament when speaking of the Messiah by Jesus, or by Peter when referring to Jesus as the Messiah. In Isaiah 28:16, Isaiah says –

“Behold, I lay in Zion a **stone** for a foundation,  
A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation;  
Whoever believes will not act hastily.” Isaiah 28:16

That is cited by both Paul and Peter when referring to Christ as well. It is God who fashioned Christ’s humanity. Thus, to shape a stone for this altar would typologically be to fashion a false “christ” of one’s own choosing. This is the reason for the specificity in the command. The earthen altar, or one of stone, pictures Christ who was alone fashioned by God.

To hew the stones would then say that *the people* were fashioning their own salvation, rejecting the only true Lord who is willing to meet with man.

The use of “large” stones provides its own picture. There are many stones, large and thus heavy. It anticipates the weight and burden of the law, of which Christ is the fulfillment. No person can carry that burden. Christ speaks of that several times and in several ways, such as –

“Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30

John speaks of the same thing when he says of Christ that “His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3). With that, we see that the plastering of the stones with plaster unites them as one, thus it is an altar of stone, even if it is an altar of stones. It is one law, even if made up of many.

Israel, meaning the people at the time of Joshua, will be in the land. They will build an altar while already in the land, and yet they are being told that the intent of the altar is “that you may enter the land which the Lord your God is giving you.”

Therefore, and as I noted, the words are instructional. They are intended for Israel, the people individually, and they are intended for Israel collectively once Messiah has come: “You have crossed over the Jordan. You are in the land. Here is what you need to do in order to enter the land.”

In this, the type, crossing the Jordan, entering the land, and building the altar, all anticipate the Antitype – coming through Christ and accepting His work in order to enter the true land “flowing with milk and honey.”

To further this, Moses again notes crossing over the Jordan, after which they were to set up the stones on Mount Ebal. Mount Ebal was noted in Deuteronomy 11 where its significance was described.

As a refresher to that, the name Ebal comes from an unused root meaning to be bald. Probably signifying the bald appearance of the mountain. Thus, it means something like Bare or Heap of Barrenness.

Of the two facing mountains, which will be noted again in next week’s passage, Gerizim is to the south and Ebal is to the north. Or, in reference to the layout of directions in the Bible, Gerizim is to the right, and Ebal is to the left. Thus, it matches the scriptural pattern of the right hand of blessing and the left hand of cursing. For example –

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.” Matthew 25:31-33

Ebal is the mountain of curse, the bald mountain. Thus, there is metaphor being conveyed. After noting the name of the mountain, Moses again said that they are to set up the stones and to plaster them with plaster.

As I noted, the second time he says this, the words were identical to the final clause of verse 2, except the word *otam*, or “them” (meaning the stones) is spelled with an additional letter, a vav.

If that is what Moses truly penned and not a scribal error that crept in, I would suggest that this letter anticipates Christ as well. Vav is the sixth letter of the Aleph-bet. The number six is the number of man, fallen man. But it can form its own picture of Christ in that He took on the sins of fallen man, becoming sin so “that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

This is what occurs in the atonement process. A Substitute takes the place of the sinner, and the transfer is made. Thus, the act of plastering the stones, on Mount Ebal – if the spelling reflects the original – appears to make its own picture of Christ.

So, the name and the location of the mountain, as well as the act of plastering the stones on the mountain, all anticipate Paul's words of Galatians 3 –

“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed *is* everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.’ <sup>11</sup> But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God *is* evident, for ‘the just shall live by faith.’ <sup>12</sup> Yet the law is not of faith, but “the man who does them shall live by them.”

<sup>13</sup> Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree’), <sup>14</sup> that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Galatians 3:10-14

And more, on this altar, Israel is then instructed to offer burnt offerings first. It is a typological representation of Christ as our sacrificial offering as was minutely detailed in the book of Leviticus in regard to this type of offering.

The altar of the law, meaning the altar of the curse, on the mountain of the curse – and everything else associated with this location and altar that we have seen so far, is the place where the sin is dealt with, anticipating Christ. Every single detail of it is so.

Once that sin is dealt with, and the transfer of the penalty of the law is made, only then are the peace offerings to be made. Restoration has been effected, peace between the warring parties is made, and fellowship through the meal is realized.

With this all stated, Moses then returns to the writing of the law very plainly on the altar. It is its own stress in the repetition, and it is its own stress in the use of the two verbs in an adverbial manner.

It is, in type, anticipatory of Christ who is the embodiment and fulfillment of the law. He clearly and plainly is shown to be this in the gospels. Thus, the altar pictures Christ in its makeup. It pictures Christ in the means it is fashioned. It pictures Christ in what is inscribed on it. It pictures Christ in where it is located. And it also anticipates Christ in what is offered on it.

Everything about the passage today is given to alert Israel to their need for Christ. Someday, they will pass through the Descender, they will put their faith in Him, and they will find that the law was only a tutor to bring them to Him.

What is being conveyed here is then summed up in the final two verses we looked at. The very fact that an offering had to be made upon the altar of the law tells us that the law has been violated and that a sacrifice is needed to atone for it.

Therefore, when Moses says that they are the people of the Lord God, and that they are to obey the Lord and keep His commandments and statutes, it is telling them that they will do so only through Christ's perfect obedience to the law. In every way, in Israel's building of this altar, it is an anticipatory type of their coming to Christ who fulfills the law for them.

As such, it is important for us in the church to remember the same lesson, and to not fall back on the law as a means of pleasing God. If you are saved, you are saved. But if you go back to law observance, you are setting aside the work of Christ.

How displeasing to God it must be when someone starts well and then trips up in his race to the end. Not only does he stop growing in Christ, he disgraces the very work of Christ that saved him in the first place!

Let us be wise and simply trust in the finished, final, and forever work of Christ on our behalf. When we are told to obey His commandments by John as we noted a few minutes ago, John was not speaking of the Law of Moses. He was referring to our obligations under the New Covenant.

It is a covenant that came at a high price to initiate. Christ gave His life up under the Old and in fulfillment of it so that we could have new life in Him. Let us remember this and be observant to His commands out of gratitude for such a great salvation.

**Closing Verse:** *"... knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified."* Galatians 2:16

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 27:11-26 *Remember all that you heard and you saw (and then do All the Words of This Law)* (76<sup>th</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **An Altar of Stones**

Now Moses, with the elders of Israel  
Commanded the people, saying  
“Keep all the commandments which I command you today  
So to you I am relaying

And it shall be, on the day  
When you cross over the Jordan to the land  
-----which the LORD your God is giving you  
That you shall set up for yourselves large stones  
And whitewash them with lime, so you shall do

You shall write on them all the words of this law  
When you have crossed over, so you shall do  
That you may enter the land  
Which the LORD your God is giving you

‘A land flowing with milk and honey, yes it is true  
Just as the LORD God of your fathers promised you

Therefore it shall be, when you have crossed over the Jordan  
That on Mount Ebal you shall set up these stones at that time  
Which I command you today  
And you shall whitewash them with lime

And there you shall build an altar  
To the LORD your God, can I get an “Amen?”  
An altar of stones  
You shall not use an iron tool on them

You shall build with whole stones  
The altar of the LORD your God, so you shall do  
And offer burnt offerings on it to the LORD your God

Just as I have instructed you

You shall offer peace offerings, and shall eat there  
And rejoice before the LORD your God  
And you shall write very plainly on the stones  
All the words of this law, as an acknowledgment and

Then Moses and the priests, the Levites  
Spoke to all Israel, saying (words by which to applaud)  
“Take heed and listen, O Israel:  
This day you have become the people of the LORD your God

Therefore you shall obey  
The voice of the LORD your God, as to you I say  
And observe His commandments and His statutes  
Which I command you today

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## **Deuteronomy 27:11-26 (All the Words of This Law)**

One of the things about the series Star Trek, at least the original series, is that it touched upon countless aspects of humanity that often merged with man's seeking out a relationship with the Creator. This was often only subtly seen, and at times it was overt.

One episode, Bread and Circuses, dealt with the issue on a surprising level. The ship arrived at a planet that resembled ancient Rome. The persecuted Roman citizens had put their trust in the "sun." At the end of the show, a surprising exchange took place –

SPOCK: I wish we could have examined that belief of his more closely. It seems illogical for a sun worshiper to develop a philosophy of total brotherhood. Sun worship is usually a primitive superstition religion.

UHURA: I'm afraid you have it all wrong, Mister Spock, all of you. I've been monitoring some of their old-style radio waves, the empire spokesman trying to ridicule their religion. But he couldn't. Don't you understand? It's not the sun up in the sky. It's the Son of God.

KIRK: Caesar and Christ. They had them both. And the word is spreading only now.

One of their full-length films followed a path toward the divine as well. Spock's brother was intent on going to meet "God." In order to do so, he hijacked the Enterprise and headed for his destination, being summoned by a call he could not seem to resist.

**Text Verse:** *"Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: <sup>27</sup> the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today; <sup>28</sup> and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known." Deuteronomy 11:26-28*

Towards the end of the movie, while the voyagers were on the planet they had been summoned to, an almost comical exchange took place. This supposed "god" asked about how they came to him. They told him it was by a starship. This "god" then asked if the starship could carry his wisdom beyond the great barrier. When he was told it could, he then said, "Then I will make use of this starship."

At this point, an obvious question arose from Captain Kirk, "Excuse me. ...I'd just like to ask a question. ...What does God need with a starship?" It was a good question to ask.



In one of our verses today, the people are told “Cursed *is* the one who makes a carved or molded image, an abomination to the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets *it* up in secret.” A set of similar questions could be asked of us. If there is a God, why do we need a carved or molded image, why do we need to carve it with our own hands, and why do we need to set it up in secret.”

What is it about the search for God, whether in a movie to stimulate our thoughts, or in our own actions, that is often so incorrect?

There were over fourteen hundred years of the law, and not a single person lived through the ordeal. Not one. And then came Christ Jesus. He not only lived under it, He died in fulfillment of it, and He resurrected to prove it. And yet, to this day, people keep trying to do better than He did.

The morning I typed this sermon, someone who had already been counseled on the futility of this emailed back attempting to explain why the law still had merit to live by. I responded, but it is pretty certain to me that my reply will go nowhere.

What is it about grace that we just cannot get? It is that we simply cannot let go of our own pride. Pay attention today. After evaluating these words of law and condemnation, we’ll explain – once again – how to avoid both.

Great things, such as the infinitely marvelous grace of God are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. Twelve Curses (verses 11-26)**

**<sup>11</sup> And Moses commanded the people on the same day, saying,**

The words of this verse follow after those of verse 1, which said, “Now Moses, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people, saying: ‘Keep all the commandments which I command you today.’”

First came the instructions for the building of the edifice on which was to be written all the words of the law. With those instructions complete, Moses now immediately (on the same day) turns to the rite that is to be conducted once that altar was completed. The instructions for that rite begin with...

<sup>12</sup> **“These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people,**

Mount Gerizim is the mountain of blessing. The name Gerizim comes from the word *garaz* – to cut, cut up, or cut off. Being a plural word, the meaning is something like, “The Cutters Down.” It may refer to those who harvest, due to the fertility of the mountain.

This then would be in complete contrast to Mt. Ebal which, as was noted last week, is the bald mountain. As far as the Hebrew, it says the people shall stand *al har Gerizim*, or “upon mount Gerizim.” However, Joshua 8 seems to contradict this, saying –

“Then all Israel, with their elders and officers and judges, stood on either side of the ark before the priests, the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, the stranger as well as he who was born among them. Half of them *were* in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel.” Joshua 8:33

There, the Hebrew reads *el mul*, or “to front,” rather than “upon.” One could infer that they are not on top of the mountain, but rather on the side of it, or are at the base of it. But one could also infer that Joshua is speaking of the opposite tribes facing one another.

Thus, they could all be “on” their assigned mountain while facing “to front” those on the other mountain. In whatever way they were actually situated in Joshua, Moses now substantially repeats the thought of verse 27:2 –

<sup>12</sup> (con’t) **when you have crossed over the Jordan:**

In verse 27:2, he said “in the day you cross over.” Here, he says, *b’averekem*, or “in your crossing over.” In other words, it is to be as close to the time of crossing over as is reasonable. From the time they cross the Jordan, it should be a fixed goal to proceed with building this altar and conducting this rite. As such, those who are to stand and bless are...

<sup>12</sup> (con’t) **Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin;**

The Hebrew is more specific, “Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin. Each of these descends from the two wives of Jacob, Leah and Rachel. These were both the free women, not the servants.

As such, it forms the same picture as Sarah and Hagar make which is used by Paul in Galatians 4. The free woman represents the blessings of Christ upon the people apart from the law because of His fulfillment of it.

The first four sons noted here are from Leah, in order of birth. The last two are from Rachel, in order of birth. Next...

**<sup>13</sup> and these shall stand on Mount Ebal to curse:**

The Hebrew is more specific, using a noun, not a verb, when referring to the curse: *v'eleh yaamdu al ha'qelalah b'har eval* – “and these standing upon the curse in Mount Ebal.” The law is written on Mount Ebal.

Because of the specific wording, it is as apparent as the nose on one's face that Mount Ebal, representing the law – because that is where the law is written upon the altar – signifies a curse. Paul states this explicitly in Galatians 3 –

“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed *is* everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.’ <sup>11</sup> But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God *is* evident, for ‘the just shall live by faith.’ <sup>12</sup> Yet the law is not of faith, but ‘the man who does them shall live by them.’

<sup>13</sup> Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree’), <sup>14</sup> that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Galatians 3:10-14

Those designated to stand upon the curse are...

**<sup>13</sup> (con't) Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.**

Two of these are sons of Leah, Reuben and Zebulun. Reuben is designated here to stand on the curse because he lay with Bilhah, his father's concubine, thus forfeiting his rights of the firstborn. Zebulun, simply being the youngest of Leah, was stuck being on Mount Ebal in order to even out the number of tribes.

Of the other four, Gad and Asher were born to Leah's maidservant Zilpah while Dan and Naphtali were born to Rachel's maidservant Bilhah. Even though the two from Bilhah were born first, they are noted not in that order. Rather, they are by order of mother.

The sons of Leah, though younger, are listed in birth order, and then those of Rachel, though older, are then listed in birth order.

Finally, Zebulun is listed after the sons of Bilhah, but before the sons of Zilpah, even though he was born last in this list. Thus, he is put behind Leah, but before Rachel. There is a definite order that is carefully followed in the listing of the sons, placing Leah (who pictures the law) before Rachel (who pictures grace). The lesson is that only in the fulfilling of the curse of the law can grace then be bestowed.

Of these two facing mountains, Gerizim is to the south and Ebal is to the north. Or, in reference to the layout of directions in the Bible, Gerizim is to the right, and Ebal is to the left. Thus, it matches the scriptural pattern of the right hand of blessing and the left hand of cursing. For example –

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.” Matthew 25:31-33

In the state of the two mountains, one can see a contrast. The mount of blessing is the fertile mountain. The mountain of curse is the bald mountain. Thus, there is metaphor being conveyed. Obedience to the Lord will bring blessing to the land while disobedience will bring a curse.

**<sup>14</sup> “And the Levites shall speak with a loud voice and say to all the men of Israel:**

Rather than “speak,” the word used, *anah*, signifies to respond, or answer. In other words, when the people are properly situated, that is the cue to respond with their voices. There is an order being followed with one step leading to the next.

The word translated as “loud” is *rum*. It means to be high or exalted. Thus, the voice is to be lifted so that it will carry between the two parties standing on each mountain. This is the only time that the phrase *qol ram*, or “voice lifted,” is seen.

As was noted in Joshua 8, the ark was in the middle of the two companies with the priests that bore it. If all the Levites called out together, it would be a tremendously loud call. Their number was recorded in the census of Numbers 26 –

“Now those who were numbered of them were twenty-three thousand, every male from a month old and above; for they were not numbered among the other children of Israel, because there was no inheritance given to them among the children of Israel.” Numbers 26:62

However, there are various interpretations as to who actually does the calling. Is it the Levites on Mount Gerizim? Is it the Levitical priests in the middle? Is it some of the Levites in the middle?

The account is not specific except to say, “the Levites.” Hence, there is no reason to assume that it is only the priests, but rather the entire congregation of Levites who are standing on Mount Gerizim. If so, it would be an immense lifting of the voice so that it could easily be heard a long distance away. Of the scene before us, Keil states –

“From the expression ‘all the men of Israel,’ it is perfectly evident that in this particular ceremony the people were not represented by their elders or heads, but were present in the persons of all their adult men who were over twenty years of age; and with this Joshua 8:33, when rightly interpreted, fully harmonizes.” Keil

First, neither account says anything of the age of the men. Secondly, the term *qal ish Yisrael*, or “all men of Israel,” doesn’t mean “‘only’ all the men.” Rather, Joshua 8 goes on to say –

“There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them.” Joshua 8:35

In other words, every single person of Israel is referred to. The masculine “all men of Israel” speaks for the whole. Thus, when someone says the words, “when rightly interpreted,” it doesn’t necessarily mean what they are saying is, in fact, rightly interpreted. Use care when evaluating the words of those who evaluate the word.

Whatever actually occurred concerning “which Levites” were the ones to call out, it is the voices of the Levites that begin the antiphonal recitation of the twelve curses, saying...

<sup>15</sup> **‘Cursed is the one who makes a carved or molded image,**

Each of these curses has already been addressed. Moses is citing examples of various sorts of laws from these different sections in order to bind all of the sections together in the minds of the people. There isn't some type of elevation of certain laws, such as the Ten Commandments, above other laws, such as those that define sexual morality in Leviticus.

Each violation of the law violates the law and results in that person becoming a curse. This will be especially highlighted in the final pronouncement. It is exactly what James states –

“For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all.” James 2:10

This first call of cursing addresses an offense against the nature and character of God. In forming an image, it denies Him the glory He is due. The first word is *pesel*. It is a carved image, coming from *pasal*, meaning to hew into shape. It was first noted in Exodus 20 at the giving of the Ten Commandments –

“You shall not make for yourself a **carved image**—any likeness of *anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth.” Exodus 20:4

The next word is *masekah*. It comes from *nasak*, signifying “to pour out.” Thus, it is an image made from molten metal; a cast image. That was first seen at the infamous account of the golden calf in Exodus 32 –

“And he received *the gold* from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a **molded** calf.” Exodus 32:4

Of these, Moses says they are...

<sup>15</sup> (con't) **an abomination to the LORD,**

*toavat Yehovah* – “abomination Yehovah.” It is not so much an abomination to the Lord as it is something the Lord has declared as such. The state of the thing, its very existence, is abominable. To explain this, Moses next says...

<sup>15</sup> (con't) **the work of the hands of the craftsman,**

The purpose of a carved or molded image is to worship it. The irony of worshipping something made by the hands of man is evident. The utterly stupid thought that someone would do this demonstrates that there is 1) no heart for the Creator, and 2) no sense in the head of the man.

Despite this, though, the next words actually reveal the depth of the stupidity in his head...

<sup>15</sup> (con't) **and sets *it* up in secret.'**

*v'sam ba'sater* – “and sets in the secret.” For a person to set such an idol up in secret means that he is hiding himself and it. But if this is a god, then it should be able to deliver him. So why does he need to have it set up in secret?

It shows an implicit knowledge that God exists, but that the knowledge is suppressed. He cannot hide it from God, and yet he tries to hide it from God. It is exactly what Paul refers to in Romans 1. Suppressing the truth, becoming futile in one's thoughts, and having foolish hearts that are darkened.

<sup>15</sup> (con't) **“And all the people shall answer and say, ‘Amen!’**

In these words, there is a difference from the next 11 curses. Here it says, “And (they, plural) shall answer all the people and (they, plural) say, ‘Amen.’” After this, each such statement will be in the singular. It is not clear why this change is here, but it simply could be Moses' way of unambiguously stating that everyone – without exception – is to be included in the antiphonal response.

Regardless, the calling out of “Amen” is an acknowledgment of the truth of the words and of the justice of the curse. It places what has been said as a statement of certainty, confirmed by the utterance – “So be it.”

<sup>16</sup> **'Cursed *is* the one who treats his father or his mother with contempt.'**

Just as an offense against the character of God was the example in the previous verse, it now speaks of an offense against the character of the parent. The word is *qalah*. It signifies to lightly esteem, or dishonor. Thus, to do so is to treat a parent with contempt. It is similar to the words of Leviticus 20:9 –

“For everyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother. His blood *shall be* upon him.”

The word there is similar, but not the same as stated now by Moses. It is *qalal*, to despise. The effect of using two different words is to ensure that the people would not be flippant in how they treated such things, such as using exact words to claim innocence.

In other words, a general precept arises from Moses’ use of multiple words, thus bolstering the words of the Fifth Commandment, “Honor your father and your mother.” For those who fail to do so, the call out is that they are a curse. As such...

<sup>16</sup> (con’t) **“And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’**

*v’amar kal ha’am amen* – “And shall say (singular) all the people, ‘Amen.’” It is in this singular manner that the rest of the antiphonal responses are directed to be made. Next...

<sup>17</sup> **‘Cursed is the one who moves his neighbor’s landmark.’  
“And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’**

From an offense against the parent, the words now speak of an offense against one’s neighbor. This was cited as a commandment in Chapter 19 –

“You shall not remove your neighbor’s landmark, which the men of old have set, in your inheritance which you will inherit in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.” Deuteronomy 19:14

The incorporation of this into the twelve curses is to demonstrate what a great offense doing such a thing is. It is deceitful, it is theft, and it is understood by all to be wrong. Even Job, who was outside of the covenant people, demonstrates that this is so –

*“Some remove landmarks;  
They seize flocks violently and feed on them;  
<sup>3</sup>They drive away the donkey of the fatherless;  
They take the widow’s ox as a pledge.” Job 24:2, 3*

Job was referring to those people who do not know the ways of the Almighty. In other words, he notes that doing such a thing was an offense to the all-powerful Creator.



The precept is referred to twice by Solomon in the proverbs, and the act is considered so reprehensible to the Lord, that it is used as a comparative form of wickedness, meaning it is a seriously grave sin. It is one of the reasons He gave for His coming wrath upon the land of Judah –

“The princes of Judah are like those who remove a landmark;  
I will pour out My wrath on them like water.” Hosea 5:10

From conduct towards one’s neighbor, Moses now turns to conduct towards the helpless, saying...

**<sup>18</sup> ‘Cursed is the one who makes the blind to wander off the road.’  
‘And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’**

The words here are similar in thought to those of Leviticus 19:14 –

“You shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but shall fear your God: I *am* the LORD.”

This is certainly referring to actual blindness, but both the Lord and Moses have spoken of blindness in a spiritual sense as well. The Lord first said this –

“And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous.” Exodus 23:8

Later, Moses restated the same precept –

“You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous.”  
-Deuteronomy 16:19

As such, this must extend to deception of those who simply don’t see or know concerning a particular matter. To put a stumbling block before the blind, or to cause the blind to go astray in the way, should be taken in both a literal and in a spiritual sense.

Job understood the need to direct the blind and stated as much while defending his righteousness –

“I was eyes to the blind,  
And I was feet to the lame.” Job 29:15

**<sup>19</sup> ‘Cursed is the one who perverts the justice due the stranger, the fatherless, and widow.’**

**“And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’**

*arur mateh mishpat ger yatom v'almanah* – “Cursed he who extends justice stranger, fatherless, and widow. The idea here is also included in the words we just cited for the previous verse –

“You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous.”

-Deuteronomy 16:19

The word translated as “pervert” is *natah*. It signifies to stretch out, extend, bend, and so on. This then must go both ways. The lack of any preposition before “stranger, fatherless, and widow” is telling. It doesn’t say, “‘due’ the stranger,” “‘from’ the stranger,” “‘for’ the stranger,” or any other such thing.

This is inclusive of any stretching of justice – for them or against them. In Exodus 23, we read of both –

You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute. Exodus 23:3

“You shall not pervert the judgment of your poor in his dispute.” Exodus 23:6

The idea here in Deuteronomy covers both thoughts. What is right is right and justice is to be blind to the status of the individual. A poor man is never to be given a favorable, but unrighteous decision simply because he is poor. Nor is a poor man to be abused in justice because he is poor. Jeremiah 5 speaks of the latter –

“They have grown fat, they are sleek;  
Yes, they surpass the deeds of the wicked;  
They do not plead the cause,  
The cause of the fatherless;  
Yet they prosper,  
And the right of the needy they do not defend.” Jeremiah 5:28

Anyone who perverts justice, extending it for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow beyond what is proper is cursed. With these laws so far stated, Moses now turns to four matters concerning sexual immorality, beginning with...

**<sup>20</sup> ‘Cursed is the one who lies with his father’s wife, because he has uncovered his father’s bed.’**

**“And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’**

This was stated in Leviticus 18 –

“You do not uncover the nakedness of your father and the nakedness of your mother, she [is] your mother; you do not uncover her nakedness. **8**You do not uncover the nakedness of the wife of your father; it [is] the nakedness of your father.” Leviticus 18:7, 8 (LSV)

In Leviticus 18:7, the second clause explains the first. As the father and mother are one flesh due to their union, a son sleeping with his mother would then uncover both her nakedness and the father’s. This then is further defined by verse 18:8. The idea is that of the two being one.

A man is not to have sex with his father’s wife, even if she is not the person’s mother. This would then also uncover the father’s nakedness. Some claim this is what Ham did to Noah, but that has to be read into the account.

In fact, that actually seems more unlikely because it is something that Reuben, the eldest of Jacob, did when he slept with Bilhah, Jacob’s concubine. In that account, which also predates the law, the wording is specific. But the account of Ham and Noah makes no such inferences. What he did was probably mocking or homosexual in nature.

Absalom also slept with his father David’s concubines in 2 Samuel 16. Despite not being under the Law of Moses, this is also what occurred in 1 Corinthians 5. Paul fully condemned that as perverse. Moses next turns towards even more unnatural relations...

**<sup>21</sup> ‘Cursed is the one who lies with any kind of animal.’**

**“And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’**

This has already been stated in one way or another three times. It was first stated in Exodus 22:19 –

“Whoever lies with an animal shall surely be put to death.”

The precept was then expanded on in Leviticus 18:23 and Leviticus 20:15, 16. Any who do this are cursed. Next, he says...

**<sup>22</sup> ‘Cursed *is* the one who lies with his sister, the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother.’**

**“And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’**

This was stated in Leviticus 18:9 –

“The nakedness of your sister, the daughter of your father, or the daughter of your mother, *whether* born at home or elsewhere, their nakedness you shall not uncover.”

It is often asked why this was considered ok prior to the law, such as with Abraham, but not afterward. There are several reasons for this, such as the fact that if people didn’t intermarry, there would be no people. Adam and Eve had children. If they couldn’t intermarry, that would be the end of the human race.

Another reason is that the world worked differently. People lived extended periods, implying that they were not physically affected in the same way we are today. After the flood, things changed. The gene pool is now breaking down at a different rate, and it is no longer an acceptable practice. For Israel, it is law. Those who do this are cursed. Also...

**<sup>23</sup> ‘Cursed *is* the one who lies with his mother-in-law.’**

**“And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’**

The word translated as “mother-in-law” is *khatan*. It signifies to join in affinity. The Greek translation of this verse says, “daughter-in-law.” Either way, this was also stated in Leviticus –

“You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, nor shall you take her son’s daughter or her daughter’s daughter, to uncover her nakedness. They *are* near of kin to her. It *is* wickedness.” Leviticus 18:17

“If a man marries a woman and her mother, it *is* wickedness. They shall be burned

with fire, both he and they, that there may be no wickedness among you.”

-Leviticus 20:14

Such unions were considered completely unacceptable and resulted in being cursed. From acts of sexual immorality, it next states...

**<sup>24</sup> ‘Cursed is the one who attacks his neighbor secretly.’**

**“And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’**

The word is *nakah*. It means to strike. It can mean to kill, but there are also other words or descriptors that can be used to explain that. And yet, it is the same word used to describe what Moses did in Exodus 2 when he killed an Egyptian. To some, the words, “in secret,” support the idea of murder. It is as if he has killed, and no one saw.

Because the act of murder isn’t clearly defined, this could simply be referring to someone who arbitrarily attacks another, even without killing him. Probably, the idea is simply attached to the word *ba’sater*, or “in the secret.” A person who attacks and strikes another, though he thinks he got away with it, is cursed.

**<sup>25</sup> ‘Cursed is the one who takes a bribe to slay an innocent person.’**

**“And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’**

The words of this verse are more specific. It uses the same word, *nakah*, or strike, but it then defines that: *arur loqeahk shokhad l’hakoth nephesh dam naqi* – “Cursed he who takes bribe to strike soul blood innocent.”

The paying of bribes has already been denounced in both Exodus and Deuteronomy. In the case of this, it is surely speaking of taking one for the purpose of killing the person. The blood is the soul (Deuteronomy 12:23). As such, the wording is implying that to take a payment in order to kill another will lead to that person being cursed. It is an offense noted as occurring in Jerusalem in Ezekiel 22:12, saying, “In you they take bribes to shed blood.”

With each of these statements now made, and all coming from various parts of the law as a summary, but not an exhaustive list, of what brings a curse, Moses finishes with bad news for those who think they are ok because they haven’t done any of the previous things mentioned...

**\*26 (fin) ‘Cursed is the one who does not confirm *all* the words of this law by observing them.’**

**“And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’”**

The word “all” is not in the Hebrew. However, it is implied nonetheless. It says: Cursed who not does confirm words the Torah, the this, to do them.” But Adam Clarke instructs us further, saying –

“The word כל col, All, is not found in any printed copy of the Hebrew text; but the Samaritan preserves it, and so do six MSS. in the collections of Kennicott and De Rossi, besides several copies of the Chaldee Targum. The Septuagint also, and St. Paul in his quotation of this place, Galatians 3:10. St. Jerome says that the Jews suppressed the word, that it might not appear that they were bound to fulfill All the precepts in the law of Moses.”

Due to the number of witnesses that say “all,” it appears that someone may have taken out the word at some point, understanding the magnitude of what is being conveyed. Paul is certainly citing the Septuagint, and the words are clear –

“Cursed *is* everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.” Galatians 3:10

Moses is clearly stating the basis for the precept that James later made, and which we cited earlier – if you stumble in one point of the law, you are guilty of all.

And this isn’t just an attempt to perform all of what is stated in the law and then give up, having attained perfection. One must perfectly do all the law requires, and then continue to do so. Anything less brings a curse. And the fact is that none of us can do what the law demands. Of this thought, Charles Ellicott says –

“For no man can do all of them. And therefore it is impossible to secure the blessing of Gerizim except through Him who bare the curse of Ebal.”

In other words, what we have failed at, Christ accomplished. And in His accomplishment of those things, He took the curse of the law, inscribed openly on Mt. Ebal, upon Himself. The meaning of the number twelve is “governmental perfection,” or “perfection of government.”

The Law of Moses was given as the governmental code by which Israel was to live. In order to find life, one would have to perfectly perform these mandates. When Christ came, He gave hints as to something new that was coming. In Matthew 5, he also went up on a mountain, but instead of calling out curses, he called out blessings, eight of them –

“Blessed *are* the poor in spirit,  
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup> Blessed *are* those who mourn,  
For they shall be comforted.

<sup>5</sup> Blessed *are* the meek,  
For they shall inherit the earth.

<sup>6</sup> Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
For they shall be filled.

<sup>7</sup> Blessed *are* the merciful,  
For they shall obtain mercy.

<sup>8</sup> Blessed *are* the pure in heart,  
For they shall see God.

<sup>9</sup> Blessed *are* the peacemakers,  
For they shall be called sons of God.

<sup>10</sup> Blessed *are* those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake,  
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:3-10

Eight is the superabundant number. As a stand-alone number, it signifies “*Resurrection and Regeneration*, and the beginning of a new era or order” (Bullinger). He was conveying to us that something new was coming, and that it would be found in Him. Upon conveying His eight blessings, He then added a ninth –

“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great *is* your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” Matthew 5:11, 12

Jesus was giving them a hint of what was coming. It would be He that would fulfill the Law. He would die in fulfillment of it, and then He would return to life because the Man who does the things of the law shall live by them. In the people’s turning to Him, even if reviled and persecuted, they would find reward in heaven.

In this ninth blessing, Bullinger defines its meaning, saying. it, “is thus significant of the end of man, and the summation of all man’s works. Nine is, therefore, THE NUMBER OF FINALITY OR JUDGMENT.”

That is perfectly in accord with Jesus’ ninth blessing. What is the word that is pleasing to God? What is that allows man to stand before Him with everything to offer while having nothing of His own to offer? What is it that is acceptable at the judgment of man? Jesus Himself tells us in John 6:29 –

“This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”

Moses says, “Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law by observing them.” Jesus says, “I have confirmed all of the words of the law by observing them. Now, trust Me. That is your work. Simply believe that I have done what you cannot do.” As an addendum, to our thoughts, the John Lange Commentary says –

“‘Not the hearers of the law are justified, but the doers (Rom. 2:13).’ Vain are the hopes of men founded upon their obedience to the law. The Amen is a condemnation upon ourselves, and shuts us up to Christ, who alone has set up, established the words of this law to do them, and in whom therefore there is blessing instead of the curse.—A.G.]”

This is true. When we Amen the law, we simply condemn ourselves. When we rely on and Amen the work of Jesus Christ, nothing can ever separate us again from the love of God which is found in Him. Be sure to trust Him and put your hopes in Him. Trusting in your own righteousness will only lead you to a sad and bitter end.

Thank God for Jesus Christ who became sin so that we could become the righteousness of God in Him. Yes. Thank God for our Lord JESUS.

*They came from everywhere  
to hear You speak,  
to see the signs,  
to sit at your feet.*

*They came with brokenness,  
with hope to their soul,  
with different walks of life  
they came to the cross.*



*But just how many,  
chose to believe?  
How many followed,  
and bowed at your feet?*

*How many understood  
the meaning of the cross?  
How many knew  
that You are their only hope?*

*How many still today  
come to see You Lord,  
who want all your blessings  
but not the cross?*

*How many still come  
to hear you speak,  
to see the signs,  
to sit at your feet?*

*But in their hearts  
they choose not to believe  
that YOU ARE THE LIFE  
and The GOD WHO LIVES!*

*Yet, there [are] still some  
who accept your Grace,  
the life through the cross  
as the only way.*

*And still the wise  
seek after Your Love,  
the Love which for their sake  
was nailed to the cross.  
~Izabela Bednara*

**Closing Verse:** *“Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. <sup>46</sup> For if you believed Moses, you would believe*

*Me; for he wrote about Me. <sup>47</sup> But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" John 5:45-47*

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 28:1-14 We'll start the chapter with 14 verses. In this we will have begun.. (The Blessings and the Curses, Part I) (77<sup>th</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **All the Words of This Law**

And Moses commanded the people on the same day, saying  
"These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people  
----- (as directed by him)

When you have crossed over the Jordan:  
Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin

And these shall stand on Mount Ebal to curse: so shall it be  
Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali

"And the Levites shall speak with a loud voice and say  
----- to all the men of Israel  
'Cursed is the one who makes a carved or molded image  
----- yes, you bet  
An abomination to the LORD  
The work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets it up in secret

And all the people shall answer and say, "Amen!"

'Cursed is the one who treats his father or his mother with contempt  
None who do this will be exempt

And all the people shall say, "Amen!"

'Cursed is the one who moves his neighbor's landmark  
Such a person's soul is cold and dark

And all the people shall say, "Amen!"

'Cursed is the one who makes the blind to wander off the road  
The door to hell he will be showed

And all the people shall say, "Amen!"

'Cursed is the one who perverts the justice due the stranger  
-----the fatherless, and widow  
That rotten scoundrel has got to go

"And all the people shall say, "Amen!"

'Cursed is the one who lies with his father's wife, because  
-----he has uncovered his father's bed  
The guy who does this is as good as dead

And all the people shall say, "Amen!"

'Cursed is the one who with any kind of animal lies  
He is cursed until, and after, he dies

And all the people shall say, "Amen!"

'Cursed is the one who lies with his sister, the daughter of his  
----- father or the daughter of his mother  
He has taken the bad course, I guarantee that, brother

"And all the people shall say, "Amen!"

'Cursed is the one who lies with his mother-in-law  
In pain and anguish his tongue he will gnaw

"And all the people shall say, "Amen!"

'Cursed is the one who attacks his neighbor secretly  
Open and exposed his sins will be

"And all the people shall say, "Amen!"

'Cursed is the one who takes a bribe to an innocent person slay  
He will meet the devil in hell some fearful day

"And all the people shall say, "Amen!"

'Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law  
----- by observing them  
His life will end in turmoil and mayhem

And all the people shall say, "Amen!"

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## **Deuteronomy 28:1-14** **(The Blessings and the Curses, Part I)**

Deuteronomy 28 is one long chapter, but it is only divided into two major sections, that of blessings and that of curses. As far as the blessings, they are detailed in today's passage. After this, it is all downhill concerning what will come upon Israel if they fail to do as instructed.

Of the chapter, Albert Barnes notes the following –

“The language rises in this chapter to the sublimest strains, especially in the latter part of it; and the prophecies respecting the dispersion and degradation of the Jewish nation in its later days are among the most remarkable in scripture. They are plain, precise, and circumstantial; and the fulfillment of them has been literal, complete, and undeniable.”  
Albert Barnes

It is the curses that truly highlight both the chapter and the history of Israel. As such, it is a part of the tutoring that we are given concerning the law and our desperate need for Christ. If it were not so, the Old Testament, and even the gospels would be vastly different than they are.

And more, the state of Israel for the past two millennia would have been vastly different as well. For now, we can see that by putting the blessings first, it is an indication that there is an ideal set forth, even if it is actually unattainable by us.

If there is an ideal set forth, however, it means that attaining it is a possibility, nonetheless. It would make no sense for God to set forth an ideal and then never allow it to be seen in its fully realized state. So, even if it has never come about as promised here in Deuteronomy, it does not mean that it never will.

**Text Verse:** *“I will make a covenant of peace with them, and cause wild beasts to cease from the land; and they will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. <sup>26</sup> I will make them and the places all around My hill a blessing; and I will cause showers to come down in their season; there shall be showers of blessing. <sup>27</sup> Then the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase. They shall be safe in their land; and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke and delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them.” Ezekiel 34:25-27*

The problem with replacement theology, well one of many with it, is that such theologians hold quite fast to all of the promised blessings, but they overlook anything negative that may arise in regard to what is put forth.

For example, in Romans 11, it clearly says that Israel is blinded. If that is so, and if those who hold to replacement theology are Israel (as they claim), then they must be blinded. So why would anyone want to discuss theology with a spiritually blinded theologian?

And if they are Israel as they claim to be, and yet the curses which are detailed in the next passage (starting next week) are actually curses that belong to Israel, which has been ongoing now for two thousand years, then how do you say that Israel has been replaced by the church? Is God still punishing people that aren't even His people in the manner that he promised to punish His people?

That would demonstrate a rather confused and vindictive God, wouldn't it? The problem with what Jews believe, and the problem with what the world at large believes, and which is a problem that is found in replacement theology as well, will be discussed in our sermon today.

So, if you are still confused about who Israel is, and who the church is, and what the responsibilities and warnings to Israel actually mean, pay attention. We'll go over that, along with the verses in this passage today.

Great things, such as, "Israel is Israel, and the church is the church" are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. Blessed Shall You Be (verses 1-8)**

**<sup>1</sup>"Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God,**

There is an emphasis given to start out the chapter: *v'hayah im shamo'a tishma b'qol Yehovah elohekha* – "And it shall be if hearing, you hear in voice Yehovah your God." As has been seen repeatedly, "to hear" signifies more than just listening to the audible sounds, but to hearken to what is said.

The people could go to the synagogue every Saturday and sit and listen to the rabbi read out the words of the Lord, but unless they actually hear what is said, let it sink in, and

then hearken to the words by applying them to their lives, they have not obeyed the precept of these words right now.

This is obviously dealing with Israel under the law, but before proceeding on, it should be at least noted that the same is true today within the church. A person can show up at church, listen to whatever is said, and go home no different than when he arrived.

James speaks of this, and his words are based on his life under the law and then discovering his new life in Christ –

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. <sup>23</sup> For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; <sup>24</sup> for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. <sup>25</sup> But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.” James 1:22-25

The precept of Deuteronomy under the law is applied by James to those who have now found life in the perfect law of liberty which is found in Christ – “if hearing, you hear” the voice of the Lord God as is found in His word. For Israel, once the word is heard and hearkened to, they were...

<sup>1 (con't)</sup> **to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today,**

The Hebrew is more expressive: *lishmor laasoth* – “to observe, to do.” One can observe without doing. Israel is to pay heed and to conduct their lives in a manner that is in accord with the word they have heard as commanded by Moses.

All of the words have been in the singular – “you, Israel.” Thus, this is speaking of the obedience of the nation. At the time of Elijah, there were only seven thousand people in the nation that could be considered as being referred to here. Thus, it cannot be said that Israel the nation was observing and doing. Rather, only a remnant of the people was. But it is the nation as a whole that will either receive the blessing or the curse.

For now, Moses notes that if the nation hearkens to the word, observes the word, and does what the word instructs...

<sup>1 (con't)</sup> **that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth.**

This is a general repeat of what was stated just two chapters ago –

“Also today the LORD has proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He promised you, that *you* should keep all His commandments, <sup>19</sup> and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made, in praise, in name, and in honor, and that you may be a holy people to the LORD your God, just as He has spoken.”

-Deuteronomy 26:18, 19

There, as here, the word *elyon*, or “most high,” is used. Although the greatness of Israel was seen especially exalted at the time of Solomon, that cannot be said to have been a fulfillment of this promise. Nor can it be said of them at any other time.

To hearken, to observe, and to do all of the commandments takes more than fallen men are capable of. This will be carefully revealed and recorded over the next fourteen hundred years of their history. Only in Christ can this truly come to pass. Only in the messianic age will Israel truly find itself in this exalted position.

In coming to Christ, who is the fulfillment of Moses’ words, Israel will someday be so exalted...

**<sup>2</sup>And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you,**

The two thoughts are separated in the Hebrew, probably for effect. It reads, “And shall come upon you all the blessings, these, and overtake you.” It isn’t just that they will be evident, but that they will actively come to them.

Moses personifies the blessings, equating them to beings that actively come upon Israel and then pursue the nation, reaching out their hands to it. Of this, John Lange says, they “are personified, because God Himself is, as it were, in them.”

He is the Giver of all good things, and the words are again reflective of the words of James –

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.”

-James 1:17



The words, still in the singular, speak of a prosperity that extends to the entire nation. Some translations use the word “abundance” which certainly gives a good sense of the intent. And there is a reason for this...

<sup>2</sup> (con’t) **because you obey the voice of the LORD your God:**

The Hebrew reads “because” (or when), not “if.” This is not a conditional statement like verse 1. Rather, it is an absolute surety that it will come about: “Because you do this, then this is the result.” Now, to explain what “all these blessings” means, Moses continues...

<sup>3</sup> **“Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country.**

This begins a six-fold repetition of the word “blessed.” However, the number of blessings is more than six as will be evident in the next verse. For now, Moses begins with the entire sphere of existence in the land by noting both the city and the country – literally, the field.

Thus, this covers domestic employment, that of industry inside the walls of the city, and that which is agricultural, or outside of them. Moses indicates that in all areas where Israel puts its hands to work, the work of their hands will be blessed.

<sup>4</sup> **“Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.**

Here are listed five blessings of one type, that of reproduction. However, in the Hebrew, the first three are termed “fruit” while the last two are termed “increase,” and explain the term fruit: “Blessed fruit your womb; and fruit your ground; and fruit your beasts – increase your herd, and offspring your flocks.”

These words follow closely after Deuteronomy 7:13 –

“And He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flock, in the land of which He swore to your fathers to give you.”

The idea is that everything will increase abundantly, and that there will be many people, but there will also be much to support the many people. Even with a large population, there will be no lack at all. With that stated, Moses next says...

<sup>5</sup> **“Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.**

The words here are rare. The first, *tene*, was introduced in Deuteronomy 26, being seen twice there. The first time, it said –

“And it shall be, when you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you *as* an inheritance, and you possess it and dwell in it, <sup>2</sup> that you shall take some of the first of all the produce of the ground, which you shall bring from your land that the LORD your God is giving you, and put *it* in a **basket** and go to the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide.” Deuteronomy 26:1, 2

The other word, *mishereth*, or “kneading bowl,” is found only twice in Exodus and then twice in this chapter –

“So the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into your house, into your bedroom, on your bed, into the houses of your servants, on your people, into your ovens, and into your **kneading bowls.**” Exodus 8:3

“So the people took their dough before it was leavened, having their **kneading bowls** bound up in their clothes on their shoulders.” Exodus 12:34

Probably what is meant by Moses is that 1) the basket that carries the first of the produce is emblematic of all of the harvest. As the firsts are overflowing, so is the entire harvest. And 2) the bowl that is used for making bread (the staff of life) will never fail to be overflowing. In other words, there will always be people sated with the abundance of food set before them.

<sup>6</sup> **“Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.**

The Hebrew reads, “in your coming in,” and “in your going out.” There are two separate views on this. The first is explained by the Jewish scholar Rashi, saying that it refers to the entrance into life and the departure from life. He says, “So that thy departure from the world shall be like thine entrance into it, sinless.”

That is wrong on the surface. Jewish scholars generally don't accept the premise of original sin, which is so clearly painted in Scripture that it removes almost any reason to listen to them on any other doctrine. Everything else will be tainted with this heretical thought. If one is born without sin, and he departs without sin, then he wouldn't need a Savior from sin. But the word says otherwise.

The other general meaning is exactly what Moses is referring to here and in each precept of the blessings, that of daily health and vigor. Moses uses the term in this way in a few more chapters –

“Then Moses went and spoke these words to all Israel. <sup>2</sup>And he said to them: ‘I *am* one hundred and twenty years old today. I can no longer go out and come in.’” Deuteronomy 31:1, 2

Joshua repeats the idea as well –

“As yet I *am as* strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength *was* then, so now *is* my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in.” Joshua 14:11

The meaning is that in one's coming in, there will be strength and vitality within the walls of one's home. There will be joy, health for the family, contentment, peace, and so on. And in one's going out, there will be health and vigor, and there will be strength for the day's labors.

<sup>7</sup> **“The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face;**

The words are active and alive: *yiten Yehovah eth oyevekha ha'qamim alekha nigapim l'phanekha* – “He shall give, Yehovah, your enemies – the risers against you – they are struck before your face.”

This would explain the “going out” for those in battle. Israel is blessed in their going out by having the Lord give their enemies into their hands so that they will be struck. So great will be the confusion that...

<sup>7 (con't)</sup> **they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways.**

*b'derek ekhad yeseu elekha u-b'shivah derakim yanasu l'phanekha* – “In way one they shall come out against you, and in seven ways they shall flee before your face.” The idea is that they will come against Israel as a united fighting force, but they shall be broken, confused, and with their tails between their legs as they flee away.

This explains the “coming in.” The enemy will be scattered before Israel, and Israel’s return to the camp will be victorious, joyous, and peaceful. Next...

### **<sup>8</sup> “The LORD will command the blessing**

*yesav Yehovah itekha eth ha'berakhah* – “May command Yehovah on you the blessing.” The first word is a jussive. It is a sort of indirect command. Moses is calling for the Lord to bless Israel in their obedience. This call out is for it to be...

### **<sup>8 (con't)</sup> on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand,**

A new word found just twice, is introduced here, *asam*. It refers to a barn. It comes from a root meaning “to heap together.” Solomon says –

“Honor the LORD with your possessions,  
And with the firstfruits of all your increase;  
<sup>10</sup> So your **barns** will be filled with plenty,  
And your vats will overflow with new wine.” Proverbs 3:9, 10

The words of this clause are again set as a contrast. The blessing is to come for Israel, as it says, “in your barns, and in all stretch your hand.” In other words, it is referring to “the income and the expenditure” (Ellicott).

That which comes into the barn will be blessed. It will be plenty, of good quality, and so on. And that which is purchased will be of good quality, useful, and so on. In this state, Moses says...

### **<sup>8 (con't)</sup> and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.**

The meaning of this is a personal blessing upon the individual. It speaks of permanence in one’s abode, possessions, life, and health. Rather than uncertainty and constant unease, there will be stability and a life that is happy and carefree. And more...

*With blessing I shall bless you  
And you shall be blessed by Me  
When you are careful to observe and to do  
You shall be blessed by Me abundantly*

*Follow that path that will lead you to Me  
And do not turn left nor right  
Be persistent in following this path diligently  
Keep Me in the center of your sight*

*Oh Israel, the blessing is waiting for you  
If you will just heed the word that I have spoken  
Follow the path that leads to life anew  
And I will heal the hearts, desolate and broken*

## **II. To Right or Left (verses 9-14)**

<sup>9</sup> **“The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself,**

*yeqimekha Yehovah lo, I'am qadosh* – “Will raise up you Yehovah to Himself, to people holy.” The word *qum* means to raise up or to stand. It can convey two different thoughts. One is that of permanence. That is how the Jewish writers take this. “We have been established as holy and it is a permanent state.”

The other is that of being raised up into a particular position whether it is permanent or not. Another word, *kun*, will certainly indicate the latter, and it is used along with *qum* when speaking of the permanent establishment of the setting up of Christ’s kingdom.

“And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled, when you must go *to be* with your fathers, that **I will set up (qum)** your seed after you, who will be of your sons; and **I will establish (kun)** his kingdom.” 1 Chronicles 17:11

The latter meaning, not necessarily indicating permanence, must be referred to here. The reason for this is that Moses has already declared Israel holy –

“For you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.” Deuteronomy 7:6

And yet the Lord has also said that they would be holy and special to Him based upon obedience –

“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine. <sup>6</sup> And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.”

-Exodus 19:5, 6

This was discussed in detail in Deuteronomy 7:6, explaining how Israel is set apart (holy) to the Lord even if they are disobedient (unholy) before Him.

In the case of the words here, the blessings, and the promise of being raised up as a holy people to Himself will not be realized if they are disobedient to the law. That is made perfectly clear in verse 1 where it is conditional –

“Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth.”

The Jewish scholars and rabbis unfortunately take what is conditional, meaning being a holy people to the Lord (being in a right standing before the Lord), and incorrectly apply it to themselves as a people, meaning being holy before the Lord, regardless as to how they conduct their lives.

This attitude is then accepted by the people at large. I have a Jewish friend that believes heaven is guaranteed for Jews regardless as to how they live their lives. This is the error that has permeated their thinking all along. To understand this, we can look at the various positions in which they might stand –

- 1) Holy to the Lord as a people because of the covenant promises (positional), but unholy to the Lord because of disobedience to His commands (moral).
- 2) Holy to the Lord as a people because of the covenant promises, regardless as to whether they are obedient to the His commands or not (positional only).
- 3) Holy to the Lord as a people because of the covenant promises (positional), and holy to the Lord because of obedience to His commands (moral).
- 4) Unholy to the Lord because of disobedience to His commands (moral only).

The first is how Israel has been for most of their history. The Lord set them apart as holy, regardless as to whether they are right with Him or not. It is the state in which they now (as a people) exist. They are set apart to God (positional) despite their unfaithfulness (moral) –

“Concerning the gospel *they are* enemies for your sake, but concerning the election *they are* beloved for the sake of the fathers. <sup>29</sup> For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” Romans 11:28, 29

The second option is how Israel see themselves. They are holy to the Lord because of the covenant (positional), and so they don't need to worry about the commands – all is good in the end. Amos shows the end of such people –

“I overthrew *some* of you,  
As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah,  
And you were like a firebrand plucked from the burning;  
Yet you have not returned to Me,”  
Says the LORD.  
<sup>12</sup> “Therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel;  
Because I will do this to you,  
Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!” Amos 4:11, 12

When the Lord says, “Prepare to meet your God,” He is not speaking about a Sunday picnic. To be fair, and just so no one thinks I'm picking on the Jews, this idea permeates various bodies, and in varying degrees, within Christianity as well.

Many Roman Catholics, for example, think they are going to heaven because they were baptized into the Roman Catholic Church. They should probably reconsider or... prepare to meet their God on rather unfriendly terms. There will be no fist bumping on that day.

The third option, holy in both a positional and moral sense, has almost never been Israel's condition. There are times recorded in the Old Testament that it could be argued this was the case, but those are tenuous at best and few and far between.

This state will finally and forever be realized, however, when they call out to receive Christ Jesus during the tribulation period, and then as they serve Him during the millennial kingdom. This is seen in the words of Isaiah –

Indeed the LORD has proclaimed  
To the end of the world:  
“Say to the daughter of Zion,  
‘Surely your salvation is coming;  
Behold, His reward *is* with Him,  
And His work before Him.’”  
<sup>12</sup> And they shall call them The Holy People,  
The Redeemed of the LORD;  
And you shall be called Sought Out,  
A City Not Forsaken. Isaiah 62:11, 12

Those who hold to the fourth option are as unscholarly as those who hold to the second, but unfortunately governments, religions, and even churches around the world are filled with such people.

They reject Israel of today as being set apart to God (position), they reject that there is any future role for them in the world or in God’s economy and dispensations, and they believe that either Israel must be eradicated, or that they (meaning replacement theology) have – instead – replaced Israel. Micah speaks of such –

“Now also many nations have gathered against you,  
Who say, ‘Let her be defiled,  
And let our eye look upon Zion.’  
<sup>12</sup> But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD,  
Nor do they understand His counsel;  
For He will gather them like sheaves to the threshing floor.” Micah 4:11, 12

As you can see, the status of Israel is complicated. And their position before the Lord is both conditional and it is unconditional, depending on what is being evaluated. For this verse in Deuteronomy, it is a conditional raising up of Israel based on their obedience to the commands of the Lord. He will do this...

<sup>9</sup> (con’t) **just as He has sworn to you,**

The Lord will raise up Israel and uphold the surety of pouring out these promised blessings upon them. This is a certainty because the Lord has sworn. However, it is only...

<sup>9</sup> (con’t) **if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways.**



Again, the Hebrew reads “when” not “if.” And saying “when” is simply a shortened way of saying “according to.” In other words, these things will be a response to the keeping of His commandments, and of walking in His ways.

“How much prosperity and blessing can you handle? It will come forth according to how you first respond to Me. With each step forward, there will be blessing. With each step back, there will be a diminishing of it.” Again, to Amos 4 –

“I also withheld rain from you,  
When *there were* still three months to the harvest.  
I made it rain on one city,  
I withheld rain from another city.  
One part was rained upon,  
And where it did not rain the part withered.  
<sup>8</sup>So two *or* three cities wandered to another city to drink water,  
But they were not satisfied;  
Yet you have not returned to Me,”  
Says the LORD. Amos 4:7, 8

However, if the commandments are obeyed, and if the people walk in the ways of the Lord...

**<sup>10</sup> Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD,**

The Hebrew is more personal, saying: *ki shem Yehovah niqra alekha* – “that the name of Yehovah is called upon you.” It is as if the name of Yehovah has alighted upon them. Or as if a husband has cast his name upon his bride.

In the pouring out of the blessings, and in the raising up of the people, it would be evident to all peoples that He is their Master, and they are His people. Of this having the name of the Lord called upon them, the Pulpit Commentary incorrectly (see option 4 mentioned above) states –

“Theirs was the adoption and the glory” (Romans 9:4) - but it was theirs only in symbol and in shadow (Hebrews 10:1); the reality belongs only to the spiritual Israel, and this came to men in all its fullness when he who is “the image of the invisible God” appeared and set up his tent among men, full of grace and truth (John 1:12, 14).” Pulpit Commentary

This is the logic of replacement theology, that Israel is out because of their moral failings, and regardless as to the covenant faithfulness of the Lord. In misciting Hebrews 10, they show the error of the thinking.

It says there that “the law” is a shadow of things to come. Even Israel, under the law, could be equated to that, but not Israel the people to whom the promises were made. That is actually seen when evaluating the next words...

**10 (con’t) and they shall be afraid of you.**

The promise is to Israel, and Jeremiah speaks of the fulfillment of it when referring not to the church, but to Israel –

“I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned and by which they have transgressed against Me. <sup>9</sup>Then it shall be to Me a name of joy, a praise, and an honor before all nations of the earth, who shall hear all the good that I do to them; they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and all the prosperity that I provide for it.” Jeremiah 33:8, 9

Based on the surrounding context in Jeremiah, this promise could only be considered as pertaining to the church by either the poorest of scholars, or by someone who is completely blinded by replacement theology – but I repeat myself.

**11 And the LORD will grant you plenty of goods,**

It is singular – “And the Lord will make you abound for good.” That is then defined by...

**11 (con’t) in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground,**

The words are similar to verse 4 where the Hebrew repeats the words “fruit” three times, “in the fruit of your womb, in the fruit of your livestock, and in the fruit of your ground.” This abundance is the “good” that was just mentioned. And it will be...

**11 (con’t) in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you.**

The same word just used (your ground) is repeated in this clause. It reads, “upon the ground.” Rather than speaking of the land in which the people live, this is speaking of

that which is blessed from the ground, and which results in the good. It is that ground which is produced in the land next described...

**12 The LORD will open to you His good treasure, the heavens,**

*yiphtakh Yehovah lekha eth otsaro ha'tov eth ha'shemayim* – “Will open Yehovah to you treasury the good – the heavens.” There is a new word, *otsar* which refers to a cellar, armory, treasure house, storehouse, etc. Here, the Lord equates the heavens, with their clouds which drop the rains from above, to a treasury.

There is great value when the skies open and the rains come forth. Not only is water needed for life to continue, but as it rains, wealth literally comes forth from the ground. Hence, the term “treasury” is appropriate. All man has to do is to pick or cut that which comes forth, and he can easily increase his own wealth. Having that on a national scale would be the prosperity of Israel. As it next says...

**12 (con't) to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand.**

Here, the word “land” is correct. It is speaking not just of the ground, but the land in which Israel lives. There will be rain in its due season, and from it, Israel will prosper. The hand of Israel, its agricultural effort, will be fruitful and abundant. In such a state, there will be no lack. Rather, there will only be abundance leading to even greater wealth...

**12 (con't) You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.**

The word is *lavah*. It signifies “to join,” coming from a root meaning to twine. Hence, it is signifying the joining of Israel to the nations as lenders. Because of the rich abundance that issues from the ground, there will be so much surplus that they will be able to lend to others without worrying about borrowing.

The idea here is exaltation above those who must submit to them for their livelihood and necessities.

**13 And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail;**

The meaning is obvious. In their obedience, Israel will be the head of the nations, leading the way and ever ready to consume the best of what comes its way. The tail, on

the other hand, is that which lags behind. Abundance, innovation, prosperity, and so on, is all lacking when one is the tail.

Rather than that, Israel is promised to be the chief in privileges, dignity, and might. Next is another, similar, metaphor...

**13 (con't) you shall be above only, and not be beneath,**

It is emphatic: *v'hayita raq la'malah v'lo tiyeh l'mattah* – “and you shall be only [nothing but] to above and no shall you be to beneath.” The words convey the same idea as the previous clause. The emphasis is given to show that it is a certainty that it will be the case. Nothing can stop it from occurring...

**13 (con't) if you heed the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them.**

Rather than “if” it again says “when.” Moses promises that when they act in accord with the commandments of the Lord, being careful to do them, then the Lord will certainly perform as he states.

What Moses says here, and the way the words are put forth does not necessarily confirm the doctrine of divine inspiration as other passages do, but they do present the idea of divine surety.

The Lord could have simply told Moses what He would do for the people, and Moses could just be giving the general sense of it to them, but he would be an utter fool to say, “The Lord will” unless he knew it was to be absolutely so.

Hence, Israel would have every reason to accept that it is so. Even at this point in their history, they had the manna provided to them every day, six days a week, and they also had the cloud by day and the fire by night with them the entire time they traveled.

The evidences of the Lord’s hand upon them, even to the recent plagues that came upon them for the matter of Peor where the people transgressed, demonstrated to them that the Lord was there, and also that Moses was authorized to speak on His behalf.

As such, there is the absolute sense of divine surety that what Moses conveys will come to pass. Therefore...

**<sup>14</sup> So you shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day,**

The words go to the plural for just one word out of the entire passage today, “which I command you (plural).” Either Moses has changed the address here to ensure that all of Israel understands that they must be obedient, even as one people, or the text is in error because several other manuscripts keep this in the singular.

Either way, however, the charge to Israel is to keep on the straight path. The one way is obedience and resulting blessing, while any other way will withhold the blessings from them. As such...

**<sup>14 (con't)</sup> to the right or the left,**

The Hebrew is simpler – right or left. There wasn't to be any deviation at all. All eyes forward, and keep the feet in step, one after the other. The law belongs to the Lord. It is the one path to a right relationship with Him. To turn off that path is...

**\*<sup>14 (fin)</sup> to go after other gods to serve them.**

It reads, “to walk after other gods.” Obedience to the law is equated to a walk with the Lord. Thus, to deviate from the law is to then walk with another. One must actively choose who he will follow and whom he will serve.

To break the law, in any point, is to break the entire law. That is why the promised blessings end with this warning which is a violation of the First Commandment. Whether a god of wood or stone, or simply the god of self, to deviate from the law is immediately equated to going after other gods.

There are great, plentiful, and sure blessings that are promised for obedience to the Lord. But what is coming in the next verses of this chapter will be considered, in minute and mournful detail, as to what will come upon the people if they turn away from this right path.

This law, a seeming friend with its wondrous promises of blessing and abundance, is shown to also be an enemy in the sense that it works against the inner nature of man. There is a corruption in us that keeps us from being able to do those things that are expected of us in the law. As such, the law itself – even with such wonderful promises – inevitably brings a curse upon us.

Paul, in particular, discusses this. He was a teacher of the law. He was trained in what it said. And yet, he failed to see this until his eyes were opened to what it means to be truly obedient to God. When he came to the realization that the Messiah had to come and take the penalty of the law upon Himself, it changed him wholly and forever.

He no longer looked at the law as a way of showing how good he was before God. Rather, he found that the law demonstrates how utterly sinful our sin is to God. This is the lesson of the many years of Israel under the law, and this is the enormity of the grace of God that not only forgives our transgressions, but who does so through the work of His own perfect Son.

What are the blessings of the law? Without God's provision in Christ, they are nothing. The inability of Israel to receive them for more than even a fleeting moment in all of their history demonstrates that without Christ Jesus, all blessing is temporary and short-lived, and we are only left with God's curse.

But in the cross of Calvary, we see God's curse, in its highest sense, in the dead body of Christ. All of the sin of mankind was placed upon Him to absolve us of our wrongdoing. And in His burial, all of that sin is placed in the grave – once and forever.

In His coming forth in triumph over the grave, He also came forth in triumph – for us – over sin. Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ our Lord who has removed the curse so that there is only blessing left. Yes. Thank God for Jesus Christ our Lord. Hallelujah and Amen.

**Closing Verse:** *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,<sup>4</sup> just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,<sup>5</sup> having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,<sup>6</sup> to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.” Ephesians 1:3-6*

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 28:15-29 *It's like being on the good or bad side of nurses, yes... it is true!* (The Blessings and the Curses, Part II) (78<sup>th</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

## The Blessings and the Curses, Part I

“Now it shall come to pass  
If you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God  
-----He of infinite worth  
To observe carefully all His commandments which I  
-----command you today  
That the LORD your God will set you high above all nations  
-----of the earth

And all these blessings  
Shall come upon you and overtake you  
Because you obey the voice of the LORD your God  
And all of these commandments you do

“Blessed shall you be in the city, it is true  
And blessed shall you be in the country too

“Blessed shall be the fruit of your body  
The produce of your ground and the increase of your herds  
The increase of your cattle  
And the offspring of your flocks; none of your kids shall  
-----turn out nerds

“Blessed shall be your basket  
And your kneading bowl, no doubt  
“Blessed shall you be when you come in  
And blessed shall you be when you go out

“The LORD will cause your enemies  
Who rise against you to be defeated before your face  
They shall come out against you one way  
And flee before you seven ways from that place

“The LORD will command the blessing on you  
In your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand  
And He will bless you in the land  
Which the LORD your God is giving you, things will be grand

“The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself  
Just as He has sworn to you  
If you keep the commandments of the LORD your God  
And walk in His ways as instructed to do

Then all peoples of the earth shall see  
That you are called – yes, it is true  
By the name of the LORD  
And they shall be afraid of you

And the LORD will grant you plenty of goods  
In the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock too  
And in the produce of your ground  
In the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you

The LORD will open to you His good treasure  
The heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season  
-----lots of joy and no sorrow  
And to bless all the work of your hand  
You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow

And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail  
You shall be above only, and not be beneath – no haw or hem  
If you heed the commandments of the LORD your God  
Which I command you today, and are careful to observe them

So you shall not turn aside from any of the words  
Which I command you this day, from them you shall not swerve  
To the right or the left  
To go after other gods, them to serve

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise



Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## **Deuteronomy 28:15-29** **(The Blessings and the Curses, Part II)**

Last week, we saw the promised blessings that Moses said would come upon the people if they simply paid heed to his words and obeyed the Lord. He gave the sure and great promises that they would be exalted, prosperous, and filled.

And in their history, this did come upon them at times. But the main thing to consider is that even when they strayed, they still remained. He brought judgments upon them, but He never allowed them to be utterly swept away.

This demonstrates the amazing patience, longsuffering, and indeed the mercy of the Lord. But there is more to it than that. It also displays the covenant-keeping nature of the Lord. We know this is true because the Lord got so tired of man's rebellion in Genesis that He destroyed all but eight of the entire race.

Through them, He started anew, and through a continued select line of people He slowly revealed His plans and purposes for man. Eventually, He established His covenant with Israel, and He set forth the blessings and the curses noted in our ongoing evaluation of Chapter 28.

**Text Verse:** *“Yet behold, there shall be left in it a remnant who will be brought out, both sons and daughters; surely they will come out to you, and you will see their ways and their doings. Then you will be comforted concerning the disaster that I have brought upon Jerusalem, all that I have brought upon it. <sup>23</sup> And they will comfort you, when you see their ways and their doings; and you shall know that I have done nothing without cause that I have done in it,’ says the Lord God.” Ezekiel 14:22, 23*

We are only beginning a long series of curses in the words we will look at today. But one thing is for sure, Israel failed to do what Moses exhorted them to do. And the curses came following hard after them. And yet, Ezekiel – a priest in exile – notes that the Lord kept a remnant who would be brought out. A remnant signifies continuance.

Paul writes of the remnant of Israel that exists in the church age in Romans 11, and he also notes that a remnant will be saved in Romans 9. The implication is that despite their continued failings, and despite their continued rejection of Christ, Israel continues.

Think it through, if a remnant of Israel will be saved, that means that there will be a much larger Israel for them to be saved from. In other words, Israel continues – whether in obedience or disobedience – to this day. A “remnant” implies a larger whole.

This is what we have in the world today – a people preserved by God, even though they are not right with their God, so that He can keep His covenant promises to them. This is the lesson of the Bible. God is faithful even when we are not.

Great truths such as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. Cursed Shall You Be (verses 15-19)**

**<sup>15</sup> “But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God,**

After all the words of blessing in the first fourteen verses, these words now carry their own highly ominous tone, even before the rest of the verse is uttered. Notice the immediate contrast to what it says in verse 1 –

1. “And it shall be if hearing, you hear in voice Yehovah your God.”
15. “And it shall be if not you hear in voice Yehovah your God.”

In verse 1, there was an emphasis, “if hearing you hear.” Now, it only says, “if not you hear.” One can sense that there is a disregard of the emphasis, and there is instead not even a lackadaisical hearing of what the Lord says. If they so fail...

**<sup>15 (con’t)</sup> to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today,**

The words are identical to the corresponding clause, but with one addition –

1. “to observe carefully all His commandments”
15. “to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes”

Moses adds in *v’khuqotav*, or “and His statutes.” This is an enactment, or something prescribed.” One might say, “an ordinance.” For example, the Passover is called such in Exodus 12:14. All commands are to be obeyed, and all ordinances are to be adhered to. If Israel fails in this, then it shall be...

15 (con't) **that all these curses**

The word translated as “curse,” *qelalah*, is the same as that used in the previous chapter when the blessings and the curses were to be proclaimed upon Mt. Ebal. It signifies “vilification.” However, this is not referring to the curses mentioned there. Rather, it speaks of what is to be stated in the coming verses. Moses says that it is these that...

15 (con't) **will come upon you and overtake you:**

The words are identical to the corresponding words of verse 2 with two exceptions. The word “blessings” is substituted with the word “curses,” and the word translated as “and overtake you” is spelled with an additional letter, a *vav*, in this verse now.

*Vav* is the sixth letter. It is the number of man, especially fallen man. In picture, a *vav* is a tent peg. The meaning of *vav* is “add,” “secure,” or “hook.” One can only speculate here, but with the total number of curses set forth in contrast to the number of blessings, it appears that what will “overtake” Israel will be added to greatly.

It is probably not coincidence that the judgment for Israel’s (and our) sins is especially highlighted in the darkness that covered the earth beginning with the sixth hour when Jesus was on the cross. In Matthew 27:45, it says, “Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land.”

The innocent Man, took the judgment of the curses which fell upon fallen man. This additional *vav* may be an anticipatory hint of what was coming in the ministry of Christ.

As far as the sins overtaking Israel, exactly that is what is spoken of towards the end of the Old Testament, as testified to by Zechariah –

“Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets preached, saying,  
‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Turn now from your evil ways and your evil deeds.”’  
But they did not hear nor heed Me,” says the LORD.

<sup>5</sup> “Your fathers, where *are* they?

And the prophets, do they live forever?

<sup>6</sup> Yet surely My words and My statutes,  
Which I commanded My servants the prophets,  
Did they not overtake your fathers?

“So they returned and said:

‘Just as the LORD of hosts determined to do to us,  
According to our ways and according to our deeds,  
So He has dealt with us.’”” Zechariah 1:4-6

It is not as if Moses didn’t warn the people. They just failed to pay heed. For now, Moses begins with the curses...

**<sup>16</sup> “Cursed *shall you be* in the city, and cursed *shall you be* in the country.**

The words of verses 16-19 are the antitheses of what was stated in verses 3-6. It is a six-fold repetition of the word “cursed.” Like the blessings, the number of curses is more than six. These are a short summary that will be expanded upon afterwards.

Here, Moses uses the word *arar*. It is a verb that signifies to bitterly curse. Using this word, Moses says they will be cursed in both the city and the country – literally, the field. As such, this covers domestic employment, that of industry inside the walls of the city, and that which is agricultural, or outside of them.

They are warned that all areas where Israel puts its hands to work, the work of their hands will be cursed. The words here are identical, letter to letter, to verse 3, except “blessed” is changed to “cursed.” Next...

**<sup>17</sup> “Cursed *shall be* your basket and your kneading bowl.**

Moses now swaps the blessings of verses 4 and 5. Verse 5 corresponds to this verse now. If you remember from the previous sermon, probably what is meant by Moses is that –

- 1) the basket that carries the first of the produce is emblematic of all of the harvest. As the firsts are be cursed, so will be the entire harvest. It will fail miserably.
- 2) the bowl that is used for making bread (the staff of life) will fail to be filled, implying famine. In other words, there will always be people hungry and malnourished by the lack of food as only empty containers sit before them.

Other than the substituted words “blessed” and “cursed,” the verses are identical, letter for letter. Next...

**<sup>18</sup> “Cursed *shall be* the fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.**

In this verse, it is letter for letter identical to verse 4, but with two exceptions. The word “blessed” is substituted with “cursed,” and Moses now leaves off “and the increase of your herds.”

“Blessed *shall be* the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase [lit: fruit] of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.

“Cursed *shall be* the fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.

As such, these are five curses detailing one category, that of reproduction. However, in the Hebrew, the first three are termed “fruit, while the fourth is termed “increase,” and the fifth is termed “offspring.”

The idea is that nothing will bear fruit or increase so that even the few people who may be left to occupy the land will face lack. The land will become wholly unproductive. With that stated, Moses next says...

**<sup>19</sup> “Cursed *shall you be* when you come in, and cursed *shall you be* when you go out.**

Again, the words are identical, letter for letter, to verse 6, only with the exception of replacing “blessed” with “cursed.” As in verse 6, the Hebrew reads, “in your coming in,” and “in your going out.”

The meaning is that in one’s coming in, there will be no strength. There will be the desire to lay down and curl up from the frustrations of life. There will be no joy, no health for the family, no contentment, no peace, and so on.

And in one’s going out, there won’t be enough strength to put one’s hand to the plow (if there is even an animal to pull it). There will be tiredness, deprivation, and want as the eyes look to desolate fields with nothing springing forth.

*With cursing I shall curse you  
And you shall be cursed by Me  
When you fail to observe and to do  
You shall be cursed by Me abundantly*

*You follow a path that doesn’t lead you to Me*

*Instead, you constantly turn either left or right  
You fail to follow My ways diligently  
And to keep Me in the center of your sight*

*Oh Israel, the blessing is waiting for you  
If you would just heed the word that I have spoken  
If only you would follow the path that leads to life anew  
And I would heal the hearts, desolate and broken*

## **II. With Madness and Blindness and Confusion (verses 20-29)**

<sup>20</sup> **“The LORD will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke**

The translation is sloppy. Definite articles precede nouns, and there is a striking alliteration used by Moses: *Yeshalakh Yehovah bekha eth ha’meerah eth ha’mehumah v’eth ha’migeret* – “Will send Yehovah in you the curse, the confusion, and the criticism.”

I translated it that way to maintain the alliteration which provides a heightened sense of the disaster set to come upon the people. The use of the articles also provides its own marked emphasis. The individual words Moses chose are –

*Meerah*. It is the noun form of the word *arar* that has been repeatedly used in the past few verses. It will be seen just five times. The next time is in Proverbs 3:33, and which perfectly describes what will come upon Israel –

“The *curse* of the LORD *is* on the house of the wicked,  
But He blesses the home of the just.” Proverbs 3:33

The last two times it will be seen are in Malachi 2:2 and 3:9, and which also beautifully fit with the theme which Moses puts forth from his lips at this time.

*Mehumah*. This is its second use. It comes from *hum*, an onomatopoeic word signifying to murmur or roar. The first was in Deuteronomy 7:23, where it speaks of just the opposite. Instead of this being inflicted on Israel when they are disobedient, it will come upon their enemies –

“But the LORD your God will deliver them over to you, and will inflict defeat upon them until they are destroyed.” Deuteronomy 7:23

*Migereth*. This is its only use in the Bible. It comes from the verb *gaar*, meaning to rebuke. Thus, I translated it as “the criticism.” In the use of these three words, Moses is bringing to the highest sense the commotion of life, mind, and attitude that will come upon Israel, and he notes that it will be...

<sup>20</sup> (con’t) **in all that you set your hand to do,**

The words literally state, “in all outstretching your hand which you do.” One can imagine stretching out the hand for grain and bringing back a viper, stretching out the hand for something cold and burning it instead, and stretching out the hand for a bite to eat and having it come back filled with thorns. No matter what is done, only the curse, the confusion, and the criticism responds...

<sup>20</sup> (con’t) **until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly,**

The words are exactly translated here. Moses repeats the word “until” for emphasis, and then he adds in “quickly” to acknowledge that the terror will be sudden and abrupt. And all of this will be, as Moses astonishingly says...

<sup>20</sup> (con’t) **because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken Me.**

*mipene roa maalalekha asher azavtani* – “from face evil your doings which you have forsaken Me.” Moses places His words into the position of the Lord – “you have forsaken Me.” To forsake Moses is to forsake the Lord, and in that, there will be only a curse left behind. The thought is repeated in the Old Testament, where the word of Moses is directly equated to the word of the Lord, such as in 2 Kings –

“In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever; <sup>8</sup> and I will not make the feet of Israel wander anymore from the land which I gave their fathers—only if they are careful to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that My servant Moses commanded them.” 2 Kings 21:7, 8

The idea of forsaking Moses is found in the New Testament when Paul went to Jerusalem to meet with James and the elders. This is found in Acts 21 –

“And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, ‘You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; <sup>21</sup> but they have been informed about you that you teach



all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children nor to walk according to the customs.”

-Acts 21:20, 21

The word there in Acts means “apostasy from Moses.” It is quite clear that there was a misunderstanding by these men of the significance of what Christ had done.

It was evident even from Chapter 10 when Peter went into the house of Cornelius that things had changed, but the leadership was still unable to fully grasp that in coming to Christ, one doesn’t forsake Moses (meaning the Law of Moses), but instead finds the fulfillment and end of Moses.

It is this that the author of Hebrews, most probably Paul, clearly sets down in his epistle. As Moses wrote of Christ (John 5:46), and as he commanded that when Christ came (meaning the Prophet of Chapter 18), the people were to listen to Him. Those who failed to do so would be so judged.

As Christ established a New Covenant in His blood, He rendered the Old (meaning the Law of Moses) obsolete. He annulled it and it is now set aside. As you can see then, to reject Christ is to reject Moses. He is the fulfillment of all that Moses taught.

However, until that time came, the people were to adhere to the law as laid down here. To fail to do so would bring upon them the curses now being set forth. They did fail, and the curses came upon them, exactly as spoken forth by Moses. But their failure to do so also became the lesson for God’s people, the tutor, which is intended to lead us to Christ.

The coming verses further explain the content of verse 20, giving examples of how the Lord would accomplish what is said there. That begins with...

### **<sup>21</sup> The LORD will make the plague cling to you**

*yadbeq Yehovah bekha eth ha’daver* – “May He cause to cling Yehovah in you the pestilence.” Like in verse 8, the first word of the verse is a jussive. It is basically an indirect command. Moses is thus essentially calling out for the Lord to do this in response to Israel’s rebellion.

Moses calls for them to be overtaken by *ha'daver*, or “the pestilence.” It is a noun, *dever*, coming from the word *davar*, meaning to speak. It is as if the spoken word of the Lord will cling to them and consume them, as is next noted...

**21 (con't) until He has consumed you from the land which you are going to possess.**

Here the word is “ground” not “land.” This is not referring to exile, but to death where Israel lives. The connection seems to be that the word of the Lord is as a destroyer. It drives together what it purposes and thus when He speaks, the pestilence issues forth when the people are so driven together. As a contagion, it moves quickly from person to person.

What this pestilence is cannot be known for sure. The Greek rendering of the verse translates it with the generic word “death.” As such, it is something terminal once it affects a person.

That becomes evident through the word translated as “cling,” which signifies to stick like glue. It is a horrifying thought that nothing will remove it and no suitable remedy for it will be found. This is what the Lord specifies as one of His four severe judgments in Ezekiel 14. There it says –

“For thus says the Lord GOD: “How much more it shall be when I send My four severe judgments on Jerusalem—the sword and famine and wild beasts and **pestilence**—to cut off man and beast from it?” Ezekiel 14:21

Jeremiah, in particular, uses this word time and again – more than any other prophet – when referring to the judgment of the Lord upon the people. Such a plague is the expected outcome of high crowding, low nutrition, and unsanitary conditions that would normally be expected during the siege of cities within the land. Next, Moses says...

**22 The LORD will strike you with consumption, with fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever, with the sword, with scorching, and with mildew;**

Here, Moses lists seven horrifying maladies that would come upon the people. Each is prefixed by an article, revealing the specific nature of the calamity. The first is *ba'shakhepheth*, or “in the consumption.” This is the second and final time the word is used. It comes from the word *shakhaph* which is a type of gull. As the gull is a thin bird, the picture is clear – emaciation. The person just wastes away from the disease.

The next is *ba'qadakhath*, or “in the *burning* fever.” This is also the second and final time the word is seen. It is derived from *qadakh*, to kindle.” Thus, it is a febrile disease such as burning augue. The fever will simply burn the person up.

The next is *ba'daleqet* or “in the inflammation.” The word is found only here in the Bible. It comes from the word *dalaq* meaning to burn or to hotly pursue. It is another burning disease, probably more intense than the first, and maybe directed in a different way than the previous, such as the entire body instead of the head. It could also be a type of rapidly consuming cancer.

The next is *ba'kharkhur*, or “in the *violent* burning.” This is also found only this once in Scripture. It comes from the word *kharar*, to be hot or scorched. Thus, if a burning in the body, it is the most extreme of the three categories. In such a state, the vital organs of the person would simply melt from the heated stress on the body.

However, it could also be referring to the burning of the mind. In other words, insanity coming upon a person because of the terrible times that have come upon the people. Thus, it is as if the mind is hotly enraged.

Next, Moses notes *ba'kherev*, or “in the sword.” The sword is another of the four severe judgments noted by Ezekiel. It is worthy of note that the three letters that spell this word can also be translated as “drought,” and that is how the Latin Vulgate, the Arabic, and Samaritan Pentateuch translate this.

As that implies heat, it is a reasonable possibility for what is described here, and it would fit the overall theme of heat well. Further, it is also something that would be attributed as a plague from the Lord directly, rather than indirectly as the sword of an enemy would.

However, as this would be the only time that the sword is mentioned in this chapter, and as it is such a common judgment upon Israel throughout the prophets, “sword” may be the correct rendering.

The next two words are plagues that target the food of the people. The first is *ba'shidaphon*, or “in the scorching.” This is a new word in Scripture, *sh'dephah*. It will be seen six times. It comes from *shadaph*, meaning to scorch or blight. Ye olde King Jimmy Version translates this as “blasting.”

This probably refers to the scorching east winds that are known to come upon the land. Rather than naming the wind itself, it would then refer to the result of what the wind causes. This seems likely based on the use of the word in 2 Kings 19 –

“Therefore their inhabitants had little power;  
They were dismayed and confounded;  
They were *as* the grass of the field  
And the green herb,  
As the grass on the housetops  
And *grain blighted* before it is grown.” 2 Kings 19:26

Next listed is *ba’yeraqon*, or “in the mildew.” This word is new also, and it will also be seen just six times. All but one time, it will be translated along with the previous word. It signifies mildew or paleness, coming from *yereg*, meaning green, greenish, or yellow.

One can get the idea of unhealthy sickliness. It is a paleness whether of people or of plants that indicates the onset of death. Of these, Moses next says...

<sup>22</sup> (con’t) **they shall pursue you until you perish.**

The Lord will send these plagues upon the people, coming hard after them, so that they will be consumed. It may be that He would send them in rapid succession as well, which would certainly bring madness to the minds of the people as they faced the rushing onslaught. And all because they failed to acknowledge the Lord who established them and blessed them.

<sup>23</sup> **And your heavens which *are* over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you *shall be* iron.**

Here, it should say “land” rather than “earth.” It speaks of the state of the entire land given to Israel. It will be under a curse, and it will be unproductive. This is a close repeat of Leviticus 26:19 –

“I will break the pride of your power;  
I will make your heavens like iron and your earth [land] like bronze.”

Moses reverses the metals to show that the punishment will be universal in nature. Of these two metals, bronze represents judgment while iron represents strength, be it in binding together, in government, in hard service, or in bondage.

In this, we see judgment in the sky, meaning barren skies with no clouds or rain, scorching heat radiating down on the people, and so on. This, in turn, will lead to an unyielding earth that is caked and dead. Digging through it to find new sources of water will be like digging through rock itself.

Times of drought are recorded in the Bible, testifying to judgment upon the people, but this was also the state of the land after the Roman exile. In the destruction of the cities, which included Jerusalem and the sanctuary there, the Romans built siege works.

In doing so, they cut down the trees of the land. In this, the natural rain cycles of the land were disrupted. If any rains fell, they were not enough to support crops and produce. This continued on until the return of Israel to the land. In their return, they began planting trees, and the cycle of former and latter rains returned to the land.

Mark Twain spoke of the nature of the land as he passed through it, penning a confirmation of the prophecies uttered forth by Moses. Further, the Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary of 1871 says –

“This want of regular and seasonable rain is allowed by the most intelligent observers to be one great cause of the present sterility of Palestine.”

The Lord spoke directly in Leviticus, and through Moses in Deuteronomy, about these things. As such, the famines of Israel must be ascribed to the deliberate action of the Lord in fulfillment of His word. In continued reference to the state of the land, Moses speaks on...

**<sup>24</sup> The LORD will change the rain of your land to powder and dust;**

With the heavens shut up in judgment, and with the ground without any moisture, any loose soil would turn into powder, and the dust below the topsoil would be exposed. Everything is in a state of complete desiccation. And because of that...

**<sup>24</sup> (con't) from the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed.**

The Hebrew says, “the heavens.” It is an indication that the sky in all directions would be filled with the powder and dust. This is not specifically speaking of the *sharav*, or *khamsin*, winds that often rage over the middle east. Such is a normal occurrence that simply arises and overwhelms the land from time to time. What Moses refers to here is a consequence of the state of the land.

The result of even a normal breeze would be that of constant debris flying about. The desiccated topsoil would be picked up and tossed around, and the dust below it would as well. One would always be covered in a layer of grime as it stuck to the sweat of the body, and there would be no comfort from the grinding of the debris into the skin. A French traveler in the 1600s is cited by Adam Clarke –

“Thevenot, a French traveler, who had observed these showers of dust, etc., says, ‘They grievously annoy all they fall on, filling their eyes, ears, nostrils, etc.’” Adam Clarke

Existence in such a land would be dirty, difficult, and demanding. And it could be avoided if the people would simply pay heed. But the warnings continue to come for those who fail to do so...

**<sup>25</sup> “The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them;**

This is the antithesis of verse 7 –

“The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways.”

Instead of victory, there will be a total routing of Israel. They will head in every direction, utterly defeated by their enemies. Already in Deuteronomy, the Lord has promised to go out with Israel, and to destroy their enemies –

“When you go out to battle against your enemies, and see horses and chariots *and* people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for the LORD your God *is* with you, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.”

-Deuteronomy 20:1

This is now explicitly qualified. The Lord will be with Israel, if Israel is with the Lord, obeying His commands and observing his statutes. To fail means destruction before the foe, and more...

**<sup>25</sup> (con’t) and you shall become troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth.**

Here is a rare word, *zaavah*, it is found only here and in Ezekiel 23:46. It is a transposition of the word *zevaah*, meaning a trembling, or an object of terror. The KJV translates it as “shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.”

This is unlikely. The idea of exile is the highest disgrace and the greatest curse to come upon the people. It will be noted later toward the end of the curses. This now is referring to the state of Israel among the kingdoms.

They will be defeated in battle, and they will then be treated like a football that gets punted between all the kingdoms who oppress them. This is recorded as occurring during their history prior to exile where they were subject to paying tribute to Moab, Assyria, Egypt, and so on. And more...

**<sup>26</sup> Your carcasses shall be food for all the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth,**

The words are singular, and instead of “air” it says, “the heavens” – “And it shall be your carcass to food to every bird *in* the heavens and to *the* beast *of* the earth.” Moses is speaking to Israel in the singular, as a united body that will be subject to the prey of the bird and the beast. The use of the singular draws this out in a notable way. And of these creatures, it says...

**<sup>26 (con't)</sup> and no one shall frighten *them* away.**

Being devoured by animals was considered one of the most ignoble ways to die. So much so that we read this account at the time of King David when the sons of a woman were put to death before the Lord –

“Now Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it for herself on the rock, from the beginning of harvest until the late rains poured on them from heaven. And she did not allow the birds of the air to rest on them by day nor the beasts of the field by night.” 2 Samuel 21:10

This woman would not allow the beasts to eat her sons, because she understood the significance of the curse Moses speaks of now. On the other hand, Israel was promised again by Jeremiah that this fate would befall them as he repeated the same words that Moses uses in this verse –

“And the carcase of this people hath been for food To a fowl of the heavens, and to a beast of the earth, And there is none troubling.” Jeremiah 7:33 YLT

Because of their unfaithfulness to the Lord, the curse of Moses was set to come upon them. Along with this, Moses next says...

**27 The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab, and with the itch,**

Moses now speaks of four separate afflictions. The first is the *shekhin*, or boil. It is singular in the Hebrew, thus designating a class of boil – the “boil of Egypt.” It is an eruption of the skin. It is what Job had all over his body, and it is what Hezekiah had, but which was cured by applying a poultice of figs.

The next is the *ophel*, or tumor. The word *ophel* means “a mound,” or “a hill.” Thus, it is that which mounds up on the body. The KJV takes it as a specific type of mound using the archaic word *emerod*, or a hemorrhoid.

After that, is noted the *garav*, or scab. This is its third and last use in the Bible. It comes from a root meaning “to scratch” as from itching, and so it is a painful affliction of the skin.

Finally, is the *kheres*, or itch. This is a new word that will only be seen four times. The other three times, it will be translated as the “sun.” James Strong thinks the connection may be that of scraping oneself with a potsherd which is round, resembling the sun. I would think it is an affliction of the skin, like prurigo, that resembles the sun, being bright red, or orange, and round.

Of these four terrible afflictions, Moses says...

**27 (con't) from which you cannot be healed.**

When the affliction sets in, it will be because the hand of the Lord sent it. It will occur at a time when the land is devoid of proper medicines due to scarcity, and it will be an affliction that so many people have that it will become endemic in the society. Along with these terrors...

**28 The LORD will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of heart.**

In addition to the physical just mentioned, come more afflictions of the body and the mind. The first is *shigaon*. It is a new word signifying madness or furiousness. It will be seen in 2 Kings 9:20, where a person drives his chariot in furiousness, and again in



Zechariah 12 where the Lord promises to strike every horse with confusion and every rider with madness during a future battle –

“‘In that day,’ says the LORD, ‘I will strike every horse with confusion, and its rider with **madness**; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness.’” Zechariah 12:4

The next word Moses uses is *ivaron*. It signifies blindness, and it will be seen only one more time, also in Zechariah 12:4 –

“‘In that day,’ says the LORD, ‘I will strike every horse with confusion, and its rider with madness; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with **blindness**.’” Zechariah 12:4

This is probably Moses’ way of referring to blindness of the mind, thus matching the other two afflictions which are mental, rather than physical torments.

The third affliction is *timahon* – it is also a new word signifying astonishment or consternation, coming from *tamah*, meaning to be astounded or dumbfounded.

In this, it will be *l’vav*, or “to heart.” Thus, it signifies a confusion of the mind’s ability to reason out what is happening. This word will also be seen only one more time, and it will also be in Zechariah 12:4 –

“‘In that day,’ says the LORD, ‘I will strike every horse with **confusion**, and its rider with madness; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness.’” Zechariah 12:4

One can see that in the great battle in the end of days, the Lord will take the same vengeance against His enemies that Moses now promises will be brought against Israel. The Lord is perfectly fair and just in how He executes His judgments upon or for Israel, depending on how they respond to His word. Finally, we read...

**<sup>29</sup> And you shall grope at noonday, as a blind man gropes in darkness;**

As the previous verse referred to mental impairment, this follows along with that. The sun at noonday is when everything is the clearest. The shadows are almost nonexistent. But just as a blind man gropes in the darkness of his eyes, Israel would grope for clarity and a remedy for the trouble they faced.

And yet, no remedy will be found. There will only be an inability to rise above the helpless state in which they find themselves...

**29 (con't) you shall not prosper in your ways;**

One could think of a country with spiraling debt, hyperinflation, and facing a total economic meltdown. They would grope for an answer to the situation, but no matter what they did, the result was always that things got worse, not better.

This is the state that Moses promises Israel will face when they reject the Lord. No matter what way they take, and no matter what option they choose, they will only face a worsening of their crisis. In such a state...

**29 (con't) you shall be only oppressed and plundered continually,**

Without the ability to correctly evaluate a situation, there is no way to correctly perform in order to alleviate it. Therefore, those who take prey in such a situation will do so to Israel. It is reflective of the words of Judges 6 –

“Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years, <sup>2</sup> and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made for themselves the dens, the caves, and the strongholds which *are* in the mountains. <sup>3</sup> So it was, whenever Israel had sown, Midianites would come up; also Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. <sup>4</sup> Then they would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor donkey. <sup>5</sup> For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, coming in as numerous as locusts; both they and their camels were without number; and they would enter the land to destroy it. <sup>6</sup> So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD.” Judges 6:1-6

Until Israel is hemmed in and plundered enough, they would keep their necks stiff and their hearts unyielding, but when things would get bad enough, they would cry out to the Lord for deliverance. This is the way it has been, and this is the way it will continue to be. Until they come to Him, Moses warns...

**\*29 (fin) and no one shall save you.**

The Hebrew reads: *v'ain movoshia* – “And no savior for you.” Apart from the Lord, Israel has no savior. Moses promises them that if they depart from Him, salvation will not be found. Only in seeking Him out will deliverance be possible.

But this is the lesson that permeates Scripture concerning all humanity. Adam rejected the word of the Lord. In this, woe and affliction came upon him. That has continued unabated in human history. Israel was given as a lesson for humanity, and that lesson is ongoing today.

Their rejection of Christ has brought people from all over the world to the place where salvation is found. Until Israel wises up and seeks the Lord they once crucified, their troubles will continue unabated. The fact that they are back in the land and seemingly doing ok does not in any way mean that things are ok for them.

They are being brought to the point where they will, as a nation, face the possibility of utter destruction. And that is written in their own Scriptures. That would not happen if they were right with the Lord, and so the curse for them is ongoing.

Until they acknowledge what they have done, and until they make it right by calling out to Christ for deliverance, they will not prosper as a people. In seeing this, and in understanding it, this should clue each of us in all the more to the fact that we each, just as Israel as a nation, need Jesus.

If the blessing and curses toward Israel are true, and if Jesus Christ is the focus of them coming, and because Jesus has been presented to the world as its one and only Messiah, then we must pay heed. This is the story of Israel. It is a story for each of us to learn from. And so may you learn it today – to the glory of the Lord who is the Giver of every good blessing, or of the finality of man through the curse.

**Closing Verse:** *“This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’<sup>12</sup> Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:11, 12*

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 28:30-37 *When they open their purses, they will be empty...* (The Blessings and the Curses, Part III) (79<sup>th</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of

Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

## **The Blessings and the Curses, Part II**

“But it shall come to pass  
If you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God  
-----pay heed, my words are true  
To observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes  
-----which I command you today  
That all these curses will come upon you and overtake you

“Cursed shall you be in the city  
And cursed shall you in the country be

“Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl  
“Cursed shall be the fruit of your body  
-----and the produce of your land  
The increase of your cattle  
And the offspring of your flocks as well, please understand

“Cursed shall you be when you come in, without a doubt  
And cursed shall you be when you go out

“The LORD will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke  
In all that you set your hand to do, so shall it be  
Until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly  
Because of the wickedness of your doings in which  
-----you have forsaken Me

The LORD will make the plague cling to you  
So to you I address  
Until He has consumed you from the land  
Which you are going to possess

The LORD will strike you with consumption  
With fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever too  
With the sword, with scorching, and with mildew  
They shall pursue you until you perish – even you

And your heavens which are over your head shall be bronze  
And the earth which is under you shall be iron  
-----such a state will be employed  
The LORD will change the rain of your land to powder and dust  
From the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed

“The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies  
You shall go out one way against them, hightailing it off to Perth  
And flee seven ways before them  
And you shall become troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth

Your carcasses shall be  
Food for all the birds of the air, so to you I say  
And the beasts of the earth  
And no one shall frighten them away

The LORD will strike you  
With the boils of Egypt, that plague will be unsealed  
With tumors, with the scab, and with the itch  
From which you cannot be healed

The LORD will strike you with madness  
----- (and that is just the start)  
And blindness and confusion of heart

And you shall grope at noonday, as a blind man  
-----gropes in darkness  
You shall not prosper in your ways, this much is true  
You shall be only oppressed and plundered continually  
And no one shall save you

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise

Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## **Deuteronomy 28:30-37** **(The Blessings and the Curses, Part III)**

This is our third Deuteronomy 28 sermon, and the second involving the curses that would be laid upon Israel for their failure to heed the word of the Lord and to honor Him as He has set forth. These are words of tragedy, terror, loss, destruction, anguish, and horror.

And yet, if one looks at them in the proper light, they are words of victory and of the enormity of what God has done in Christ. They drip with the richness of His power, ability, and capability.

While typing the sermon you are now presented with, which was on 13 September 2021, I was so elated after typing the first verse that I did something I rarely do. I stopped and sent it to Sergio.

This is something I don't like doing, meaning sharing sermon content before the thing is presented. This is for several reasons, but one is simply that I want the presentation to not be spoiled for people by their own reading or hearing what I have to present.

You know I get excited by sermon content, and I often stop with the written notes and add in all kinds of comments off the top of my head during the sermon. That will not have the same force or impact if what is presented on Sunday has already been shared with someone.

Along with that, I can think of probably 3-5 reasons that I don't want to share content in advance. But with such a mournful passage, and yet with such a delightful anticipation of Christ presented, even in the very first verse, I felt like exploding with joy. And so, I shared it...

**Text Verse:** *"Oh, how I love Your law!*

*It is my meditation all the day.*

<sup>98</sup> *You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies;*

*For they are ever with me.*

<sup>99</sup> *I have more understanding than all my teachers,*

*For Your testimonies are my meditation." Psalm 119:97-99*

None of my instructors, meaning the commentators I read each week for sermon information, will normally make the connections to the Lord that are so obviously staring at us when the words are carefully considered.

At times, John Gill will come up with some Christological connection, but he will often take it down the wrong path, so you have to be careful with his thoughts. But they may be just right enough to send you down the correct avenue.

This is, although much less so, at times true with the others I refer to. They are very good at mechanical analyses of what is going on, and also of historical truths that relate to whatever is said. But more than anything, and I am certain of this, the Lord wants us to find how Scripture points to Christ directly, or how what He has done now includes us, or even Israel of the future.

In other words, the highest form of analyzing the Old Testament Scriptures is found in typology. Jesus and the apostles hint at this in Luke 24:27, John 5:39 and John 5:46, Acts 8:35, and so on. The epistles reveal this to us as well when the apostles take actual examples of Scripture and equate them directly to Christ, or spiritual truths relating to Christ.

Paul says the Rock in the wilderness was Christ. He says Christ is our Passover Lamb, a sentiment repeated through comparison by Peter and John, Paul equates Sarah and Hagar as the two covenants in Galatians 4, demonstrating how what Christ has done is superior to the Mosaic code.

On and on it goes. This is the heart of what God has placed into the living word. It is what causes the life to pulse through it and take form, and it is the Spirit that brings it to life! This is the highest form of interpretation, if we can accurately place it into words.

When Sergio received the comment from our first verse (verse 30), he said, "WOW. WHAT A PICTURE OF CHRIST and HIS BRIDE!" He then noted Rhoda's excitement about it too. But not wanting to spoil the rest of the sermon, and yet keep them excited about wanting to know more when it is published, a few minutes later, I added in "More Christ in 31! What a treasure."

Yes, great treasure is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.



## I. Oppressed and Crushed Continually (verses 30-34)

<sup>30</sup> **“You shall betroth a wife, but another man shall lie with her;**

The three clauses of this verse, though seemingly random thoughts, are actually part of one thought process. The first is that of the destruction of a coming marriage, one that has already gone through the betrothal process.

The Hebrew will, at times, have a written form, and then a form that is spoken audibly when the verse is read. The written form of these words is much more violent, saying, “You shall betroth a wife, but another man shall ravish her.”

It is a new word in Scripture, *shagel*, signifying “to violate,” or “to ravish.” Thus, the idea is of her being forcibly taken away and raped. The other three uses of the word are found in Isaiah 13:16, Jeremiah 3:2, and Zechariah 14:2.

The sentiment being conveyed is obvious. There will be horror for every betrothed couple. For the man, there will be no joy of marriage, and for the woman, there will be the terror of being violated, accompanied by all of the negatives associated with such treatment – captivity, sexual bondage, carrying the child of an invader, or even being raped, tortured, and killed.

The man had made plans and designs for this wife, but they are to be robbed from him. And more...

<sup>30</sup> (con’t) **you shall build a house, but you shall not dwell in it;**

The idea of building a house is that of preparing for married life. In a betrothal contract, the girl’s father will want her to be tended to in a proper fashion. As such, he may say, “Yes, you can have my daughter, but you need to have suitable accommodations for her before you receive her. It is the thought of Jesus’ words to his followers –

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. <sup>2</sup> In My Father’s house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. <sup>4</sup> And where I go you know, and the way you know.” John 14:1-5

The Lord’s people are His betrothed, as Paul explicitly says in 2 Corinthians 11:2 –

“For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ.”

As such, Christ is preparing a place for His betrothed. When He is ready and when she is ready (Romans 11:25), Christ will return to consummate the marriage. For disobedient Israel, the hopes of such a time of joy will be taken from them by their foes. But more...

<sup>30</sup> (con't) **you shall plant a vineyard, but shall not gather its grapes.**

This must be paraphrased to understand what is being conveyed. It reads: *kerem tita v'lo tekhalenu* – “vineyard you shall plant, and no you shall eat as common.” The verb *khalal* signifies to bore or pierce, and thus to begin. But it is also frequently translated as “profane.” The idea here is that of the dedication of fruit to the Lord –

“When you come into the land, and have planted all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as uncircumcised. Three years it shall be as uncircumcised to you. *It* shall not be eaten. <sup>24</sup> But in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy, a praise to the LORD. <sup>25</sup> And in the fifth year you may eat its fruit, that it may yield to you its increase: I *am* the LORD your God.” Leviticus 19:23-25

The word is explicitly stated in Deuteronomy 20 –

“Also what man *is there* who has planted a vineyard and **has not eaten of it**? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man eat of it.” Deuteronomy 20:6

The man cannot eat of the fruit until the set time, lest he profane it. Thus, he can begin to eat once that period is complete because the fruit has gone from holy to the Lord to common.

In this, the man has his wife picked out and the betrothal is arranged. He is building his house for their home. Further, he has arranged for income, food, and joy through the planting of a vineyard.

They anticipated having raisins, wine, and surplus to sell. But only after the fruit has gone through its dedication process. Until then, he will not partake of the “wine *that* makes glad the heart of man” (Psalm 104:15).

This process would have been followed by those, still under the law, at Jesus' time. His parable of the vinedressers becomes clearer when taken in relation to this precept –

“A certain man planted a vineyard, leased it to vinedressers, and went into a far country for a long time. <sup>10</sup> Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the vinedressers beat him and sent *him* away empty-handed. <sup>11</sup> Again he sent another servant; and they beat him also, treated *him* shamefully, and sent *him* away empty-handed. <sup>12</sup> And again he sent a third; and they wounded him also and cast *him* out.

<sup>13</sup> “Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Probably they will respect *him* when they see him.’ <sup>14</sup> But when the vinedressers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.’ <sup>15</sup> So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed *him*. Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do to them? <sup>16</sup> He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others.” Luke 20:9-17

This then helps make understandable the words of the Lord just prior to His crucifixion –

Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, “Take this and divide *it* among yourselves; <sup>18</sup> for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” Luke 22:17, 18

The betrothed of the Lord is being prepared, the house is being built, and the vineyard is set apart as holy to the Lord. Someday, what Israel is denied because of disobedience, the Lord will receive in its fulness because of His obedience.

As for Israel, the verse conveys the utter futility of the situation. If the house is built, and if the vineyard has fruit that can be eaten, then he has gone through all of the time, expectation, and labors of starting out his life with his betrothed. And yet, all of it will be taken from him.

<sup>31</sup> **Your ox shall be slaughtered before your eyes, but you shall not eat of it;**

The literal truth of this is terrible. The ox is an animal that has productive value for work on the land. This would be robbed of disobedient Israel. The labors would be multiplied greatly in plowing the fields.

But oxen are also clean animals used for food, lots of it, and which are of a healthy nature. It is an animal that could be used for feeding a large party of friends at a festive gathering, like a feast day or a wedding. And this is what Jesus refers to in Matthew –

“And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: <sup>2</sup> ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, <sup>3</sup> and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. <sup>4</sup> Again, he sent out other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle *are* killed, and all things *are* ready. Come to the wedding.’””

-Matthew 22:1-4

What Israel will be denied because of disobedience, the Lord will share with others because of their faith in Him.

**31 (con't) your donkey *shall be* violently taken away from before you, and shall not be restored to you;**

The donkey is an unclean animal, but it is one that provides a great deal of benefit. It is an easy mode of transportation, it is used for carrying heavy burdens, it can be used in plowing, and so on. To take the donkey is to deprive the man of the comforts of possessing a donkey.

In the case of Christ, apart from His crown of thorns, there are few things that convey the idea of Israel's humble King more poignantly than the donkey –

“Fear not, daughter of Zion;  
Behold, your King is coming,  
Sitting on a donkey's colt.” John 12:15

In their disobedience, the symbol of Israel's king would be stripped from them and not restored to them. When He returns to them, it will not be on a donkey, but on a white horse. The symbolism of Deuteronomy speaks forth the prophetic future.

**31 (con't) your sheep *shall be* given to your enemies,**

Sheep are given to man for food, for clothing, for gaining capital wealth, and so on. In Israel's disobedience, these will be ripped from them, depriving them of all the benefit they could have possessed, but which they squandered away.

And this is more than a literal occurrence. There is no better metaphor of God's people in Scripture than that of sheep. It is used consistently in the Old and New Testaments as such. Having sheep implies being a shepherd. Israel's sheep would be taken from the bad shepherds and would be given to their true Shepherd –

“I am the good shepherd; and I know My *sheep*, and am known by My own. <sup>15</sup> As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup> And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock *and* one shepherd.”

-John 10:14-16

<sup>31</sup> (con't) **and you shall have no one to rescue *them*.**

*v'ain movoshia* – “And no savior for you.” It is the same words as in verse 29 which closed out our verses last week. It is also the same word, in the same form, as is found in the prophetic verse of Isaiah 19 that anticipates the coming Messiah –

“And it will be for a sign and for a witness to the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the LORD because of the oppressors, and He will send them a Savior and a Mighty One, and He will deliver them.” Isaiah 19:20

Israel would reject the Lord Yehovah, they would reject His incarnation in the Person of Jesus, and their sheep would be taken from them while leaving them with no Savior. Next...

<sup>32</sup> **Your sons and your daughters *shall be* given to another people,**

The curses continue and multiply in tragedy with these words. The very fruit of the womb, and the continuance of the name, will be taken from Israel for their failure to uphold and perform the word of the Lord.

This idea of having one's children taken from someone has been so foreign to us in our modern society that only in the very recent past has this started to be introduced into our thinking, with the exception of being for the gravest of reasons or the most serious of offenses.

With the introduction of the current “plague” surrounding us, lefties in the government, news media, judiciary, and academia are proposing children be robbed away from their

parents if they are unwilling to be vaccinated. Against that, the outcry has been great due to the unthinkable nature of it.

However, these words have literally been fulfilled again and again in Israel's history. Adam Clarke provides one example of it –

“In several countries, particularly in Spain and Portugal, the children of the Jews have been taken from them by order of government, and educated in the Popish faith. There have been some instances of Jewish children being taken from their parents even in Protestant countries.” Adam Clarke

In such an occurrence, Moses woefully says...

<sup>32 (con't)</sup> **and your eyes shall look and fail *with longing* for them all day long;**

The idea of the people simply sitting and staring comes to mind. It is like the young man who waits and waits for the girlfriend who changed her mind and isn't coming to a date at the movies, but it goes on from day to day.

The moments tick by, the eyes are lifted yet again, they scan the horizon, they peek into the wooded forest, they search through the wavering mirage hanging over the desert – whatever the surroundings, there is no movement of son or daughter to catch the attention of the eyes. The anguish of loss continues on.

In what Moses says, there is a word found only once in the Bible, the adjective *kaleh*. Rather than, “your eyes shall look and fail,” it more precisely reads, “and your eyes look, and failingly, for them.” There is only pining and grief.

The sense is that of being utterly destitute of any hope. There is not even a glimpse of them except in the anguished memory of the mind. But the Lord, through Moses, told Israel in advance that this would be the case. They cannot blame Him. Even if these words were not recorded, they would have no case against Him. How much more is it so when they were warned ahead of time.

The words of Jeremiah refer to such an occasion which is then picked up by Matthew and applied to the time of Christ's advent. But at the time of Jeremiah, it was both a reality and also a point upon which the Lord promised restoration –

“Thus says the LORD:  
‘A voice was heard in Ramah,  
Lamentation *and* bitter weeping,  
Rachel weeping for her children,  
Refusing to be comforted for her children,  
Because they *are* no more.’

<sup>16</sup> Thus says the LORD:  
‘Refrain your voice from weeping,  
And your eyes from tears;  
For your work shall be rewarded, says the LORD,  
And they shall come back from the land of the enemy.

<sup>17</sup> There is hope in your future, says the LORD,  
That *your* children shall come back to their own border.” Jeremiah 31:15-17

However, Moses speaks only of loss, not restoration. The mournful words would occur repeatedly in Israel’s history because of their failure to honor the Lord. In this despondent state, Moses says...

<sup>32</sup> (con’t) **and there shall be no strength in your hand.**

*v’ain l’el yadekha* – “and no to God your hand.” It is a proverbial expression found also in Genesis 31:29, Proverbs 3:27, and Micah 2:1. Most translations express the word *el*, or God, as simply reflecting might, strength, or power. But that could be rendered in other ways.

Rather, this is a way of conveying that there is no ability to lift a hand to Him, and thus there is no help to be expected from Him. This devastating curse that will befall Israel because of disobedience is reversed in Christ. Where children will be removed from them, He will instead be given them –

“Here am I and the children whom God has given Me.” Hebrews 2:13

With this realized, the author immediately continues. Where there was no ability for Israel to lift a hand to God in the loss of their children, Christ possessed the power of God to secure release for His children –

“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had

the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Hebrews 2:14, 15

**<sup>33</sup> A nation whom you have not known shall eat the fruit of your land and the produce of your labor, and you shall be only oppressed and crushed continually.**

The words of this verse were taken and expanded upon by the Lord through Jeremiah –

“Behold, I will bring a nation against you from afar,  
O house of Israel,’ says the LORD.

‘It *is* a mighty nation,

It *is* an ancient nation,

A nation whose language you do not know,

Nor can you understand what they say.

<sup>16</sup> Their quiver *is* like an open tomb;

They *are* all mighty men.

<sup>17</sup> And they shall eat up your harvest and your bread,

*Which* your sons and daughters should eat.

They shall eat up your flocks and your herds;

They shall eat up your vines and your fig trees;

They shall destroy your fortified cities,

In which you trust, with the sword.” Jeremiah 5:15-17

The labors of Israel would be taken from them and consumed by their enemies, and in the devastation from their hands, there would be oppression and crushing. This is the lot for Israel who failed to bear fruit for the Lord. Their fruit would be taken from them.

The words of this verse go beyond Jeremiah (tangible fruit), and the Babylonian exile though. Christ conveys the same thoughts found in this verse concerning the spiritual fruit Israel was to bear and how He would take it from them –

“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. <sup>44</sup> And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.” Matthew 21:43, 44

Everything in Israel’s physical existence, again and again, points to spiritual truth in their intended spiritual role. But the law stood against them. Only in Christ can that which is pleasing to God be found. For Israel, the woe continues from Moses’ words...



**<sup>34</sup> So you shall be driven mad because of the sight which your eyes see.**

This verse is to be given as a summary result based on the previous verses. In what happened to them, they would be driven mad.

In this is a new word, *shaga*. It is a verb signifying raving through insanity. What the eyes will behold will madden the mind. Only confusion, disorder, and an inability to grasp reality will be the result of what will come upon the people for simply failing to hold to the law set before them.

When things are going well, such a thought is inconceivable. But that is what makes it so terrible when such things do occur. In the past year, because of the things that have come upon the world through hyping of the current “plague,” this has literally come true in countless minds. Many people have completely lost control of their senses.

If this is true when there is only minimal danger in reality, imagine what it was like for Israel when true dangers suddenly swept over them. And as soon as they would become reestablished in a new land and with a new direction, the sword of the Lord would come out and sweep over them again.

Even for two millennia, this has come to pass. John Gill refers to a literal fulfillment of these exact words of Moses –

“In Germany, in their rage and madness, they burnt a city and themselves in it; and, in the same country, being summoned by an edict to change their religion, or to be burnt, they agreed to meet together in a certain house, and destroy one another; and first parents killed their children, and husbands their wives, and then killed themselves; leaving only one person to be their doorkeeper, who finished the tragedy by destroying himself, as their own historian relates.” John Gill

If only they heeded the words of Moses, all of this would have been avoided. But their eyes have been blinded and their minds have been brought to insanity. John Lange pithily sums up this verse, saying, “What it must see with the eye of the body, takes away the eye of the spirit.”

This is the result of a state of *no hope*. When all is crushed, destroyed, or taken away for a people with no hope, then only maddening hopelessness is left. They had abandoned the Lord, and so the Lord abandoned them.

But in Christ is the victory. And in Him, the eyes see what Israel could not see. No matter what state a grounded believer finds himself in, there is still the state of unshakeable faith, and thus nonremovable hope. Paul reveals this to us –

“Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, <sup>16</sup> do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: <sup>17</sup> that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, <sup>18</sup> the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup> and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power <sup>20</sup> which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places,* <sup>21</sup> far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.” Ephesians 1:15-21

The terror of a life with no hope, one which leads only to madness in the eyes that behold such catastrophe, is perfectly replaced with hope leading to eyes of understanding that Christ has, in fact, triumphed over the law, over the curse, and over the state of death that man has faced since his first father.

*The choice is yours what shall come upon you  
You are told in advance how it can go well  
If you follow My words and are faithful and true  
You will find heaven and you will avoid hell*

*I offer you what is good; I offer you what is right  
You are told in advance how it can go well  
Be diligent by day, and be obedient at night  
And you will find heaven instead of ending in hell*

*Be faithful to the word, learn from it what to do  
I assure you in this, you will do well  
Follow it and find My Son, given for you  
In Him you will find heaven, without Him there is only hell*

*Oh, Israel! Come to the everlasting well  
And drink of the Water that will keep you from hell*

## II. An Astonishment, a Proverb, and a Byword (verses 35-37)

**<sup>35</sup> The LORD will strike you in the knees and on the legs with severe boils which cannot be healed,**

Here, the *shekhin*, or “boil” is brought up again. It is the sixth plague to have fallen on Egypt. It was considered a leprous ailment as defined in Leviticus 13. It was also just mentioned in verse 27, last week. It would make such a person unclean and defiled. As such, he would be excluded from fellowship within the society.

As the words continue in the singular, you Israel, it is saying that Israel would “be cut off from covenant union with God” (Pulpit Commentary). This exact affliction, in this exact manner, is what Job was afflicted with –

“So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. <sup>8</sup> And he took for himself a potsherd with which to scrape himself while he sat in the midst of the ashes.”

-Job 2:7, 8

Because it specifies the knees and legs, the idea being conveyed is an inability to bow, kneel, or prostrate oneself. Thus, it speaks of punishment upon Israel for failing to render to the Lord such obeisance. What they deprived Him of, He punishes them with in like manner. Further, Moses says...

**<sup>35</sup> (con't) and from the sole of your foot to the top of your head.**

*mi'kaph raglekha v'ad qadedodekha* – “from sole your foot and until crown your head. The idea is that of authority (that which is below the sole of the foot) and honor (the crown of the head). That is seen, for example, in the blessing of Jacob upon Joseph, and which is substantially repeated by Moses later in Deuteronomy –

“The blessings of your father  
Have excelled the blessings of my ancestors,  
Up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills.  
They shall be on the head of Joseph,  
And on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers.”

-Genesis 49:26

Israel is punished for their lack of honoring the Lord, they have been stripped of authority, and they have been deprived of honor. Exactly the opposite is said of Christ who prevailed where Israel failed –

“You have crowned him with glory and honor,  
And set him over the works of Your hands.

<sup>8</sup>You have put all things in subjection under his feet.” Hebrews 2:7, 8

Christ always honored His Father (John 8:49), He submitted Himself to His will (Hebrews 10:7), and He was perfectly obedient to His law (Romans 10:4). In this, unlike Israel who was crowned with shame and the covenant curses, thus losing their right to kingdom authority, He was crowned with glory and honor and received authority over all of God’s kingdom.

<sup>36</sup> **“The LORD will bring you and the king whom you set over you**

Like in verses 8 and 21, the first word of the verse is a jussive: *yolek Yehovah otekha v’eth malkekha asher taqim alekha* – “May cause to walk Yehovah you and king whom you set over you.” A jussive is basically an indirect command. Moses is calling out for the Lord to do this in response to Israel’s rebellion.

The words continue in the singular. Moses is not saying, “If this guy doesn’t pay heed, then may this happen.” Individual transgressions were to be handled by the individual in personal repentance, or by the community concerning a serious infraction.

Rather, Moses is calling for the Lord to directly act when the nation turns from Him and does not turn back. “May the entire nation, inclusive of the king who has so grossly failed in his responsibilities, to be caused to walk...”

<sup>36</sup> (con’t) **to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known,**

The meaning is exile. It is the gravest punishment national Israel could expect. However, this does not mean it is the final punishment they could expect. To be removed from the land signified a total rejection of them as a people fit for being in the presence of the Lord.

While in exile, they would continue to receive the covenant punishments detailed here and elsewhere in the law. They had become unclean, and they were to be removed from His presence.

However, it DOES NOT mean, as replacement theologians claim, a total rejection of the people – thus violating the covenant by the Lord. He has promised to keep them as a people forever. But in their state of disobedience, He has promised to do so apart from His land, and apart from a right covenant relationship.

This occurred at various points in Israel's history, both to the northern tribes and to the southern tribes, such as at the time of Zedekiah the king –

“Zedekiah *was* twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. <sup>19</sup> He also did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. <sup>20</sup> For because of the anger of the LORD *this* happened in Jerusalem and Judah, that He finally cast them out from His presence. Then Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.” 2 Kings 24:18-20

“Then the city wall was broken through, and all the men of war *fled* at night by way of the gate between two walls, which was by the king's garden, even though the Chaldeans *were* still encamped all around against the city. And *the king* went by way of the plain. <sup>5</sup> But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and they overtook him in the plains of Jericho. All his army was scattered from him. <sup>6</sup> So they took the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they pronounced judgment on him. <sup>7</sup> Then they killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, put out the eyes of Zedekiah, bound him with bronze fetters, and took him to Babylon.” 2 Kings 25:4-7

In this state of exile...

<sup>36</sup> (con't) **and there you shall serve other gods—wood and stone.**

This was certainly voluntary for most, and it continues to be voluntary for many even to this day. Statues of Buddha and Krishna adorn Jewish homes throughout the world and in homes found in Israel. But it was also involuntary as well. Such an event is recorded in Daniel –

“To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, <sup>5</sup> *that* at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, *and* psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; <sup>6</sup> and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.” Daniel 3:4-6

What happened to Israel, Yehovah's firstborn son (Exodus 4:22), who was exiled from their kingdom – inclusive of the king who sat over them – is set in complete contrast to Christ. Where they were sent to worship other gods, we see how Jesus, God's only begotten Son (John 3:16), prevailed and is granted a permanent kingship over all of the kings of the earth.

The entire 2<sup>nd</sup> Psalm refers to this –

<sup>1</sup> Why do the nations rage,  
And the people plot a vain thing?  
<sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth set themselves,  
And the rulers take counsel together,  
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, *saying*,  
<sup>3</sup> "Let us break Their bonds in pieces  
And cast away Their cords from us."  
<sup>4</sup> He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;  
The Lord shall hold them in derision.  
<sup>5</sup> Then He shall speak to them in His wrath,  
And distress them in His deep displeasure:  
<sup>6</sup> "Yet I have set My King  
On My holy hill of Zion."  
<sup>7</sup> "I will declare the decree:  
The LORD has said to Me,  
'You *are* My Son,  
Today I have begotten You.  
<sup>8</sup> Ask of Me, and I will give *You*  
The nations *for* Your inheritance,  
And the ends of the earth *for* Your possession.  
<sup>9</sup> You shall break them with a rod of iron;  
You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel."  
<sup>10</sup> Now therefore, be wise, O kings;  
Be instructed, you judges of the earth.  
<sup>11</sup> Serve the LORD with fear,  
And rejoice with trembling.  
<sup>12</sup> Kiss the Son, lest He be angry,  
And you perish *in* the way,  
When His wrath is kindled but a little.  
Blessed *are* all those who put their trust in Him. Psalm 2

While Israel and her failed kings served other kings and gods of wood and stone, Christ – the Lord God – is served by other kings. The contrast is complete between the two.

For Israel, in their state of exile, Moses is quite clear about how they would be considered by those nations they were exiled to or fled to...

**<sup>37</sup> And you shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword**

Here, the exact opposite of verse 10 is seen. If Israel obeys...

“Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you.” Deuteronomy 28:10

However, in their disobedience and time of cursing, instead of being called by the name of the Lord, Moses speaks out three forms of derision by which they will be called –

*Shamah*. It is a new word, a noun ultimately coming from a root signifying “to stun.” Thus, it speaks of an astonishment, a waste, a desolation, a horror, and so on. The vast number of uses will be found in the book of Jeremiah.

This is not speaking of the land, but of the people. They will be called this term, signifying that so pervasive is their state of horror that they will even be considered unclean among, and to, the Gentiles.

Whereas the Jews kept separate from and wouldn’t eat or even associate with Gentiles (see Acts 10:28), in their dispersion, they would be considered so unclean that the Gentiles would not venture to eat or associate with them.

*Mashal*. This is a proverb or parable. It is a pithy saying, usually as a lesson of what to do or what not to do. Israel, in their exile would become a lesson to the nations of how not to act and how not to treat the Lord. Psalm 44 shows that exactly this occurred to Israel–

“You make us a reproach to our neighbors,  
A scorn and a derision to those all around us.

<sup>14</sup> You make us a byword among the nations,  
A shaking of the head among the peoples.

<sup>15</sup> My dishonor *is* continually before me,  
And the shame of my face has covered me.” Psalm 44:13-15

*Sheninah*. It is also a new noun coming from a word signifying to sharpen or pierce. Thus, it is something pointed, and hence a taunt – as if a word that pokes at a person. One might think of the way people deride the Jews with a multitude of expletives that I can't repeat lest YouTube filters were to pick them up and ban the sermon for simply saying them.

One can see a Jew walking down the road and a group of people calling out all of these names, exactly as it continues to happen to this day. And, according to Moses, it is all a self-inflicted wound.

The ADL spends innumerable hours defending the Jewish people. But when they keep putting out heroes like Chuck Schumer; Jerry Nadler, and a continuous stream of really unlikeable people who have no care at all for the Lord who established them; when they continue to promote every perversion one can think of; when they jubilantly exult in the murder of the unborn; and so on; the prophetic words of the Lord, through Moses, are consistently and continuously vindicated.

Israel need only look in the mirror to discern why all of the calamities of their history have come upon them...

**\*37 (fin) among all nations where the LORD will drive you.**

They have sat, and many still sit, in synagogues in almost every nation of the world. They read the words of Moses which are fulfilled in their sitting, and they accept no responsibility for the lengthy and continuous times of trial that they have faced.

Until they search out and discover the “why” of their state, they will never stop facing the horrors that have plagued them for these past two thousand years. This is their sadness, this is their misery, and this is based upon the prophetic warning of Moses. “Israel, pay heed lest all this trouble and terror fall upon you.”

In contrast to them, being an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among the nations because of their disobedience, we see the complete and absolute contrast to them in the Lord Jesus who perfectly fulfilled what Israel so miserably failed at...

“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, <sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and *that* every



tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

-Philippians 2:9-11

His name alone is exalted because He alone accomplished what Israel was given opportunity to work out. But the lesson had to be brought forth, and Israel was chosen for it to be so. In their choosing, the offer was made, and in the offering, they also agreed.

Though the words and the sadness are highlighted in them, they are only a reflection of each and every one of us. Their life under the law is for our instruction and learning as well as for them. The law was given to lead us to the Door, but it is we who must open it and pass through.

As individuals, some of them have – along with many, many Gentiles. As a nation, they have yet to do so. Until they do, terrible times remain ahead for them. But God has covenanted with them, the Lord has stated that it will happen, and the word testifies to the truth of this.

For now, pray for Israel the nation as you would for any individual you care for. They carry a very heavy burden that they don't even seem to realize they are still obligated to. Yes, pray for Israel, and praise be to God for Jesus Christ our Lord who has made access to our heavenly Father available once again. Praise God for His grace that is found in Jesus Christ our Lord. And all of God's people say... Amen.

**Closing Verse:** *“And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. <sup>17</sup> For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.” John 1:16-18*

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 28:38-44 *More curses to come in these verses, yes plenty more...* (The Blessings and the Curses, Part IV) (80<sup>th</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **The Blessings and the Curses, Part III**

“You shall betroth a wife, but another man shall lie with her  
You shall build a house, but you shall not dwell in it  
You shall plant a vineyard, but shall not gather its grapes  
A dismal future, you must admit

Your ox shall be slaughtered before your eyes, but you shall  
-----not eat of it  
Your donkey shall be violently taken away from before you  
-----and shall not to you be restored  
Your sheep shall be given to your enemies, and you shall have  
-----no one to rescue them  
Because my words of law you have ignored

Your sons and your daughters shall be given to another people  
And your eyes shall look and fail, please understand  
With longing for them all day long  
And there shall be no strength in your hand

A nation whom you have not known  
Shall eat the fruit of your land, so it will be  
And the produce of your labor  
And you shall be only oppressed and crushed continually

So you shall be driven mad, yes to insanity  
Because of the sight which your eyes see

The LORD will strike you in the knees  
And on the legs, something you will dread  
With severe boils which cannot be healed  
And from the sole of your foot to the top of your head

“The LORD will bring you, and the king whom you set over you  
To a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known  
And there you shall serve other gods  
Yes, you shall serve other gods—wood and stone

And you shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword

-----a sad fate it is true  
Among all nations where the LORD will drive you

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## **Deuteronomy 28:38-44** **(The Blessings and the Curses, Part IV)**

The people of Israel obviously failed to uphold the words of this law, because they were sent into exile. Can anyone here disagree with that? The Lord, directly through Moses, and through the prophets, warned Israel to pay heed.

They were given all the information they needed in advance to live rightly, and all of the warnings that explained what would happen if they didn't. They had only themselves to blame when the disasters that are stated came upon them.

Eventually, the prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and the exile of the people came to pass. But along with those things, came their prophesied return to the land, just as they were told would come about. In fact, the things spoken were so precise that Daniel knew exactly when to pray for restoration –

“In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans— <sup>2</sup> in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years *specified* by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.” Daniel 9:1, 2

As such, Israel couldn't say, “Well, we are finally getting what we deserve by being returned to the land.” No, the best they could say is, “Well, despite our unfaithfulness, the Lord has been faithful to us.” But once they were in the land, they again neglected the Lord. Hence, the bad spoken of in the law continued after their return...

**Text Verse:** *“Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Consider your ways! <sup>8</sup> Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified,’ says the LORD. <sup>9</sup> ‘You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house. <sup>10</sup> Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. <sup>11</sup> For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands.’”*

*-Haggai 1:7-11*

Despite their neglect of the Lord, He sent them prophets to tell them what to do, and He promised to bless them as they did it. It's all one giant lesson that, unfortunately, still has not been learned by them.

They were exiled a second time according to everything stated in the law. They only have themselves to blame for the past two thousand years of misery. Yes, it is more than common for them to blame those woes on pretty much anything else but themselves, but that is how it is.

And now that they are back in the land, they are certain that it was because they somehow deserve it, or because of their own smarts, power, or ability. They are just like their fathers at the time of Haggai. But their unfaithfulness does not, once again, negate the faithfulness of the Lord.

I say this sermon after sermon, and it is a word to them. But it is also a word to those in the church who completely fail to get it. They dismiss Israel of today, being back in the land today, as an aberration. Or they simply reject that there is any connection between the two.

A little more study (and trust in God's word) and a little less reliance on nonsense, and they would get it right, just as Israel should. How sad that we can't. But all of this serves a purpose. And we will see that purpose, once again, in today's verses. When everything is placed in relation to Christ, it all makes sense.

Along with that is His word that puts such things into their proper perspective. There are an immense variety of tools to help us do that. One of them will be seen in the verses today, parallelism. I will explain it now, and then we will get right into the passage.

Parallelism is a type of construction found in sentences where clauses or complete sentences carry the same grammatical structure. Parallelism can help explain what is actually being conveyed when words or thoughts are otherwise difficult to pin down. Further, the syntactical similarities can be used to provide rhetorical effect.

Now, we will proceed. Great things, such as parallelism, are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. Four Points of Loss (verses 38-41)**

**38 “You shall carry much seed out to the field**

The words of this verse are set in contrast to those of verse 28:11 –

“And the LORD will grant you plenty of goods, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground, in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you.”

It takes a certain amount of grain to sow an entire field. The thought of carrying out food that could be eaten, especially at the beginning of the harvest season when supplies would be dwindling, would be tough especially if things weren't going so well.

The weight of the bag would seem heavy – “I could have a lot of meals with this...” But one cannot reap unless he first sows. And so, much seed is carried out to the field. During the time of Israel's disobedience, it would be better to just eat the grain and die...

**38 (con't) but gather little in,**

What is promised as a blessing for obedience is now stated as a curse for disobedience. In it is a word found only this one time in Scripture, translated as “consume.” It is *khasal*, coming from a primitive root meaning to eat off.

The idea being set forth in these words is that at the beginning of the cycle, the farmers would take bags and bags of seed saved from the previous crop, and they would sow it into the field. However, at the end of the harvest, there would be little to show for all of the effort. This will be the case as noted by Isaiah because of the sins of the people –

“Woe to those who join house to house;  
They add field to field,  
Till *there is* no place  
Where they may dwell alone in the midst of the land!

<sup>9</sup> In my hearing the LORD of hosts *said*,  
‘Truly, many houses shall be desolate,  
Great and beautiful ones, without inhabitant.

<sup>10</sup> For ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath,  
And a homer of seed shall yield one ephah.’” Isaiah 5:8-10

The disastrous nature of Isaiah's words is realized in what the homer and the ephah represent. The weights are described in Ezekiel 45 –

“The ephah and the bath shall be of the same measure, so that the bath contains one-tenth of a homer, and the ephah one-tenth of a homer; their measure shall be according to the homer.” Ezekiel 45:11

If an ephah is one-tenth of a homer, and if an entire homer yields only one ephah, then there is to be such a loss of grain in the harvest season that the yield will not be enough to even sow one-tenth of the land the next year, even if nothing was used for food or selling. The output speaks of total disaster. Of the reason for the disaster in this case, Moses says...

<sup>38</sup> (con't) **for the locust shall consume it.**

The locust plague upon the land is spoken of in several places. At times, it is symbolically used to represent invading armies. But the thought of the locust is generally that of destroyed produce –

“What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten;  
What the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten;  
And what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten.” Joel 1:4

The reason for the coming of the locust has already been explicitly stated here in Deuteronomy 28:15, saying, “if you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you.” That is then reflected in the words of Amos –

“I blasted you with blight and mildew.  
When your gardens increased,  
Your vineyards,  
Your fig trees,  
And your olive trees,  
The locust devoured *them*;  
Yet you have not returned to Me,  
Says the LORD.” Amos 4:9

The symbolism here is that of the failure of the people under the law. A great harvest indicates obedience and prosperity. As the curse is promised, and as it is said to have come upon the people, it is an overall note of Israel's failure. The harvest season fails to produce. This is in contrast to what Christ sets forth. Even before the completion of His ministry, His sowing of seed anticipated the magnitude of His harvest –

“Then He said to them, ‘The harvest truly *is* great, but the laborers *are* few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’”  
Luke 10:2

“Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! <sup>36</sup> And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup> For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ <sup>38</sup> I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.” John 4:35-38

The idea of the prosperity of the harvest after first sowing one's seed (Christ in His death, and those who follow Him) is reflected in the psalms –

“Those who sow in tears  
Shall reap in joy.  
<sup>6</sup> He who continually goes forth weeping,  
Bearing seed for sowing,  
Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing,  
Bringing his sheaves *with him*.” Psalm 126:5, 6

For now, along with the lack of harvest because of the great devourer of the fields, the locust, another calamity is noted...

<sup>39</sup> **You shall plant vineyards and tend *them*,**

A vineyard is planted in the hopes of gathering grapes. It is something that requires attention and care, but it is also dependent on the right conditions to be healthy, such as the right moisture for the type of vine.



Israel is told that they will, in fact, plant vineyards. They already knew the land was favorable for this when the spies were sent into the land many years before. Upon their return, they brought a cluster of grapes as evidence.

Thus, Moses acknowledges that this will be the regular practice of the people henceforth. However, in disobeying the Lord and in the failure to adhere to His word, there will be consequences...

<sup>39</sup> (con't) **but you shall neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes;**

The translation adds two unnecessary articles: *v'yayin lo tishteh v'lo teegor* – “and wine no you shall drink, and no you shall gather.” To say “the wine” implies there is wine, and to say “the grapes” implies there are grapes to gather. But both thoughts are erroneous.

There will be no grapes to gather, and thus there will be no wine to drink. The words speak of complete futility concerning the effort put forth.

In this clause is a new word, *agar*, meaning “to gather.” It will be seen here and twice in the proverbs (6:8 and 10:5). It comes from a primitive root signifying “to harvest.” There will be no such gathering because of the lack of grapes...

<sup>39</sup> (con't) **for the worms shall eat them.**

It is singular: *ki tokelenu ha'tolaat* – “for shall eat them the worm.” Because of the singular, the *tola*, or crimson grub worm, is set forth as the destroyer. It will come forth and ravage the efforts of the people. In the prophets, the vineyard is set forth as a people group. The fruit is the product of that group, and the wine is a cultural expression such as joy, debauchery, wrath, and so on.

Though a bit lengthy, this is well-expressed in Isaiah 5 –

“Now let me sing to my Well-beloved  
A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard:  
My Well-beloved has a vineyard  
On a very fruitful hill.  
<sup>2</sup> He dug it up and cleared out its stones,  
And planted it with the choicest vine.  
He built a tower in its midst,  
And also made a winepress in it;

So He expected *it* to bring forth *good* grapes,  
But it brought forth wild grapes.

<sup>3</sup> ‘And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah,  
Judge, please, between Me and My vineyard.

<sup>4</sup> What more could have been done to My vineyard  
That I have not done in it?

Why then, when I expected *it* to bring forth *good* grapes,  
Did it bring forth wild grapes?

<sup>5</sup> And now, please let Me tell you what I will do to My vineyard:

I will take away its hedge, and it shall be burned;  
*And* break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.

<sup>6</sup> I will lay it waste;

It shall not be pruned or dug,  
But there shall come up briars and thorns.

I will also command the clouds

That they rain no rain on it.’

<sup>7</sup> For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts *is* the house of Israel,

And the men of Judah are His pleasant plant.

He looked for justice, but behold, oppression;

For righteousness, but behold, a cry *for help*.” Isaiah 5:1-7

The vineyard is Israel and Judah, the people of God. Jesus then takes this example, and shows that what the Old Covenant failed to do, He would accomplish in the giving of the New Covenant –

“Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. <sup>34</sup> Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. <sup>35</sup> And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. <sup>36</sup> Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. <sup>37</sup> Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ <sup>38</sup> But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’ <sup>39</sup> So they took him and cast *him* out of the vineyard and killed *him*.

<sup>40</sup> “Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?”

<sup>41</sup> They said to Him, “He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease *his* vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.” Matthew 21:33-41

Jesus’ words speak of the leaders of Israel under the law. In saying that he would give the vineyard to other vinedressers, He was not saying that the church would replace Israel. Rather, He was referring to the covenant arrangement.

Israel and Judah would be led under a new type of leader (Jeremiah 31:31) of which the Gentiles would participate in as well – sharing in the commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:12). As for “the worm,” which destroyed the vineyard, it is a picture of Christ –

“But I *am* a worm, and no man;  
A reproach of men, and despised by the people.  
<sup>7</sup> All those who see Me ridicule Me;  
They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying*,  
<sup>8</sup> ‘He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him;  
Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!’” Psalm 22:6-8

The symbolism was clearly seen when we looked at the book of Jonah where the *tola*, or crimson grub worm, pictured Christ destroying the plant that grew as shade over Jonah’s head. The vineyard of God’s people under the law would be destroyed, but the vineyard of God’s people would remain, tended to by new dressers of the vine.

<sup>40</sup> **You shall have olive trees throughout all your territory,**

This is to be taken as an axiom. Moses has already said that the land is filled with olive trees –

“So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, <sup>11</sup> houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant...” Deuteronomy 6:10, 11

This implies that the olive trees are well-established. Unlike vineyards that need a lot of attention, olive trees need some pruning and the like, but they should generally be hardy enough to produce olives once they are up and running. They are considered to be rather low-maintenance plants.

When Israel moves in, they will have olive trees, and the trees should produce accordingly. However, in their disobedience...

**40 (con't) but you shall not anoint *yourself* with the oil;**

*v'shemen lo tasuk* – “and oil no you shall anoint.” This is a new word, *suk*, meaning to anoint. It comes from a primitive root signifying “to smear over.” Hence, it is the act of anointing.

As before, there will be the hope of harvest, and the heartbreak of having none. To anoint oneself is to enjoy the luxury of the olive upon the body. It is a blessing beyond just eating, but of tending to the body in a way that both blesses the individual and excites those around as well –

“Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, *is he* not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. <sup>3</sup> Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your *best* garment and go down to the threshing floor; *but* do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.” Ruth 3:2, 3

Such will not be the case for disobedient Israel. And Moses explains why...

**40 (con't) for your olives shall drop off.**

It is singular: *ki yishal zetekha* – “for plundered your olive.” Pretty much every translation, including the Greek, gives the sense of the olives simply failing – dropping off, casting off, and so on.

However, that might require the verb *nashal* to be used in a way not intended. As such, this may be a form of the verb *shalal*, which means “plunder,” “spoil,” “booty,” and so on.

I would prefer this, rather than them simply “dropping off” for a particular reason. If you’re still awake, and if the Lord hasn’t come for us at the end of the next verse, I will enlighten you as to why.

No matter what, there will be no anointing from the olive. In the Bible, the olive clearly evinces the idea of a witness. For example, this is said of the “two witnesses” of Revelation 11:3 who are then explained in Revelation 11:4 –

“These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.” Revelation 11:4

But these two witnesses are more fully explained in Zechariah 4 –

“So I said, ‘I am looking, and there *is* a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the *stand* seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. <sup>3</sup>Two olive trees *are* by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left.’ <sup>4</sup>So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, ‘What *are* these, my lord?’” Zechariah 4:2-4

“Then I answered and said to him, ‘What *are* these two olive trees—at the right of the lampstand and at its left?’ <sup>12</sup>And I further answered and said to him, ‘What *are these* two olive branches that *drip* into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden *oil* drains?’

<sup>13</sup> Then he answered me and said, ‘Do you not know what these *are*?’

And I said, ‘No, my lord.’

<sup>14</sup> So he said, ‘These *are* the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.’” Zechariah 4:11-14

The olive goes from the idea of being a witness, to the idea of anointing and being anointed. This then is explained in the same metaphor by Paul concerning the failure of the Old Covenant to the supremacy of the New (the Christ) covenant. This is seen in who the “witness” is that is “anointed” to convey its message.

“For if the firstfruit *is* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*; and if the root *is* holy, so *are* the branches. <sup>17</sup>And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, <sup>18</sup>do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, *remember that* you do not support the root, but the root *supports* you. <sup>19</sup>You will say then, ‘Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.’

<sup>20</sup>Well *said*. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. <sup>21</sup>For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. <sup>22</sup>Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in *His* goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. <sup>23</sup>And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. <sup>24</sup>For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were

grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who *are* natural *branches*, be grafted into their own olive tree?" Romans 11:16-24

The words of Paul neither indicate that the Jews have been replaced by the church, nor do they indicate that there is one gospel to the church and one to Israel.

The point is that Israel continued with the law and is no longer a suitable witness to what God is doing in Christ. Christ has come, and those who received him (predominantly Gentiles) are now the witness. Someday, the matter will swing back in the other direction when Israel is brought into a right (New) covenant relationship with the Lord.

The two witnesses of Zechariah and Revelation, Enoch and Elijah it is believed, reflect this union. Enoch is not a Hebrew, Elijah is. Both testify to the work of God in Christ for all people. As I noted, a minute ago, this idea of being a witness (the olive tree) goes to the idea of anointing and being anointed (the olive oil) –

“Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us *is* God,  
<sup>22</sup> who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.”

-2 Corinthians 1:21, 22

Israel is currently broken off as a witness, and they lack the anointing of the Spirit. All of this is seen in the curses of Deuteronomy 28 as is spoken forth by Moses. Next...

<sup>41</sup> **You shall beget sons and daughters,**

Israel has continued on for millennia. The fact that they have testified to the truth of the words of Moses now. They will have sons and daughters. Were it not so, there would be no Israel. However, in times of disobedience, it would be quite often the case that they would be deprived of them. Moses, in advance of such times, calls out the warning...

<sup>41</sup> (con't) **but they shall not be yours;**

The sense is wrong. In begetting children, it means that they are their children. Rather, it reads: *v'lo yihyu lak* – “and no shall be to you.” Even though they belong to those who beget them, they will not be with their begetters. It is the state of being deprived of one's continuance. Thus, there is the sense of complete desolation in this regard. The name ends. And there is a tragic reason for this...

<sup>41</sup> (con't) **for they shall go into captivity.**

*ki yeleku ba'shviy* – “for they shall go in the captivity.” The word “captivity” is brought alive. It has become the foe of the people, carrying away their sons and daughters. The chances of ever returning to one’s family, home, city, and country are infinitesimally small, and they grow smaller with each day that passes. As Moses has already said of this earlier –

“Your sons and your daughters *shall be* given to another people, and your eyes shall look and fail *with longing* for them all day long; and *there shall be* no strength in your hand.” Deuteronomy 28:32

Moses reaffirmed and explained what he has already stated. Israel cannot say they were not warned. As far as this verse, the idea of begetting sons in a new way, and with a new and unbreakable bond of sonship is found in Christ through the New Covenant –

“He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. <sup>11</sup> He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. <sup>12</sup> But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” John 1:10-13

“And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, ‘You know nothing at all, <sup>50</sup> nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.’ <sup>51</sup> Now this he did not say on his own *authority*; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, <sup>52</sup> and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.” John 11:49-52

The number of verses that speak of this unbreakable and eternal bond between a Parent and His children is abundant. What Israel could not be assured of, meaning keeping their children under the Mosaic code, was only reflective of their state as children of God.

On the other hand, what God has done in Christ in the New Covenant is reflective of our eternal security in the arms of our heavenly Father. Thank God for Jesus.

As you are still awake (well, most of you), and as the Lord has obviously not come for us, and because we have now completed this verse, I promised you an explanation of the verb concerning the olives noted in the previous verse. Why do I think it is *shalal*, plundered, and not *nashal*, to drop off? The reason is the parallelism used by Moses in the verses we have so far looked at –

- a. You shall carry much seed out to the field
  - b. but gather little in
  - c. for the locust shall consume it
- 
- a. You shall plant vineyards and tend them
  - b. but you shall neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes
  - c. for the worms shall eat them
- 
- a. You shall have olive trees throughout all your territory
  - b. but you shall not anoint yourself with the oil
  - c. for your olives shall drop off (rather: your olive shall be plundered)
- 
- a. You shall beget sons and daughters
  - b. but they shall not be yours
  - c. for they shall go into captivity

In seeing the results of the four actions, it is apparent that the word “plundered” is most probable. Each has had an external action taken against it – the locust consumes, the worm eats, your olive is plundered, your children go in the captivity. Therefore, the word *shalal* is probably the best choice for the Hebrew.

It would be improper to be dogmatic about this, but the parallelism calls out for this rendering. In this, you can see the importance of looking at such passages in this light. When you study the word, look for these internal cues, and you will be in the sweet spot of at least knowing that you may have a particular insight not readily seen in a cursory reading of what is before you.

Of these past four verses, Micah calls out the curses of all four of them to the people, but in a different order: children, grain (sowing), olives, and then the produce of the vine –

“You shall eat, but not be satisfied;  
Hunger *shall be* in your midst.



You may carry *some* away, but shall not save *them*;  
And what you do rescue I will give over to the sword.  
<sup>15</sup> You shall sow, but not reap;  
You shall tread the olives, but not anoint yourselves with oil;  
And *make* sweet wine, but not drink wine.” Micah 6:14, 15

The sad state of not attending to the law, even after being warned through the prophets, is the lot of Israel. Someday, they will see the futility of the law and understand their need for Christ Jesus who has set before redeemed man a new and better hope.

*Here am I and the children God has given Me  
Because of the work I accomplished before Him  
We are united as an eternal family  
When before, such a state seemed tenuous, even grim*

*What the law could never do because it was weak  
I accomplished with My own glorious right hand  
For any who will an eternal relationship seek  
Come to Me and it shall be so; the union shall stand*

*Here am I and the children God has given Me  
Because I prevailed over the law that was set against you  
When they nailed My body to that tree  
It was in fulfillment of what I was sent to do*

*Come and partake of the wonder of this family  
Come and be My children; yes, come unto Me*

## **II. Lower and Lower (Verses 42-44)**

The words of our three final verses today are pretty much the opposite of the blessings stated in verses 12 and 13 –

“The LORD will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. <sup>13</sup> And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the

commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe *them*.” Deuteronomy 28:12, 13

For now, instead of the Lord opening His good treasure from the heavens, He will open His stores of destroying insects...

**<sup>42</sup> Locusts shall consume all your trees and the produce of your land.**

The translation is deficient for several reasons: *kal etsekha uperi admatekha yeyaresh ha'tslatsal* – “Every tree yours, and fruit your ground shall possess the cricket.” The word tree is singular, the word “land” is better rendered as “ground,” and the word “locusts” is both singular (with an article), and it is a different creature than what was just seen in verse 38. It is *ha'tslatsal*, or “the cricket.”

It is a new word, *tslatsal*, that comes as a reduplication of the word *tsalal*, meaning to tingle or quiver. By reduplicating it, one gets the sense of whirring or chirping. This word will be seen six times and the other uses will help give the sense – cymbals, fishing spears (harpoons which rattle together), and whirring wings (Isaiah 18:1).

I chose “cricket,” to disassociate it from the locust, but it could be some insect that buzzes, like flies. Whatever they are, they are identifiable by their sound, and they would consume the vegetation readily. Because the word also means “cymbals,” one would think “cricket” to be a good choice.

As far as what they do, the word used is *yarash*. It signifies to possess or inherit. As such, it means that it has taken over the trees and fruit as a possession. There are other words that signify “consume,” and so the thought may be that they come and eat the fruit to the point it is useless without actually eating it all.

As far as trees, there are types of mole crickets that can damage root systems. Hence, I am still going with them as the offender. As I am not a renowned entomologist, please do not buzz with excitement over my translation. In the end, it may be moth-eaten or swatted down like a fly.

What seems obvious is that, like the trees and fruit of Israel when the people did not heed the Lord’s words, man under law is simply unable to flourish or to bear proper fruit. Paul says just this in Romans 7 –

“Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. <sup>5</sup> For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.” Romans 7:4, 5

Next, in contrast to being “above only, and not beneath,” as it said in verse 13, Moses says...

**<sup>43</sup> “The alien who *is* among you shall rise higher and higher above you,**

*ha’ger asher b’qirbekha yaaleh alekha malah maelah* – “The stranger who in your midst shall rise above you, upwards, upwards.” In verse 13, Moses’ words were simply put and not superlative. When they were right with the Lord, Israel would be above, but they would not consider themselves overly exalted.

In other words, no matter how “above” they were in relation to others, they were always under the Lord. But Moses’ words now are in the superlative. In not putting the Lord first above them, the stranger who was in their midst – meaning right among them – would be exalted above them and continue to rise above them. At the same time...

**<sup>43</sup> (con’t) and you shall come down lower and lower.**

*v’atah tered matah matah* – “and you shall go down, lower, lower.” Again, Moses speaks in the superlative. Israel won’t just go down, but they will continue to go down. There will be no hope of ever rising from their undignified state. One cannot first help but think of Christ’s contrast to this –

“(Now this, ‘He ascended’—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? <sup>10</sup> He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)”

-Ephesians 4:9, 10

Christ voluntarily placed Himself under the law. In doing so, He descended even to death. But in His fulfillment of the law, He has ascended to the highest point of all. For those in Christ, the same is true. To be “in” Christ (in Your midst, O God), means to be raised with Him –

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup> and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 2:4-6

In contrast to them are those who hold to the law for their justification, trusting in “self,” because the law is of deeds. As Jesus says, “Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?” (Matthew 23:33).

Though speaking to the leaders of the law, being leaders implies having followers. If you reject Christ, you, by default have placed your hope elsewhere. The only way for Israel to get out of the bind they are in is to come to the One who can raise them to Himself.

And finally, instead of lending to other nations and being the head, as stated in the blessings, the curse will bring the opposite...

**<sup>44</sup> He shall lend to you, but you shall not lend to him;**

The word “he” is in the emphatic position. “HE shall lend to you.” The one who was in the midst of the people, and who was the borrower, is the one who now has risen above Israel, and he is the lender.

So much will this be the case that there is no time when Israel would lend to him. Whatever Israel possessed, it would be unneeded by the stranger who had risen above them. Likewise...

**\*<sup>44</sup> (fin) he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail.**

Again, “he” is in the emphatic position, “HE shall be the head.” It is an embarrassment of the highest sense. The great and exalted nation of the Lord has become the very tail of everything that is going on because they have rejected the Lord who established them.

The words of this final verse seem to recall the words of Isaiah –

“For the people do not turn to Him who strikes them,  
Nor do they seek the LORD of hosts.

<sup>14</sup> Therefore the LORD will cut off head and tail from Israel,  
Palm branch and bulrush in one day.

<sup>15</sup> The elder and honorable, he *is* the head;  
The prophet who teaches lies, he *is* the tail.

<sup>16</sup> For the leaders of this people cause *them* to err,  
And *those who are* led by them are destroyed.” Isaiah 9:13-16

Israel was promised to be the head, but in not seeking the Lord, they would be the tail. And even the head of Israel, its leaders, would be a part of the tail. In failing to come to Christ and remaining under law, one can only expect this position, and the fate of being cut off.

In contrast to this is Christ, who fulfilled the law, He is now the Head. It is a term used of Him repeatedly in the epistles, such as –

“And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.” Colossians 1:18

As such, those who are in Christ, even though once strangers to the covenants, are raised to an exalted position in Him.

“Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— <sup>12</sup> that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” Ephesians 2:11-13

This is what it means to be a part of what God has done in Christ, or to reject what He has done in Him. The law is a tutor. It was given as such, and it was never to be considered a means to an end, except as it is fulfilled in Christ.

However, Israel is responsible to this law until they are willing to exalt the One to whom the honor of this law belongs. It is only in Messiah that a true and right understanding of what it means to be right with God is realized.

God promised the covenant blessings, and He was faithful to provide them as long as Israel was living even remotely in accord with what they were commanded. And God is just in bringing upon them the curses when they are not.

All of this is a lengthy lesson for the world to read about and then to choose what is good and right. The law is good and holy, but it cannot make man – who is already infected with sin – good and holy. But its fulfillment can. Thank God for Jesus who lived it out, died under it, and established a new and better hope for us through His shed blood.

And thank God for Jesus who proved it by coming out of that tomb and giving us an everlasting hope. The contrast is made, and it is complete – the law or grace. Choose wisely. Christ has done it all for you, if you will just reach out to Him.

And remember to pray for Israel who is the subject of these verses, in the sense that they are obligated to what is said until they get it right. Until they do, they will have many woes to go through, and many will never see the good that God has prepared for them. Pray for their eyes to be opened when you pray for the lost in your own life.

**Closing Verse:** *“What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith;<sup>31</sup> but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness.<sup>32</sup> Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law.” Romans 9:30-32*

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 28:45-51 *More bad for Israel here in these verses, and that ain't no jive...* (The Blessings and the Curses, Part V) (81<sup>st</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

#### **The Blessings and the Curses, Part IV**

“You shall carry much seed out to the field but gather little in  
-----for the locust shall consume it

You shall plant vineyards and them you shall tend  
But you shall neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes  
For the worms shall eat them, this shall be their end

You shall have olive trees throughout all your territory  
Hoping for a great crop

But you shall not anoint yourself with the oil  
For off shall your olives drop

You shall beget sons and daughters, but they shall not be yours  
For they shall go into captivity at My hand  
Locusts shall consume all your trees  
And the produce of your land

“The alien who is among you shall rise  
Higher and higher above you  
And you shall come down lower and lower  
Because you were neither faithful nor true

He shall lend to you  
But you shall not lend to him, your finances shall fail  
He shall be the head  
And you shall be the tail

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## **Deuteronomy 28:45-51** **(The Blessings and the Curses, Part V)**

The word *shamad*, translated as “destroy,” will be used three times in today’s verses. In total, it is used seven times in this chapter. Every time it is used, it is in relation to Israel. But in the very last verse of the chapter, it says that Israel will be offered for sale to their enemies.

One cannot be sold off if he has been totally destroyed, and so the word “destroy” cannot mean utter destruction of the people. We’ll see that more fully expressed during the sermon when a promise from the Lord concerning Israel from Leviticus 26 is cited. That is the comparable “blessings and curses” passage to Chapter 28 of Deuteronomy.

We have to remember that if Israel was destroyed as a people, then God’s promises to the people would be of no value at all. What would be the point of going through all of redemptive history just to destroy the people that got the world through redemptive history until the time when the Redeemer would come?

Where is the glory for God in that? And more, where does the remnant that Paul refers to in Romans 9 (citing Isaiah) and Romans 11 then come from? If the church is now Israel, does that mean that only a remnant of the church is saved? That is a logical contradiction. Being a true member of Christ’s church means that one is saved.

So, Paul cannot be referring to the church, except as that remnant is a part of it. And if the remnant is from Israel, which is exactly what Paul says in Romans 11, then that means that Israel – the nation – still exists. You can’t have a remnant without a whole to have a remnant from!

**Text Verse:** *“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people;  
For He will avenge the blood of His servants,  
And render vengeance to His adversaries;  
He will provide atonement for His land and His people.” Deuteronomy 32:43*

The words of the text verse tell the Gentiles to rejoice with His people. The implication is that the Gentiles are additional to “His people.” Paul cites that in the New Testament, in Romans 15, clearly indicating that the Jews (he refers them as “the circumcision”) are His people and that we, the Gentiles, are now a part of what He is doing.



So, we have a remnant from a whole, the remnant is not “from” the church, and that Gentiles are a part of what God is doing. It is rather clear that there has been, and there still is, a role for Israel the people today. As such, it means that Israel the people, who are in the land of Israel today, have a part in that role. It cannot be otherwise.

Their disobedience to the Lord’s word doesn’t negate God’s faithfulness to it. Rather, it highlights the magnificence of God’s faithfulness, despite man’s unfaithfulness. Remember that when someone tells you that you can lose your salvation.

Transgression, violations of the law, faithlessness, and so on, will all be dealt with by God, but He will uphold His word to His people through every single one of our failings. Trust in that and be reassured that if you are in Christ, you are in the sweet spot – for all eternity.

Great things, such as the eternal and infinite grace of God towards His people are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. A Sign and a Wonder (verses 45 & 46)**

A distinct section of Deuteronomy 28 is seen with the coming of verse 45. As such, some scholars take these sections and divide them into epochs of Israel’s history. For example, Joseph Benson says –

“Here some critics have made a division of these prophecies and have interpreted the preceding part as relating to the former captivity of the Jews, and the calamities which they suffered under the Chaldeans; and the remaining part as referring to their latter captivity, and the calamities which they suffered under the Romans. But “there is no need,” says Bishop Newton, “of any such distinction; there is no reason to think any such was intended by the author; several prophecies of the one part, as well as of the other, have been fulfilled at both periods; but they have all been more amply fulfilling during the latter period; and there cannot be a more lively picture than they exhibit of the state of the Jews at present.”

I agree. It is an oversimplification of what has occurred in Israel’s history to say that verses 15-44 belong to one epoch of time and the next section (45-68) to another.

Further, this would dismiss the obvious division of the people between the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah and what occurred to each. Moses repeats and builds upon his previous words, but not necessarily to prophetically refer to separate epochs of time. Rather, it is to show that the Lord's judgment will lessen or increase according to Israel's return to Him, or departure from Him.

The second exile occurred after their rejection of Jesus. As such, the punishments would be great, lengthy, and almost ubiquitous among the people. But the judgments ultimately come from rejecting the Lord, Yehovah, regardless as to whether it is prior to His incarnation or not. Moses is continuing the same main thought now, even if this new section is clearly defined from the last.

<sup>45</sup> **“Moreover all these curses shall come upon you and pursue and overtake you,**

The thought has been expressed twice already in this Chapter –

Vs. 2 “And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you.”

Vs. 15 “that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you.”

The words are the same as verse 15, except Moses adds in the word “pursue.” In this, he adds to the intensity of the thought. It is as if the curses are alive, like wild dogs, chasing their prey. No matter how fast Israel runs from them, they will catch up, and in their catching up, they will overwhelm like a flood.

In this state of being so overwhelmed, Moses next says...

<sup>45</sup> (con't) **until you are destroyed,**

This is the third of seven times that Moses uses the word *shamad*, or “destroy” in this chapter. It means just that, to destroy, bring to naught, perish, and so on. However, it does not have to be taken in its absolute sense, nor should it be here. The Lord has already said as much in Leviticus 26, using another word, *kalah*, which signifies to bring to an end –

“Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, nor shall I abhor them, to utterly destroy them and break My covenant with them; for I *am* the LORD their God.” Leviticus 26:44

As such, the word “destroyed” here simply means the destruction of the people without the annihilation of the nation. And there is a reason for this. Moses tells us in the Song of Moses –

“I would have said, ‘I will dash them in pieces,  
I will make the memory of them to cease from among men,’  
<sup>27</sup> Had I not feared the wrath of the enemy,  
Lest their adversaries should misunderstand,  
Lest they should say, ‘Our hand *is* high;  
And it is not the LORD who has done all this.’” Deuteronomy 32:26, 27

The Lord’s name is at stake in the preservation of Israel. He has given His word. To fail to keep it would demonstrate that He was incompetent and not worth following. If He failed, none of His other covenant promises could be considered sure.

It is a note of absolute security for the believer. The preservation of Israel confirms the doctrine of eternal salvation. When the Lord speaks forth His guarantee, it is an eternal decree. This is exactly why the Song of Moses ends with a note concerning the Gentiles, as we saw in our text verse.

The Bible early on teaches us core doctrines concerning faith, hope, security, and so on, if we will simply pay heed to the template set before us. The template is disobedient Israel. How the Lord has faithfully treated them should give each of us a great deal of assurance when we also fail to measure up.

However, we are still in the curses section of Deuteronomy 28, and so we must continue with evaluating the bad news as well. It will come upon Israel...

<sup>45</sup> (con’t) **because you did not obey the voice of the LORD your God,**

*ki lo shamata b’qol Yehovah elohekha* – “for no you did hear in voice Yehovah your God.” To “hear” means to obey. This is what it all comes down to. The voice of the Lord speaks forth His words, and it is His words that His people are to obey.

On the day I typed this sermon, someone emailed concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage. “We aren’t under law, and so how can it hurt for a person to do this.” The answer is, “Because the Lord has spoken.” In Christ, we are not imputed sin, but we will still be judged for our actions concerning rewards and loss.

Eternal salvation does not mean “no consequences.” Some will come in this life. One divorce often leads to another, finances are ruined, children are destroyed in heart and in proper direction, people get shot over jealousy, and so on.

And some consequences follow later. Standing before the Lord hearing, “Yes, you willingly disobeyed me in this, and because of it you will not receive a full reward,” will be a point of true sadness.

What could have been, never will be. When we fail to hear the voice of the Lord our God – be it Israel under the Mosaic Covenant, or us now under the New Covenant, we will suffer consequences for our failure...

<sup>45</sup> (con’t) **to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you.**

The voice of the Lord is that which utters forth what He wills. When God said, “Let there be light,” the light came forth. But light is not an entity with free will. It simply obeys the command.

When the Lord says, “A wife is not to depart from *her* husband. <sup>11</sup> But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to *her* husband. And a husband is not to divorce *his* wife” (1 Corinthians 7:10, 11), it is as a decree – “This is how it is to be.”

As surely as the light shines out of the darkness at the word of the Lord, so should we hold to our marriage because the voice of the Lord has so spoken. And this is true with each command set forth in the context of the covenant in which it is spoken.

For Israel, statutes and judgments were set forth by the Lord and they were to be heeded accordingly. Failure to hearken meant the promised curses would follow after, overtake, and consume.

However, there is the ongoing truth that though Israel was deserving of the curses, Christ took them upon Himself in their stead. Jesus, in His humanity, was destroyed. He obeyed the commandments and the statutes set forth, and yet all of the curses clearly came upon Him as well. In this, Moses says...

<sup>46</sup> **And they shall be upon you for a sign and a wonder,**

The words more literally say, “And they shall be in you to sign and to wonder.” The word “they” is speaking of the curses. What happens to Israel (in you) in fulfillment of the word, and as is displayed in the curses upon them, are what will be a sign and a wonder.

The *oth*, or sign, is something that points to something else. As such, the curses will be a sign of the surety of the word of the Lord. In seeing what happens to Israel, it confirms that the Lord has spoken and performed. Hence, the nations are as much without excuse in rejecting the Lord as is Israel. Both are guilty of failing to heed the sign of the curses.

The *mopheth*, or wonder, is the thing itself. It is the event that occurs. Together, they are a sign and a wonder. As such, those who are wise will see and understand –

“Because My people have forgotten Me,  
They have burned incense to worthless idols.  
And they have caused themselves to stumble in their ways,  
*From* the ancient paths,  
To walk in pathways and not on a highway,  
<sup>16</sup>To make their land desolate *and* a perpetual hissing;  
Everyone who passes by it will be astonished  
And shake his head.” Jeremiah 18:15, 16

Those who pass by will see the wonder that has been brought upon Israel. The wise among them will then understand the sign. The wonder is given and the sign – the surety of the word – is confirmed.

<sup>46</sup> (con’t) **and on your descendants forever.**

*u-b’zarakha ad olam* – “and in your seed until forever.” The words here are taken by scholars, in one degree or another, as referring to the effects upon Israel. In other words, Cambridge says –

“*Forever*. This, though it may imply the final and utter rejection of Israel as a nation, does not preclude the hope of restoration of a part of Israel as individuals, or as a remnant remaining in or returning to faith and obedience (cf. Isaiah 10:22; Isaiah 6:13; Romans 9:27; Romans 11:5).” Cambridge

Likewise, Lange argues about the scope of the effect upon Israel in contrast to what Keil had said –

“The term *forever* cannot, with KEIL, be limited “to the generation smitten with the curse.” It is rather to be limited by *thy seed* in distinction from the holy seed. Thy seed, seed of evil doers, involving themselves in iniquities of their fathers—upon such the curse rests forever. There is a remnant here also according to the election of grace.—A. G.” John Lange Commentary

These analyses ignore the obvious subject of the verse – “And they [the curses] shall be upon you.” Israel is the object. As such, it is not referring at all to the people, but the curses. They are the sign and the wonder.

All Israel has to do, forever, is to look at their history, and what has occurred to them, and they can forever know that their own disobedience brought the calamities upon them. This exact thought is expressed by Daniel –

“Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him. <sup>12</sup> And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem.” Daniel 9:11, 12

Despite the curses being for a sign and a wonder on Israel, even forever, Christ was willing to intervene and become His own sign and wonder to the people. Isaiah refers to this, using the same words –

“Bind up the testimony,  
Seal the law among my disciples.  
<sup>17</sup> And I will wait on the LORD,  
Who hides His face from the house of Jacob;  
And I will hope in Him.  
<sup>18</sup> Here am I and the children whom the LORD has given me!  
We are for signs and wonders in Israel  
From the LORD of hosts,  
Who dwells in Mount Zion.” Isaiah 8:16-18

Christ took the curses of the law upon Himself on behalf of His people, those who believe. They received what He had done to join to Him in this state. The curse of the law is lifted from them, and they have become signs and wonders in Israel.

The author of Hebrews cites Isaiah, demonstrating that this is exactly what is being referred to –

“And again:

‘Here am I and the children whom God has given Me.’

<sup>14</sup> Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Hebrews 2:13-15

As far as the curses upon Israel being a sign to them, Moses will continue to explain this in the verses ahead.

*The Lord has given His command, and it is what you are to do  
It is that which you cannot see heaven without  
He has spoken the word which is faithful and true  
In doing that thing, He is pleased – have no doubt*

*Jesus spoke the word and it is exactly what He meant  
When He said, “This is the work of God”  
It is “that you believe in Him whom He sent”  
With this gospel of peace, be sure that you are shod*

*Believe in Christ Jesus, that He died for your sins  
Believe that He was buried after that  
Believe that He rose the third day – Yes, over death Jesus wins!  
In your belief, it is as an eternal feather in your hat*

*The law couldn’t save anyone, this much is true  
But in Christ’s fulfillment of it, there is granted life anew*

## **II. Until You Are Destroyed (verses 47-51)**

<sup>47</sup> **“Because you did not serve the LORD your God**

*takhat asher lo avadta eth Yehovah elohekha* – “Under which no you did serve Yehovah your God.” The word *takhat*, or under” signifies “in place of.” One can think of something coming up, like a son replacing his father.

Thus, the words here are not based on what was said, but what will be said in the next verse. In essence, the thought is, “Instead of this...” The word “serve” can also mean “worship.” The two thoughts are so closely connected that either is used at times.

The idea is that the people fail to express themselves positively toward the Lord. As such, Moses continues this thought saying...

<sup>47</sup> (con't) **with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything,**

*b'simkhah u-b'tuv l'vav me'rov kol* – “in joyfulness and in gladness to heart from abundance all.” The preposition is *b'*, meaning “in,” and it should be translated as such. It is the same preposition rightly translated repeatedly in the next verse.

The Lord is showing a contrast in the two states. The Lord promised the blessings. In receiving them and being grateful for them, and in serving the Lord in joy, in gladness, and the like, Israel would prosper.

If one looks at the record of Christ, He did exactly what was expected of Israel here. He served the Lord with joy and gladness of heart for all of the Lord's blessings. The record of Israel, however, shows that they were not found serving in this way. As such...

<sup>48</sup> **therefore you shall serve your enemies,**

Instead of serving (worshipping) the Lord in joy and gladness, Moses says Israel would serve (it is the same word) his enemies. It is one or the other, and the choice was solely up to the people, but the response would be at the hand of the Lord. As Moses says...

<sup>48</sup> (con't) **whom the LORD will send against you,**

This can come about in various ways. In times of prosperity, the people would be well fed and well defended. In such a state, because of the Lord's blessing, the enemy couldn't prevail. The blessing would result in further blessing.

However, in a state of prosperity mixed with overindulgence and neglect towards the Lord, the people would be unprepared. Thus, the blessing would result in receiving the curses and the enemy could prevail.



Or, in a state of lack because of no rains, high heat, or other adverse weather conditions, the people would lack food, wealth, the capability to defend themselves, and so on. Thus, the curse would lead to further curses and the enemy prevailing.

However, such a state of lack could result in the people turning back to the Lord. As such, the curse could lead to renewed blessing. The assumption of this verse, though, is that the Lord is not served, and the people have not turned to Him. In this, He has withheld the blessing. Therefore, Israel will serve his enemies...

**48 (con't) in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything;**

As seen in the examples just noted, the hunger, thirst, nakedness and need could come directly from the Lord prior to the coming of the enemy, or it could come as a result of the enemy coming against them. It doesn't matter which way it comes, in failing to serve the Lord, the result is lack, want, and need of everything.

In such a state, and with the enemy over the people, they will serve man rather than the Lord whom they failed to serve. In this state...

**48 (con't) and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you.**

The question here is, "Who the subject of the action?" The NKJV capitalized "He," indicating they feel it is the Lord. Other translations recognize it as the enemy –

"They'll set a yoke of iron upon your neck until they have exterminated you." (ISV)

The ISV is clearly wrong as the Hebrew is in the singular, "he," but their intent is to indicate that it is the enemy and to not confuse the translation by simply saying "he." Other versions, like the ESV, don't capitalize the pronoun, even when speaking of the Lord, and so one has no idea which they think is meant.

In the Hebrew, the Lord is the nearest antecedent. That makes it probable it is the Lord. But, letting Scripture interpret Scripture, we can confirm that it is most surely the Lord being referred to –

"For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'I have put a yoke of iron on the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and they shall serve him. I have given him the beasts of the field also.'"

-Jeremiah 28:14

What is seen in this verse is the continued contrast of Israel to the Lord. He faithfully served the Lord, and yet, He received the deprivation Israel deserved and the weight of the unyielding yoke of the enemy upon Himself, meaning the law.

This doesn't mean that the law is from the enemy. Rather, it is from God. But the enemy uses the law against the people because of their inability to perform it. This is exactly referred to by Peter in Acts 15 –

“Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? <sup>11</sup> But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.” Acts 15:10, 11

In exchange for His work, including bearing the impossible burden of the law upon the people, Jesus offered them a happier state –

“Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30

But for disobedient Israel while under the law and under its curse...

**<sup>49</sup> The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar,**

The words of this verse are closely followed in Jeremiah 5 –

“Behold, I will bring a nation against you from afar,  
O house of Israel,’ says the LORD.  
“It *is* a mighty nation,  
It *is* an ancient nation,  
A nation whose language you do not know,  
Nor can you understand what they say.” Jeremiah 5:15

At that time, Jeremiah was referring to the Chaldeans of Babylon. The point is that Israel wouldn't just be targeted by her neighbors, but from any country the Lord determined would be the rod of His anger and vengeance. As such, distance was of little matter, even...

<sup>49</sup> (con't) **from the end of the earth,**

*miqtseh ha'arets* – “from extremity the earth.” The word *erets*, or “earth” can speak of the land of Israel, or it can extend to mean the earth itself. In this case, it is referring to the furthest parts of the earth. Despite the distance, they will come...

<sup>49</sup> (con't) **as swift as the eagle flies,**

*ka'asher yideh ha'neshar* – “according to which darts the eagle.” It is a new word, *daah*, meaning to fly swiftly, or to dart through the air. It will be seen just four times, in Psalm 18:10 and in Jeremiah 48:40 and 49:22. The point of these words is that the nation will be unaffected by the distance, obstacles, or difficulty of the journey.

They will dart on the land as easily as an eagle does in the sky. As such, they would retain their strength, order, and discipline when they arrived at the borders of Israel. The prophets use such terminology when referring to Babylon, such as –

“Our pursuers were swifter  
Than the eagles of the heavens.  
They pursued us on the mountains  
And lay in wait for us in the wilderness.” Lamentations 4:19

Despite this theme being repeated concerning Babylon, it is certainly not limited to them. Rather, the eagle was the symbol found on all Roman standards as well.

Thus, the symbolic nature of the eagle representing Babylon becomes a literal symbol of Rome, even if the symbolism continues in regard to the Roman armies. That continues to be true for both nations in the next words...

<sup>49</sup> (con't) **a nation whose language you will not understand,**

*go asher lo tishma leshono* – “Nation which no shall hear tongue.” Again, this is in accord with what Jeremiah 5:15 said a moment ago, “A nation whose language you do not know.” Though Aramaic and Hebrew are cognate languages, the variations in them made it beyond the ability of the nation, meaning Israel as whole, to understand.

This is seen, for example, in 2 Kings 18. Though this is referring to the Assyrians and not the Babylonians, it is the same Chaldee (Aramaic) spoken by both –

“Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, Shebna, and Joah said to *the* Rabshakeh, ‘Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand *it*; and do not speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people who *are* on the wall.’” 2 Kings 18:26

Here, it does not say “Hebrew.” Rather, it says Yehudith, meaning “the language of Judah.” At no time does the Old Testament use the term “Hebrew” when referring to the language of Israel.

Despite that, those trained in diplomacy would have learned the language of Assyria, but the common people would not have understood it. Hence, these men petitioned for the Rabshakeh to speak to them in Aramaic.

However, his response, though crude, showed that he wanted all of the people to be warned, hoping they would rebel and surrender without a fight. And so, he continued in Yehudith –

But *the* Rabshakeh said to them, “Has my master sent me to your master and to you to speak these words, and not to the men who sit on the wall, who will eat and drink their own waste with you?” 2 Kings 18:27

From there, the Rabshakeh continued warning the people and promising them peace if they would come out and surrender. As this was the case with a cognate language, how much more is it the case with the Roman language, Latin. The structure and idiomatic expressions would have been completely foreign to Israel.

And further, both the Babylonians and the Romans can easily be associated with the next words...

**<sup>50</sup> a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly nor show favor to the young.**

The description is well reflected in that of the Chaldeans of Babylon as seen in 2 Chronicles –

“Therefore He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, on the aged or the weak; He gave *them* all into his hand.” 2 Chronicles 36:17

Jeremiah, in the Lamentations, speaks in similar words –

“Our skin is hot as an oven,  
Because of the fever of famine.

<sup>11</sup> They ravished the women in Zion,  
The maidens in the cities of Judah.

<sup>12</sup> Princes were hung up by their hands,  
And elders were not respected.

<sup>13</sup> Young men ground at the millstones;  
Boys staggered under *loads of wood*.

<sup>14</sup> The elders have ceased *gathering at the gate*,  
And the young men from their music.” Lamentations 5:10-14

It is evident based on the words of Jesus in Luke 21 that the Romans would be equally hard on the people, something confirmed by later secular historians –

“For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. <sup>23</sup> But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. <sup>24</sup> And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations.” Luke 21:22-24

It is not hard to see the comparison to Christ in this. Israel is the disobedient, and Israel deserved the curse. And yet, Christ – who perfectly submitted to His Father’s will, and who served Him with joy and gladness – had the terror of the Roman nation brought against Him. The penalties of the curse came upon Him in place of the people.

The nation of fierce countenance that did not respect the elderly, nor show favor to the young, treated the One more innocent than any other with the cruelest of tortures. As for disobedient Israel, Moses continues telling them what they deserve because of their failure to serve the Lord...

<sup>51</sup> **And they shall eat the increase of your livestock and the produce of your land,**

This is still speaking of the nation of fierce countenance. As such, and despite most translations repeatedly saying “they” in this verse, the Hebrew is in the singular. “He [or it] shall eat the increase of your livestock and the produce of your land.”

Concerning these things, verse 4 and verse 18 made a contrast between them –

“Blessed *shall be* the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.” Deuteronomy 28:4

“Cursed *shall be* the fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.” Deuteronomy 28:18

Now, it states that whether blessed in increase or not, whatever they have – be it much or little – will simply be taken from them and consumed. The one with much will see much taken from him. The one with little will see what little he has taken from him. All of the efforts of the land will be taken away by the invading forces...

<sup>51 (con't)</sup> **until you are destroyed;**

It is the third time in our few verses today where the word *shamad*, or destroyed, is used. Israel's efforts will be brought to nothing, and in turn, Israel will be brought to nothing. The words speak of futility of effort leading to futility of life.

This futility will include all of the things that are accounted as necessary for a normal life. In other words, the next two clauses are set in parallel to the first clause. The “produce of your land” is explained by the words...

<sup>51 (con't)</sup> **they shall not leave you grain or new wine or oil,**

The grain, new wine, and oil are the commodities of the soil. They are used for consumption, storing up, and for selling. But none of this will come to pass for disobedient Israel. Instead, all of the efforts of their labors will be taken from them by the nation of fierce countenance, leaving them nothing except empty hands and empty stomachs.

Next, Moses explains the meaning of the words, “the increase [fruit] of your livestock,” saying...

<sup>51 (con't)</sup> **or the increase of your cattle or the offspring of your flocks,**

Two words here are seen for the last time in Scripture, *sheger*, or increase, and *ashtaroth*, or offspring. Both words were used in the same four verses in Deuteronomy and are now retired from Scripture together. What issued from the cattle and from the flock together make up the fruit of the livestock.

Again, like the previous clause, that which Israel worked for will be taken from them and consumed, leaving nothing left for them to eat. It elicits the thought of complete futility and a state of absolute destitution. This will be wrought upon them by this nation...

**\*51 (fin) until they have destroyed you.**

It is a poor translation. Three times in our verses, the word *shamad* has been used. Now, it uses the word *abad*. It signifies to “perish.” Thus, the words should say, “until he (it is singular) has caused you to perish.”

The idea is that Israel will be destroyed until they are caused to perish. Everything will be against them, every burden will be upon them, and everything will be taken from them until they simply wither away from the strain of it all.

One can see the contrast between Israel and Christ in this. Both suffered under the law. One for its own sins. Everything was taken from them, and they were destroyed until they perished. Those that remained were exiled from their home.

Only because of the Lord’s faithfulness to them because of the covenant were they not utterly destroyed. Their time of exile is over, even if their time of destruction is not. Their future is set only because the Lord has preserved them to bring them into the New Covenant.

Christ also suffered under the law, but it was for the sins of His people. Everything was taken from Him, and He was destroyed until He perished. He was exiled from the land of the living. But He was restored because of His faithfulness to the covenant.

Because of Him, Israel’s future is set. It is His faithfulness under the Old Covenant that will, in fact, bring them into the New Covenant. With each step of both the blessings and curses of Deuteronomy, the work of Christ is highlighted.

He is the basis of any true blessing, and He is the bearer of and remover of the curses. We can see that where they failed, He was able to pick up and continue forward. It is the lesson of the law. What man is incapable of doing, Christ was willing to do in our place. In Him is the victory, and in Him is restoration and renewal for the human soul.

For any who will come to Him now, simply trusting by faith that He is capable of saving us from our sins, such will be saved. And for Israel as a nation, they too will someday be

saved and they will receive the wonderful covenant promises made to them under the Old Covenant, but which speak of their favor under the New Covenant.

Jesus Christ is the hope set forth for mankind, and He is the covenant-keeping Lord who will fulfill every promise He has made. Nothing will fail because He is our God who cannot fail. Thank God for Jesus Christ.

**Closing Verse:** *“The LORD has sworn by His right hand  
And by the arm of His strength:  
‘Surely I will no longer give your grain  
As food for your enemies;  
And the sons of the foreigner shall not drink your new wine,  
For which you have labored.  
<sup>9</sup> But those who have gathered it shall eat it,  
And praise the LORD;  
Those who have brought it together shall drink it in My holy courts.’”* Isaiah 62:8, 9

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 28:52-61 *Another dose, as if vaccines from nurses, in order to help you get your Deuteronomy 28 fix...* (The Blessings and the Curses, Part VI) (82<sup>nd</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **The Blessings and the Curses, Part V**

“Moreover all these curses shall come upon you  
and pursue and overtake you, until you are destroyed  
-----this fate to you will be handed  
Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD your God  
To keep His commandments and His statutes which He  
-----to you commanded

And they shall be upon you for a sign and a wonder too  
And on your descendants forever, such He shall do to you

“Because you did not serve



The LORD your God, and praises you did not sing  
With joy and gladness of heart  
For the abundance of everything

Therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the LORD  
-----will send against you  
In hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything  
And He will put a yoke of iron on your neck  
Until He has destroyed you, such catastrophe He will bring

The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar  
From the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies  
-----yes, He will have brought  
A nation whose language you will not understand  
A nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly  
-----nor show favor to the young

And they shall eat the increase of your livestock  
And the produce of your land, until you are destroyed  
-----so He will do  
They shall not leave you grain or new wine or oil  
Or the increase of your cattle or the offspring of your flocks  
-----until they have destroyed you

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## **Deuteronomy 28:52-61** **(The Blessings and the Curses, Part VI)**

In our first verse today, a word, *batakh*, will be introduced. As will be explained again when we get there, it means “to trust.” It is used in the psalms more than 45 times, almost always in connection with trusting in the Lord.

There are things we can trust in, and there are things that we are admonished to not put our trust in. The verses today contain some of the most horrifying words in all of Scripture. That is for certain.

To keep them in context with the people to whom they are directed, I will say, without giving too much personal information, that I have been to several Jewish funerals. Some friends, some family of friends.

At one of them, the rabbi who was doing the ceremony talked about his people and the struggles they had gone through. He even mentioned Leviticus 26 which is the parallel passage to Deuteronomy 28. There, it is in the first person. The Lord says, “I will do this,” and “I will do that.”

On the other hand, here in Deuteronomy 28, it is in the third person. Moses says, “the Lord will do this,” and “the Lord will do that.” Either way, they are words that are so obviously fulfilled in the history of the Jewish people that they simply cannot be dismissed. And yet, this is exactly what the rabbi did when he mentioned the plagues the Lord promised to come upon the people.

It was as if, “This great book established us, and it is our rule and guide for life, but the bad parts do not – no they cannot – apply to us.” I was shocked, but not surprised. We see it in churches all the time. Let us get out our Exacto knife and cut out the things we don’t like. It is not wise, nor is it helpful.

Who are we going to trust concerning the word, concerning the Lord, concerning our theology, and our doctrine? If God is competent, and he made trees so He is, then we should expect that He will get us a word that is suitable for the edification of all people, if they will simply check it out.

**Text Verse:** *“O Israel, trust in the LORD;  
He is their help and their shield.*

<sup>10</sup> *O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD;*

*He is their help and their shield.*

<sup>11</sup> *You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD;*

*He is their help and their shield.” Psalm 115:9-11*

One thing that doesn't matter is “many.” Too often, we look at “many” and we use that as our guide for making decisions. There are many people on the earth and so there must be many acceptable ways to express ourselves toward God.

There are many cultures on the earth and so there are many ways that people groups can express themselves toward God.

There are many religions, and so there must be many ways to have a relationship with God.

There are many denominations, and so it must be ok to worship God in any of them.

And so on.

The problem with that is that there is only one God. We don't set the rules, He does. That should be obvious on the surface. But it eludes most people, and it is a tragic flaw in our thinking. Once we can accept that God is God and that He sets the rules – and only then – can we then work to find out “how” He expects us to live.

If there is one God and He has actually only given one way for many to relate to Him, we need to find out what that way is. Is it Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, or what? Does He care at all? It is certainly worth finding out.

Does walking into a shopping mall and pulling a detonator cord, blowing yourself and all the people around you up, please God? Does that, as some are told, guarantee you a place in paradise?

If the Bible is God's word, and if we think dismissing parts of it are ok, then we only need to look at Israel. The tragic story is of a nation that has, and continues to receive, exactly what it bargained for. God has given an example for the whole wide world to discover exactly what He expects and what happens when those expectations aren't met.

Wonderful, blessed, and great things, along with tragic, terrible, and extraordinary things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word

once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. The Siege and Desperate Straits (verses 52-57)**

<sup>52</sup> **“They shall besiege you at all your gates**

*v’hetsar lekha b’kal shearekha* – “and he shall besiege to you in all your gates.” As was noted in the verses last week, from verse 49, it speaks of a nation whom the Lord will bring against Israel. In referring to the actions of that nation, the words are in the singular, speaking of it as a united entity.

That continues now – “He shall besiege you,” rather than “They shall besiege you.” Understanding this, it will be...

<sup>52</sup> (con’t) **until your high and fortified walls,**

The words are prefixed by articles for effect. It says, “until come down your walls, the high and the fortified.” Obviously, one builds walls for protection.

To build them high is intended to make getting over them more difficult, and to give greater advantage to those inside when those outsiders are trying to scale them. And more, from a higher elevation, there is an advantage for archers and the like over troops mustered below.

To fortify them obviously is intended to make breaching them more difficult. Having such notable defenses would lead to a feeling of security for those within. The walls are those things...

<sup>52</sup> (con’t) **in which you trust,**

With such strong fortifications, the inhabitants would feel secure. But to trust in such things while failing to trust the Lord can only lead to futility. To highlight this, a new word is introduced, *batakh*. It gives the sense of being bold, confident, placing one’s hope, and so on.

Where is one’s confidence? In 2 Kings 18 alone, the word is used eight times. The chapter refers to Hezekiah. Of him, it first says in verse 5 –

“He trusted in the LORD God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him.”

In verses 9-12, it notes the besieging of Samaria by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria. The city was taken, and the inhabitants were taken into exile “because they did not obey the voice of the Lord their God.” They had failed to put their trust in Him.

After that, starting in verse 13, it refers to the warfare of the cities of Judah by Sennacherib, king of Assyria. Then, from verse 17, it details the coming siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib. Until the end of the chapter, the word *batakh* is used seven more times in relation to where Hezekiah placed his trust, meaning in the Lord.

After that, the word is used again in Chapter 19 as the account of the siege continues. Despite the overwhelming force that stood outside threatening the city, Hezekiah refused to surrender, but continued to trust (*batakh*) in the Lord God. Because of this, the account of the siege concludes with these words –

“And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when *people* arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead. <sup>36</sup> So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned *home*, and remained at Nineveh.” 2 Kings 19:35, 36

Here in Deuteronomy, Moses is laying down the law. Where will the people place their trust? Will it be in the Lord, following Him and being obedient to His law, or will it be in the walls of their cities, the work of their own hands? If that is their hope, he says that such strong fortifications will...

52 (con't) **come down throughout all your land;**

If an army is prepared to besiege a city long enough, even the highest and strongest walls will not be able to endure forever. A city is comprised of people and people need food. Eventually, even the greatest and most protected city will run out of it.

In such a state, the soldiers within would be so famished that they would be unable to fend off those scaling the walls or the sappers beneath the walls. In this, the walls which had been the inhabitant's greatest trust will come down. One city after another would fall to the foe. But more...

52 (con't) **and they shall besiege you at all your gates**

*v'hetsar lekha b'kal shearekha* – “and he shall besiege to you in all your gates.” Moses returns to the thought of the besieging of the gates of the first clause, exactly repeating those words again. Why would he do this? It is to set a contrast to what was said and what will next be said, which is...

52 (con't) **throughout all your land which the LORD your God has given you.**

Notice the difference between the two thoughts –

\*at all your gates until your high and fortified walls, in which you trust

\*at all your gates throughout all your land which the LORD your God has given you

Where is your trust? There are gates and there are gates. There are walls and there are walls. Some are built by man, and some are of the Lord. The contrast to where Israel will place its trust, to its own destruction, and where the Lord Jesus placed His trust, to His own victory, is absolute.

In the 22<sup>nd</sup> Psalm, a messianic psalm, the word *batakh*, or trust, is used three times. Twice it speaks of the trust of the fathers in the Lord –

“But You *are* holy,

Enthroned in the praises of Israel.

<sup>4</sup> Our fathers trusted in You;

They trusted, and You delivered them.

<sup>5</sup> They cried to You, and were delivered;

They trusted in You, and were not ashamed.” Psalm 22:3-5

The third time, it speaks of the faith of the Lord’s Messiah in the Lord –

“But You *are* He who took Me out of the womb;

You made Me trust *while* on My mother’s breasts.

<sup>10</sup> I was cast upon You from birth.

From My mother’s womb

You *have been* My God.” Psalm 22:9, 10

Christ placed His trust in the Lord, even from infancy. The Lord is the Gate of trust –

“Open to me the gates of righteousness;  
I will go through them,  
And I will praise the LORD.  
<sup>20</sup> This is the gate of the LORD,  
Through which the righteous shall enter.” Psalm 118:19, 20

And the Lord is a Wall for those who trust Him –

“‘For I,’ says the LORD, ‘will be a wall of fire all around her, and I will be the glory in her midst.’” Zechariah 2:5

Moses’ implied question for Israel is, “Where will you place your trust?” Israel failed and was punished and exiled. The Lord Jesus never swerved in His trust of the Lord His God. He prevailed where Israel failed. Because of their failures, Moses says...

**<sup>53</sup> You shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and your daughters**

The words here, as tragic as they are, were given by Moses in advance. Therefore, when such events were to take place, and they did – in fact – take place, the people could go to his words and say, “This is our fault.” The “fruit of your own body” is explained by the words, “the flesh of your sons and your daughters.”

What is as horrifying as the act itself is the fact that before the act, the child would first have to be killed. And this is what the record of Israel details –

“Then, as the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, saying, ‘Help, my lord, O king!’

<sup>27</sup> And he said, ‘If the LORD does not help you, where can I find help for you? From the threshing floor or from the winepress?’ <sup>28</sup> Then the king said to her, ‘What is troubling you?’

And she answered, ‘This woman said to me, “Give your son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.”’ <sup>29</sup> So we boiled my son, and ate him.

And I said to her on the next day, “Give your son, that we may eat him’; but she has hidden her son.”” 2 Kings 6:26-29

This also is recorded as occurring in Judah –

“The hands of the compassionate women  
Have cooked their own children;

They became food for them  
In the destruction of the daughter of my people.” Lamentations 4:10

These and other such examples are given right in Scripture as fulfillment of the words of Moses now. Israel was told that they would eat their own children...

<sup>53</sup> (con't) **whom the LORD your God has given you,**

In the Bible, having children is considered a blessing from the Lord. However, in rejecting the Lord and shunning His law, the blessing of children would turn into a curse of horror. The unthinkable would become reality...

<sup>53</sup> (con't) **in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you.**

*b'matsor u-b'matsoq asher yatsiq lekha oyevekha* – “in siege and in desperate straits which shall distress to you your enemy.” The words are filled with horror – enemies without, complete lack within, and a state of total distress because of the siege of the enemy.

Moses introduces two new words. The first is *tsuq*. It is a verb signifying distress, being brought into dire straits, and so on. From that comes the other noun, *matsoq*, meaning dire straits, anguish, and so on. Moses says that the Lord will distress Israel in the sieges and straits that He brings upon the people.

It is in this terrible state that they would do the horrifying thing of eating their own children. This is not only recorded in the Bible, but it is also recorded concerning the siege of Jerusalem by Josephus. Joseph Benson says the following –

“This prediction was repeatedly fulfilled, especially when Vespasian and his son Titus begirt Jerusalem so closely that the besieged were reduced to a most grievous famine, which forced them, after they had eaten up their horses and other creatures, to eat even their own children, whom parents, who had used to live delicately, Moses here foretels, should themselves eat up privately, and let none share with them.” Joseph Benson

What Benson is referring to continues to be explained by Moses in the next words...

<sup>54</sup> **The sensitive and very refined man among you**



Moses uses two words to describe the man of this verse. The first is *rak*, or “sensitive.” It signifies tender, delicate, soft and the like. The second word is new and rare, *anog*. It is used only here, in verse 56, and in Isaiah 47:1. It speaks of that which is luxurious or delicate. He then modifies it with the word *meod*, or very.

The person being described is the kindest and most gentle sort of man. In normal circumstances, he would reach out to help anyone, and he would never dare to be rude or unkind. And yet, in the straits that Moses speaks of, he...

<sup>54</sup> (con’t) **will be hostile toward his brother, toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the rest of his children whom he leaves behind,**

The words translated as “will be hostile” are literally “will be evil his eye.” In his own anguish, he will look at his brother, his beloved wife, and even his own children with contempt and disdain rather than compassion.

In saying “the rest of his children,” it means that he has taken one to eat. In saying “whom he leaves behind,” it is speaking of the other children. More correctly, it reads, “the rest of his children who remain.” One is taken, the others are not, but he will not give a bite of the meal he is preparing to anyone else.

In the siege of Jerusalem Josephus records –

“...in every house where there was any appearance of food (or anything that looked like it, that had the shadow of it) there was a battle; and the dearest friends fought with one another, snatching away from each other, the miserable supports of life.”

That is just what Moses says of this refined man now. He will take one of his own children and look at those around him with an evil eye...

<sup>55</sup> **so that he will not give any of them the flesh of his children whom he will eat,**

The obvious thought that comes to mind is that his child is already skin and bones. To his demented mind, killing him would be an act of mercy at this point. But because he is nothing but skin and bones, to share him wouldn’t leave enough even for himself. This is all there is, and it isn’t much...

<sup>55</sup> (con’t) **because he has nothing left in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates.**

Moses repeats the same words as in verse 53, thus forming its own stress on the state of things - “in siege and in desperate straits which shall distress to you your enemy.” Along with that, he adds in the words from verse 52, *b’kal shearekha* – “in all your gates.”

It isn’t just a city that is besieged so that the residents of other cities could come and help. Rather, there is no help for anyone because invaders have come upon the whole land. None will be spared. No food will be smuggled in. No friendly armies will launch counterattacks.

In this terrible state, the unthinkable for this man has become reality. The horror and the revolting nature of the meal is all he can think of. But the man is not alone...

**<sup>56</sup> The tender and delicate woman among you,**

Moses uses the same two words he just used to describe the man to describe now this woman, *rak* and *anog*. She is “tender” and “delicate.” She is a woman of culture, she is refined, she is dainty. However you would describe the mildest and sweetest woman, this is who Moses now refers to. She is so cultured that she is one...

**<sup>56</sup> (con’t) who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground**

The word translated as “venture” is *nasah*. It signifies to test or prove a matter. She is so delicate and soft that she wouldn’t attempt to tread barefooted. Moses also uses the word *arets* (land) instead of *adamah* (ground).

Though they are almost synonymous, and are both translated as earth, land, and ground, it appears that he may have chosen *arets* to speak of any terrain – be it soft grass, the shores of the water, or anywhere else. She would never even attempt it...

**<sup>56</sup> (con’t) because of her delicateness and sensitivity,**

Again, Moses repeats the word *anog* (delicate) and then he uses the noun form of *rak*, a word found only here in the Bible, *rok*, or “tenderness.” The repetition is once again a way of highlighting what is said. Such a completely polished and refined woman...

**<sup>56</sup> (con’t) will refuse to the husband of her bosom, and to her son and her daughter,**

Again, like the description of the sensitive and refined man, Moses says that this sensitive and refined woman would have an evil eye toward her beloved husband and also toward her own children. The idea here is that of the strongest of possible bonds.

In saying “wife of his bosom,” or “husband of her bosom,” it is speaking of someone so close that the two are as close to one another as if they are one. And as the children have issued from them, they are one in the same stock. No human relationships could be any closer. And yet, for this once refine and tender woman, she will refuse them...

**<sup>57</sup> her placenta which comes out from between her feet**

This is a word found only here in the Bible, *shilyah*. Some translations say “her young,” but this is unlikely. It is more likely referring to afterbirth. The word comes from *shalah* meaning to extract.

The woman is at the time of birth, and so she has withdrawn herself from being near anyone else in order that she will be alone to consume what passes from her. But knowing that the placenta would only lightly satisfy her, she plots to also add to it...

**<sup>57</sup> (con't) and her children whom she bears;**

The use of the plural, children, certainly means one, twins, or triplets. Her affection for the child or children to be born would be completely lacking. In her deranged thinking, she probably thought it a just and fair trade. “My body has been the vessel to produce the child, now the child will be the means of sustaining my body.

Such is the nature of the horror of being besieged and there being nothing left to eat. And so, to bear a child would be to set forth a meal...

**<sup>57</sup> (con't) for she will eat them secretly for lack of everything**

*ki tokelem b'khoser kol ba'sather* – “for she will eat them [plural – probably meaning the afterbirth and the child] in lack all, in the secret.” The words of Moses are so direct, so personal, and so horrifying that surely none could believe they were possible. Who could even imagine it?

But in abandoning the Lord, there would be a time of dread that those who have never faced such a thing could not even think possible. And yet, he says that it would come...

<sup>57</sup> (con't) **in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates.**

The NKJV translators lazily copied the translation from verse 55 and restated it here. However, here it only says, “in your gates,” not “in all your gates” as it said in verse 55. Such lack of attention to detail is unacceptable for a translation committee.

Despite that, for the third time in a row, Moses returns to the same general words as were used in verses 53 and 55 – “in siege and in desperate straits which shall distress to you your enemy in your gates.” Thus, he is forming a very heavy stress on the state of what it will be like when the Lord turns His favor away from Israel.

As already seen, this came to pass in various degrees in 2 Kings 6 and in Lamentations 4. This is also noted in Ezekiel 5. Moses had warned, the law was given, and Israel shunned both the Lord and His word. Because of this, the prophet confirmed what lay ahead –

“Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘This *is* Jerusalem; I have set her in the midst of the nations and the countries all around her. <sup>6</sup> She has rebelled against My judgments by doing wickedness more than the nations, and against My statutes more than the countries that *are* all around her; for they have refused My judgments, and they have not walked in My statutes.’ <sup>7</sup> Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Because you have multiplied *disobedience* more than the nations that *are* all around you, have not walked in My statutes nor kept My judgments, nor even done according to the judgments of the nations that *are* all around you’— <sup>8</sup> therefore thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Indeed I, even I, *am* against you and will execute judgments in your midst in the sight of the nations. <sup>9</sup> And I will do among you what I have never done, and the like of which I will never do again, because of all your abominations. <sup>10</sup> Therefore fathers shall eat *their* sons in your midst, and sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments among you, and all of you who remain I will scatter to all the winds.’” Ezekiel 5:5-10

Ezekiel was referring to the tragedy that would come upon the people in the first exile, which had already begun. Eventually, the city was destroyed as prophesied, including the resulting horrors he conveyed to the people.

However, in failing to heed after that, the same tragedy came upon them again as recorded by Josephus and as relayed on Wikipedia. It is a story that occurred during the Roman siege that so closely matches Moses’ words that it can be considered nothing but a fulfillment of these verses here in Deuteronomy –

“Josephus relates that there was a Mary, daughter of Eleazar originally from the village of Bethzuba in the district of Perea, east of the Jordan River, who had previously fled to Jerusalem. Distinguished in family and fortune, her property, treasures and food had been plundered by the Jewish defenders of the city during the siege. Famine was “eating her heart out, and rage consuming her still faster”. Maddened by hunger she took the infant at her breast and said to him: ‘Poor little mite! In war, famine, and civil strife why should I keep you alive? With the Romans there is only slavery and that only if alive when they come; but famine is forestalling slavery, and the partisans are crueller than either. Come you must be food for me, to the partisans an avenging spirit, and to the world a tale, the only thing left to fill up the measure of Jewish misery.’ And in ‘defiance to all natural feeling’ she killed her son, then roasted him and ate one half, hiding the rest.

Almost immediately the rebels appeared (‘sniffing the unholy smell’) and threatened to kill her on the spot unless she revealed what she had prepared. As she uncovered what was left of the child she offered them a share. They left her in horror and the ‘entire city could not stop thinking of this crime and abomination.’ When the news reached the Romans, ‘some refused to believe, some were distressed but on most the effect was to add enormously to their detestation’ of the enemy at hand. Titus disclaimed all responsibility as he had repeatedly offered peace and amnesty for surrender.”

Though not in the Bible itself, and though Josephus – at times – contradicts or misunderstands some of the things found in Scripture, his eyewitness writings of the time in which he lived serve as a witness to what occurred in Israel after their rejection of Christ Jesus.

On the one hand, there is disobedience leading to the horror spoken of in these verses concerning the offspring of the people. On the other hand, there is the note of the blessing for Christ who perfectly obeyed the will of His Father by accomplishing everything set forth for Him to do –

“For it was fitting for Him, for whom *are* all things and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. <sup>11</sup> For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified *are* all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, <sup>12</sup> saying:

‘I will declare Your name to My brethren;  
In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.’

<sup>13</sup> And again:

‘I will put My trust in Him.’

And again:

'Here am I and the children whom God has given Me.'

<sup>14</sup> Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. <sup>16</sup> For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. <sup>17</sup> Therefore, in all things He had to be made like *His* brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup> For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted." Hebrews 2:10-18

Instead of those in Israel rejecting brother, wife, or offspring, and consuming their own children, Christ was willing to come to save His brethren, die for His bride (Ephesians 5:25), and to suffer for the children God has given Him. The contrast between the two is complete.

As for Israel, it has been a heavy burden laid upon them, but the law came by their own agreement to be under it, and it came with advanced warnings of what it meant to reject what it says. Moses will again confirm this thought in the next verse...

*He was so gentle and such a loving soul  
He never harmed a thing in his whole life  
But something has come over him that he cannot control  
And it has separated any love he had, even for his wife*

*She was the epitome of tenderness and sensitivity  
Never did she dare to put the sole of her foot to the ground  
But she has destroyed her own child in the siege of the city  
And has hidden his body to eat when none are around*

*How could such a thing happen? It is a world full of woe  
There is only horror and disaster to be found  
Where will it end? No one can know  
But look at what has happened with the terror all around*

*Oh God, may our trust be in You alone  
You are our God, our only Helping Stone*

## II. Until You Are Destroyed (verses 58-61)

<sup>58</sup> **“If you do not carefully observe**

This is somewhat of a paraphrase. The words are more precise, saying, “If not you keep to do.” There is the keeping and the doing as has been mentioned in earlier sermons. One can keep and not do, and one can do without keeping. But what is expected is that the people will both keep and also do...

<sup>58</sup> (con’t) **all the words of this law that are written in this book,**

The English gives the sense for us to understand, but in the original Moses is very specific, leaving out any possibility of ambiguity – “all words, the law the this, these written in the book the this.” One can only see that absolute perfect adherence to what is stated is the expectation.

For Israel, there was the sacrificial system for failure to meet this perfect standard, but the intent is not to fail and then seek forgiveness. It is, instead, to perform and not need to seek it. In keeping and doing, there is a demonstration of the attitude of the people...

<sup>58</sup> (con’t) **that you may fear**

The words, “that you may fear” are not correct. Rather, it says “to fear.” Using “that” implies one clause gives the purpose for the other. Rather the second clause explains the first. In observing and doing, the people are showing reverential fear.

Taken together, it says, “If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, to fear...”

<sup>58</sup> (con’t) **this glorious and awesome name,**

*ha’shem ha’nikbad v’ha’nora* – “the Name, the heavying, and the feared.” The verb *kavad* means heavy, weighty, or abounding with. Thus, “the glorying” is a good way to understand the meaning. The word *nora* is a verb meaning to fear. Being prefixed by the article, it thus means “the feared,” and so “the awestriking” may get the point across as well. And that superlative name is...

<sup>58</sup> (con’t) **THE LORD YOUR GOD,**

*YEHOVAH ELOHEKHA* – YEHOVAH YOUR GOD. It is a term used many times in Deuteronomy when speaking of the Lord in general, but because of how Moses has preceded it with the previous clause that is filled with superlatives, the full cap title is a sweet touch to offset the words.

By stating it the way he has, it appears that Moses has shown that the name Yehovah that was explained to him at the burning bush in Exodus 3:14 (I AM THAT I AM), is now more fully developed to Israel. It is not just that He is “Yehovah, who is your God,” but that he is “YEHOVAH YOUR GOD.”

The name, and the people to whom the name has been presented, are united in a new revelation of Himself. God is progressively revealing who He is and what His relationship with Israel is. Therefore, if they fail to keep and to do the words of the law and to fear the Name, the heavying, and the feared (YEHOVAH YOUR GOD) ...

**<sup>59</sup> then the LORD will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues**

The nature of the plagues is stated first – “And will make extraordinary, Yehovah, your plagues and plagues your descendants.” Also, the word “plagues” is the same word that was used to describe the beating a person was to receive for violating the law – up to forty stripes – seen in Deuteronomy 25:3.

Therefore, this is certainly more than just plagues of pestilence, but plagues, hazards, social afflictions against the people, and dare we even say of events such as the pogroms and the holocaust. It is the stripes of punishment for rejecting the law and the Lord from whom the law came. These will be...

**<sup>59</sup> (con’t) —great and prolonged plagues—and serious and prolonged sicknesses.**

This seems to show that the idea of “stripes” is more suited. There are both great and prolonged stripes and great and prolonged sicknesses. The two work hand in hand. In being afflicted, such as when the Jews were all clustered into the ghettos (a stripe), the sicknesses would then accompany the stripes.

**<sup>60</sup> Moreover He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt,**

Here, the word “disease” is singular. It reads, “And he will return in you every infirmity Egypt.” The word translated as “disease” is used now for the second and last time, *madveh*.” In both Deuteronomy 7:15 and here, it is referring to disease found in Egypt.



It comes from a word signifying infirmity and it was something that they should have forever left behind, but the Lord promises to bring them back upon the people when they fail to heed. These may or may not be the diseases that afflicted the Egyptians during the plagues upon Egypt. The reason is that a different word is used when describing those in Exodus 15 –

“There He made a statute and an ordinance for them, and there He tested them, <sup>26</sup> and said, ‘If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For *I am* the LORD who heals you.’” Exodus 15:25, 26

Either way, whether those particular plagues, or whether it was general diseases that were found in Egypt that the Israelites personally experienced, of them, he specifically notes...

<sup>60</sup> (con’t) **of which you were afraid,**

The words are more personal, “which you were afraid of their presence.” In other words, like AIDS or some other debilitating disease that people are fearful of even being around, they shall return to the people of Israel, but more...

<sup>60</sup> (con’t) **and they shall cling to you.**

They will reappear among the people and there will be no way to shake them off. Where one person goes, it will follow. And when it does, it will cling to whoever is near him, sticking like glue. But more than these, the Lord promises extra that the people had not even considered...

<sup>61</sup> **Also every sickness and every plague, which *is* not written in this Book of the Law,**

Here again, Moses uses the same word translated elsewhere as “stripe” that he used in verse 59, “Also, every sickness and every stripe, which is not written in this Book of the Law.”

Things that would be completely unknown, more terrible, more enduring, more terrifying, and so on – all of these would come upon Israel for their failure to heed. All of these and more...

\*61 (fin) **will the LORD bring upon you until you are destroyed.**

This is the sixth of seven times that Moses uses the word *shamad*, or “destroy” in this chapter. As we have already seen, it means just that, to destroy, bring to naught, perish, and so on. However, it does not have to be taken in its absolute sense.

Moses knows that Israel will be destroyed. They will be so crushed that there appears to be no hope for them at all. And yet, he knows that the Lord has promised to preserve them through their destruction and to never utterly annihilate them. But that will not ease the pains they are sure to face while they are facing them.

In Jeremiah 6, the prophet uses the same two words that Moses now uses (sickness and stripe) to describe what had befallen the people as an attempted corrective measure –

<sup>6</sup>“For thus says the LORD of hosts:  
‘Cut down her trees;  
cast up a siege mound against Jerusalem.  
This is the city that must be punished;  
there is nothing but oppression within her.  
<sup>7</sup>As a well keeps its water fresh,  
so she keeps fresh her evil;  
violence and destruction are heard within her;  
**sickness** and **wounds** are ever before me.  
<sup>8</sup> Be warned, O Jerusalem,  
lest I turn from you in disgust,  
lest I make you a desolation,  
an uninhabited land.’”

Jeremiah probably read the words after penning them and said, “Yes, the Lord is true to His word.” He may have wondered what the end of it all would be. But it wasn’t for him to know. He simply wrote what the Spirit inspired, and he waited to see where things would head.

To this day, people in Israel still don’t know where things will go, because – for the most part – they are wholly ignorant of His word. And of those who have studied it, almost none of them have done so with the thought of Christ Jesus being the One to whom the words point.

Think of that rabbi I mentioned at the beginning of our word today. There he is, telling his people about how unreliable the word is, when it told – in the minutest detail – exactly what would come to pass. But unless one wants to admit that he is (or his people are) in the wrong, there will be no understanding.

Let us not make this error. God is God and we must let Him be so in our lives. Think clearly, think soberly, and think about Israel. If nothing else on this planet explains what is right and what is not concerning who God is (and there many things that do), Israel surely does.

We cannot ignore this word, which tells us of such things, and go unscathed. And the fact is that above all else, this word tells us of Jesus. Therefore, to reject what it says about Him is to find only condemnation.

Pay heed to the word, accept it as it is given (and in its proper context), and you will do well. Of this, I am absolutely certain. If you do not, things will not go well. And of this, I am absolutely certain. Come to Christ and find God's favor. Amen.

**Closing Verse:** *"Vengeance is Mine, and recompense;  
Their foot shall slip in due time;  
For the day of their calamity is at hand,  
And the things to come hasten upon them."* Deuteronomy 32:35

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 28:62-68 *Some will find hell by ignoring these verses, and yet they think they will find heaven...* (The Blessings and the Curses, Part VII) (83<sup>rd</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **The Blessings and the Curses, Part VI**

"They shall besiege you at all your gates until your high and  
-----fortified walls  
Those in which you trust  
Come down throughout all your land; and they shall besiege you  
-----at all your gates

Throughout all your land which the LORD your God has given you  
-----as is right and just

You shall eat the fruit of your own body  
The flesh of your sons and your daughters – yes, this is true  
Whom the LORD your God has given you  
In the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy  
-----shall distress you

The sensitive and very refined man among you  
Will be hostile toward his brother, acting so unkind  
Toward the wife of his bosom  
And toward the rest of his children whom he leaves behind

So that he will not give any of them the flesh; their meat  
Of his children whom he will eat

Because he has nothing left in the siege and desperate straits  
In which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates

The tender and delicate woman among you  
Who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground  
Because of her delicateness and sensitivity  
Will refuse to the husband of her bosom, and to her son  
-----and her daughter, if they be found

Her placenta which comes out from between her feet  
And her children whom she bears, so she will them treat

For she will eat them secretly for lack of everything  
-----in the siege and desperate straits  
In which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates

“If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law  
That are written in this book by which you should be awed  
That you may fear this glorious and awesome name  
THE LORD YOUR GOD

Then the LORD will bring upon you and your descendants

Extraordinary plagues; a life full of messes  
Great and prolonged plagues—  
And serious and prolonged sicknesses

Moreover He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt  
Of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you  
-----they shall from you not be stripped

Also every sickness and every plague  
Which is not written in this Book of the Law  
Will the LORD bring upon you until you are destroyed  
Because you did not show Him respect and awe

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## **Deuteronomy 28:62-68** **(The Blessings and the Curses, Part VII)**

In 2003, I went on a trip to Israel with mom. We went together with Zola Levitt ministries. Zola was a messianic Jew and had been on about 70 tour groups by the time we went with him. Because of this, he had things pretty tightened up as to how to make the trip enjoyable – what to see, what not to see, and so on.

We enjoyed everything from Dan to Beersheba, down to Eilat, and over to Petra in Jordan. While in Jerusalem, there were many nice sights to see. It was during the second Intifada, and people thought we were stupid for going. While in Jerusalem, we had lunch on a hill overlooking the city.

I fell asleep on the grass, and Zola took a photo of me napping with the city in the distance. That made the cover of his next month's publication. It was a selling point for those who might have thought you could get shot while touring Israel. That just wasn't likely.

While in Jerusalem, Zola took us to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Memorial, on Mount Herzl (the Mount of Remembrance). It was certainly a moving place to be, and they made sure that all who went through it would feel that way. Israel wants the world to never forget what happened to them. But Israel has yet to acknowledge why those things happened to them...

**Text Verse:** *“Now therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city of which you say, ‘It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: <sup>37</sup> Behold, I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them in My anger, in My fury, and in great wrath; I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. <sup>38</sup> They shall be My people, and I will be their God; <sup>39</sup> then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them. <sup>40</sup> And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. <sup>41</sup> Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.” Jeremiah 32:36-41*

A Jewish guy that a friend of mine knows watched some of the sermons I have done. Eventually, he told her, I will never watch one of his sermons again. He said that I blamed Israel for what happened to them in the Holocaust.

I have never directly said that, but I have implied it many times. They don't need my opinion on this, all they need to do is read Leviticus 26 (the Lord in the first person), or Deuteronomy 28 (Moses speaking of the Lord in the third person), to know that if they had been obedient to the Lord, none of the woes of their past would have come upon them, including the Holocaust.

When mom and I walked out of Yad Vashem, I turned to her and said, "The only thing that is missing in this place is a copy of Deuteronomy 28 posted in every language that the Jews were driven to. As sad as the Holocaust was, it was a self-inflicted wound for having rejected the Lord their God.

It is true, that man certainly took things too far, just as the Babylonians did millennia earlier, but there would have been no first exile, nor a second exile, along with the resulting punishments, if Israel had done what the Lord expected of them.

And, sadly, what happened to them in the Holocaust will be overshadowed by what the word says is still to come upon them. If you want to know what I mean, your next reading assignment is Zechariah 13:8. But good news immediately follows that coming tragedy in Zechariah 13:9.

The blessings and the curses. Israel was given the choice. It was carefully laid out for them, in advance. And everything that Moses prophesied has come to pass. And it is all because they failed to know the time of their visitation.

The terrible woes to come upon Israel, as prophesied in Deuteronomy 28, will be completed in our sermon today. But the terrible woes to come upon Israel will continue into the future until that day when they – as a nation – finally call out to Jesus, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord."

Certain truths such as these are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. To Destroy You and Bring You to Nothing (verses 62 & 63)**

**<sup>62</sup> You shall be left few in number,**

*v'nishartem bimte meat* – “And you (all: plural) shall remain in persons few.” With the exception of one instance in verse 14, Deuteronomy 28 has spoken to the people in the singular consistently until this point.

Now, and in the next clause of this verse, it goes to the plural – you all. As far as the content, the words are a close repeat of Deuteronomy 4:27 where Moses also uses the plural –

“And the Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the Lord will drive you.”

In this verse, however, the NKJV omits the word “And” that begins it. The words are actually a continuation of what has been said and they speak of the result of those previous verses –

<sup>58</sup>“If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, THE LORD YOUR GOD, <sup>59</sup> then the LORD will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues—great and prolonged plagues—and serious and prolonged sicknesses. <sup>60</sup> Moreover He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you. <sup>61</sup> Also every sickness and every plague, which *is* not written in this Book of the Law, will the LORD bring upon you until you are destroyed. <sup>62</sup> [And] You shall be left few in number, whereas you were as the stars of heaven in multitude, because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God. Deuteronomy 28:58-62

It is the plagues, sicknesses, and diseases noted in the previous verses that will result in the diminution of their numbers. The use of the plural adds emphasis to the content. Instead of, “And you (Israel) shall be left few in number,” it says, “And you (all) shall be left few in number.” The plural continues with the words...

<sup>62</sup> (con't) **whereas you were as the stars of heaven in multitude,**

*takhat asher heyitem ke'kokve ha'shemayim la'rov* – “under which you (all: plural) were as stars the heavens to multitude.” Again, the plural adds emphasis. After the many, many verses of it being in the singular, Moses uses the plural to speak forth the magnitude of the resulting catastrophe that will come upon the people –

“And you (all) shall be left few in number.”



“Whereas you (all) were as the stars of heaven in multitude.”

With that noted, he again provides the exact reason that this will come about, saying...

<sup>62</sup> (con't) **because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God.**

*ki lo shamata b'qol Yehovah elohekha* – “for no you (singular) would hear (meaning hearken to) in voice Yehovah your (singular) God.” In essence, Moses is calling down the collective curse upon the people – both as individuals and as a nation. The two are essentially inseparable.

If America is to be judged for its wrongdoing, all of the people will suffer. It is not as if the Lord will separate the faithful from the unfaithful when the nuke detonates over New York City, or when the plague falls upon the land. Rather, all will participate in the tragedy of the events.

With this stated, we cannot go far from the truth that Jesus came to take Israel's punishment upon Himself. The nation transgressed, and yet the punishment of the sins of Israel could – ostensibly – have been carried by Him.

This would include the sins of each person, and the sins of the nation collectively. In relation to Him, each person who accepts him – Peter or Paul for example – is forgiven. But the guilt of the nation remains. Hence, exile and punishment came upon all.

The idea of being few in number is probably twofold in significance. First, it is that there will be but a few left in the land at any time, but also that the whole will be reduced to a few as well. As far as the first premise during the Babylonian exile, that is recorded in Jeremiah –

“But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left in the land of Judah the poor people, who had nothing, and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time.”

-Jeremiah 39:10

It is also true of the number who were exiled. The total of Israel was reduced to a tiny number compared to those who were, as it said in 1 Kings 4, at the time of Solomon –

“Judah and Israel *were* as numerous as the sand by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing. <sup>21</sup> So Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the

River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. *They* brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.” 1 Kings 4:20, 21

Whether the term “stars of the heavens,” or the term “sand by the sea,” the number was immense. Eventually, through war, pestilence, and exile, the number was reduced to a paltry few souls.

The same is true at the time of the Roman exile. After the Babylonian exile, the people returned to the land and grew in number once again. However, John Gill notes the sad details of their reduction in number when the Romans came –

“...how much they were reduced by the Romans will appear by the accounts Josephus gives of those that were slain, and made prisoners by them: he says (i), ‘there were 1,100,000 slain at the siege of Jerusalem and by the war, and 97,000 made prisoners;’ and it is computed that 1,240,490 were destroyed in Jerusalem and other parts of the nation (k); and it is also said by their historian (l), that of those that were transported from Jerusalem and other parts of Palestine into Spain, scarce a thousandth part remained and that an infinite number were slain in France and Germany; and though their number equalled those that came out of Egypt, yet scarce five thousand of them were left.” John Gill

This is how it was, and this is how it continues to be, for Israel. The people belong to the whole, and the many will collectively be reduced within the nation. Until the nation collectively turns to Christ, this will remain unchanged. With that understood, Moses continues with the words of tragedy...

**<sup>63</sup> And it shall be, *that* just as the LORD rejoiced over you**

*v’hayah ka’asher sas Yehovah alekhem* – “And it shall be according to which has delighted over you (plural).” As you can see, the plural continues. Moses acknowledges that the Lord rejoices over each and every soul.

It is as if the Lord looks down from heaven and sees the masses and rejoices over them all together and individually at the same time. In this, Moses introduces a new word, *sus*. It means to be glad, rejoice, make mirth, and so on. There is the sense of gladness in the Lord that is being delightfully expressed, which is...

**<sup>63</sup> (con’t) to do you good and multiply you,**

*l'hetive etkhem u-l'harbot etkhem* – “to do good you (all) and to multiply you (all).” In the obedience of the nation, the Lord rejoices to do good to all of the people individually.

One can almost see Moses raising his hands and sweeping them across the people, and then pointing at individuals in rapid succession. “This is what the Lord did for you all. You, you, you, you, annnnnnd you over there as well.” However, in their disobedience, another course will be set for them...

<sup>63</sup> (con't) **so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you and bring you to nothing;**

*ken yasis Yehovah alekhem l'haabid etkhem u-l'hashmid etkhem* – “Thus, will delight Yehovah over you (all) to cause to perish you (all) and to destroy you (all). The contrast is complete. “Yehovah delighted to do you good and to multiply you when you were faithful. Just so, Yehovah will delight over you to cause you to perish and to destroy you when you are faithless.” Of this verse, John Lange rightly says it... –

“...is a bold anthropomorphic figure, but spoken from the profoundest view of the truth, since righteousness on the basis of His holiness, as His mercy according to His love, is in full accordance with the nature of God. As He is glorious, so also He is fearful.” John Lange

This is now the seventh and final use of the word *shamad*, or destroy, in Deuteronomy 28. It will continue to be seen in Scripture, but repeating the word seven times brings its own sense of completeness and finality to the words.

As we have seen, and as is now repeated, this doesn't mean to destroy utterly. Israel continued to exist, and they continue to exist. But the people have been destroyed along the way.

Though using different words to express the thought, what is stated here is certainly reflective of what is said about Christ in Isaiah 53. The Lord delighted to bring His destruction upon Israel. But it also pleased the Lord to do so in Christ in their stead –

“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him;

He has put *Him* to grief.

When You make His soul an offering for sin,

He shall see *His* seed, He shall prolong *His* days,

And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.” Isaiah 53:10

God in Christ was willing to take what Israel rightly deserved upon Himself in order to redeem them from their transgressions committed under the law. However, as for Israel in their destruction, Moses next says...

<sup>63</sup> (con't) **and you shall be plucked from off the land which you go to possess.**

The words now go from the plural back to the singular – “and you (all, plural) shall be plucked from off the land which you (Israel, singular) go to possess.” Here, it more appropriately reads, “the ground.” Those who would come to Canaan would go in to possess their own plot, but like a tree being pulled up, so would those who once went to sink down their roots.

In this is a new word, *nasakh*. It means to destroy, pluck, or uproot, coming from a root meaning to tear away. It will be used once by David in Psalm 52 and then only two more times by Solomon in the proverbs. So literally was this fulfilled that John Gill records these words as a part of the historical record of the Jews –

“The Emperor Adrian, to prevent their insurrections and rebellions, which had given him a great deal of trouble, ordered by an edict that no Jew should come into Jerusalem, nor into the land of Judea, or be seen in it, which is observed by several writers (m); by which means the country was cleared of them. In later times some of them did get thither again, but they were but few. Benjamin of Tudela, a Jew of the twelfth century, travelled into several parts of the world in quest of his countrymen, and particularly into Judea, and his view was to magnify his people; and yet owns he found at Jerusalem only two hundred persons, whose employment was dyeing wool, and dwelt in a corner of the town under the tower of David; and but twelve at Bethlehem, three at Maresha, at Shunem indeed three hundred, none at Gilead, two at Nob, who were dyers, three at Ramah, one at Joppa, none at Jafne, where had been a famous academy, none at Ashdod, and at Tiberias about fifty (n). And our countryman Sandys (o), who travelled into Judea in the seventeenth century, says, ‘here be some Jews, yet inherit they no part of the land, but in their own country do live as aliens.’” John Gill

So, at any given time there were from no Jews at all to less than a thousand in the entire land, and even while there, they were counted as foreigners. This lowly state continued right up until the Zionist Movement began and the Jews, once again, started to fill the land.

As for a parallel in Christ, again, though the Hebrew words used are different, the same sentiment is spoken of concerning Him in Isaiah 53:8 –

“He was taken from prison and from judgment,  
And who will declare His generation?  
For He was cut off from the land of the living;  
For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.”

Israel was to be removed from their land due to disobedience, but Christ was to be removed from another type of land in their place. The trade was offered, and to this day it still stands. Only when the exchange is accepted will there be surety for them.

As for being uprooted, Moses next tells what the consequences of that will be for them, as we will see in a minute...

*If only you will heed the voice of the Lord your God  
If only you will do what that voice calls out to you  
But like animals being conducted with a cattle prod  
So, you will be treated for what you failed to do*

*The Lord has given the word in advance  
And Moses has spoken the word out to you  
This word will not fail, of this there is no chance  
The Lord will set forth all He has promised to do*

*He will provide the blessing when you heed the word  
And surely will come the curses when you fail to heed  
So be diligent to do all that you have heard  
Or the Lord will destroy you, and He will do so with speed*

## **II. Your Life Shall Hang in Doubt Before You (verses 64-68)**

<sup>64</sup> **“Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples,**

The words of this verse are all in the singular, you Israel. In this clause, it is more specific – “all the peoples.” In other words, the distinction is being made between Israel and “all the peoples.” They are completely set apart from them, even if they are dwelling among them.

And how true has that been, and how true it remains even to this day. They dwell throughout the US, even as citizens, but they remain Jews. Such is true wherever they

have gone. They have stubbornly held onto their identity not only among all the people, but throughout the millennia among all the peoples, even...

<sup>64</sup> (con't) **from one end of the earth to the other,**

*miqtseh ha'arets v'ad qetseh ha'arets* – “from end the earth and as far as end the earth.” This has been literally fulfilled as Jews have been spread to every possible place where man dwells.

Synagogues exist in remote China and in Budapest. They are found on remote islands of Tunisia and in India. They are found as far north as Fairbanks, Alaska and Trondheim, Norway, and they are found as far south as Dunedin, New Zealand.

Jews have been dispersed like the dust blown off of the Sahara Desert, encompassing the world and just as easily removed once again and scattered further still. It is without controversy that the prophecy of Moses as he sat in the plains of Moab, near the Jordan River has been literally fulfilled.

Looking at it in this light, and considering that it was spoken concerning Israel's disobedience, it is actually a mark of shame upon them, rather than something to be boasted of.

Consider the parallel noted in the previous verse. Like Israel being removed from the land which typifies life, Christ was removed from the land of the living. The parallel continues in that Israel was prophesied to be returned to their land, just as it was prophesied that Christ would return from that place where no one could have imagined anyone would ever return from again.

Moses, in just two more chapters, shows us that it would be the same for Israel –

“Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call *them* to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you, <sup>2</sup> and you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, <sup>3</sup> that the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you. <sup>4</sup> If *any* of you are driven out to the farthest *parts* under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. <sup>5</sup> Then the LORD your God will bring

you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. <sup>6</sup>And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.”

-Deuteronomy 30:1-6

Likewise, Isaiah – in the same passage where he spoke of Christ’s death – also speaks of Christ’s return from death –

“After the anguish of His soul, He will see the light of life and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant will justify many, and He will bear their iniquities.” Isaiah 53:11 (BSB)

Even from the remotest parts of the world, the Lord has, and continues to, bring the people back to the land where they may live. And just so, Christ was brought back from the remotest place a human could imagine going, back to the land where He may live.

As for Israel in their land of exile, Moses tells them of their state in such places...

<sup>64</sup> (con’t) **and there you shall serve other gods,**

Some scholars say this can’t be confirmed. They haven’t looked very closely. The words *elohim akherim*, or “gods other,” mean any god other than the Lord God. If they were serving the Lord God, they wouldn’t be in exile. Moses then further defines what he means by saying...

<sup>64</sup> (con’t) **which neither you nor your fathers have known—**

This is obviously referring to serving the Lord God. Even though Israel in the land served innumerable gods other than the Lord, causing them to be exiled, this isn’t referring to them. It is referring to any gods out among the nations that the Jews have served.

Today, if you go into many Jewish homes, you’ll find statues of Buddha, Krishna, and other gods. Of these, and many others, they are...

<sup>64</sup> (con’t) **wood and stone.**

Along with all of the other false gods the Jews have served around the world, John Gill tells of the false gods of Roman Catholicism that they have gone after –

“The author of the history of their calamities and sufferings owns this; “multitudes (he says (p)) in Spain and Portugal forsook the law of Moses, and joined the Papists, pretending at least to be of their religion.” He makes mention of sixteen thousand at one time (q), and some, he say (r), “that were driven out of Spain, came into Italy, where the young men pressed with famine could not bear it, and changed their religion, and began to worship images that they might have to satisfy their hunger; and the Papists used to go about with a crucifix in one hand, and a piece of bread in the other, promising the bread to those that would worship the crucifix; and so many famishing persons forsook the law of Moses, and mixed with them:” and to this day the convents of monks and nuns in Spain are full of them; and most of their canons, inquisitors, and bishops, are Jews (s).” John Gill

In this, there is a complete contrast to Jesus in His exile from the land of the living. The book of Jonah, while he was in the belly of the fish, prophetically refers to the time when Christ was in the tomb. In that state, it says –

“Out of the belly of Sheol I cried,  
And You heard my voice.  
<sup>3</sup> For You cast me into the deep,  
Into the heart of the seas,  
And the floods surrounded me;  
All Your billows and Your waves passed over me.  
<sup>4</sup> Then I said, ‘I have been cast out of Your sight;  
Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple.’  
<sup>5</sup> The waters surrounded me, *even* to my soul;  
The deep closed around me;  
Weeds were wrapped around my head.  
<sup>6</sup> I went down to the moorings of the mountains;  
The earth with its bars *closed* behind me forever;  
Yet You have brought up my life from the pit,  
O LORD, my God.  
<sup>7</sup> “When my soul fainted within me,  
I remembered the LORD;  
And my prayer went *up* to You,  
Into Your holy temple.  
<sup>8</sup> “Those who regard worthless idols  
Forsake their own Mercy.  
<sup>9</sup> But I will sacrifice to You  
With the voice of thanksgiving;



I will pay what I have vowed.  
Salvation *is* of the LORD.” Jonah 2:2-9

In death and through death, in exile from the land of the living, Christ remained faithful to the Lord God. The wood and stone the Jews have served have no life. They cannot sense anything. As such, they cannot hear prayer and they cannot deliver from the place of distress. But the Lord God, whom Christ remained faithful to, can hear and He did deliver. The contrast is complete.

For Israel in exile, Moses continues...

**<sup>65</sup> And among those nations you shall find no rest,**

The words of this verse are all in the singular – “you Israel.” Despite this, it can just as easily refer to an individual who belongs to Israel. If he is the only “Israel” in the land, then he represents the nation to whom he belongs.

In this verse, Moses pulled out his lexicon in order to bestow upon us several new or rare words. The first is *raga*. It is a verb meaning to disturb. Thus, it is used figuratively to signify settling. Israel would remain unsettled anywhere they went. They would always be in a state of being upheaved and moved along.

When I was young, we used to go on vacation to a remote part of Massachusetts. There was a Jewish couple that lived there. When I was with my aunt one day, she said, “Twice, they had to get up and leave the food on the table and flee for their lives.” This is the idea of the words Moses now gives. It was literally fulfilled in that old couple on the mountain. Moses next says...

**<sup>65 (con’t)</sup> nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place;**

Here Moses uses a word, *manoakh*, seen only once so far, in Genesis 8:9, where it says, “But the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot.” It is exactly translated, resting place. Wherever Israel’s foot comes down, it will be as if there is a thorn or hot coals there, prodding it to move hurriedly on. Along with that, Moses says...

**<sup>65 (con’t)</sup> but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul.**

Rather than “but,” the word simply says, “and.” There will be no resting place for the soul of the foot, and along with that would come added calamities. Of them, Moses introduces three very rare words. The first is *ragaz*. It is an adjective occurring only this once.

It comes from the verb *ragaz*, meaning to quake or tremble. Thus, “trembling heart” is correct. There would never cease to be a time when the heart wouldn’t feel as if it might simply explode from the fear of the moment or from the constant motion of the foot.

Next, he uses the word *kilayon*. It is a noun signifying pining or failing. It is found only here and in Isaiah 10:22. The idea is probably that the eyes would become weak from looking for a spot to rest or looking for the salvation of a messiah, not realizing that the Messiah had already come, and they had rejected Him.

Along with that, Moses uses the word *deavon*. It is a noun, found only here, meaning faintness or languishing. Combined with the word *nephesh*, or soul, it means that the very force which impels the person would be so worn out that there would be no desire to even continue on. It is the weariness of the person that would choose death, if it would just come and end the misery.

The words here are not unlike those that the Lord spoke forth in Leviticus 26 –

“As for those of you who are left, I will make their hearts so fearful in the lands of their enemies that the sound of a windblown leaf will put them to flight. They will run as though fleeing from the sword, and they will fall, even though no one is pursuing them.” Leviticus 26:36

Israel is the transgressor. It is he who failed to honor and serve the Lord, and his soul suffered because of his failings. But the Lord had come to take away their sin. While they were looking for a hero to exalt them among the nations, He came to restore them to the Father.

Instead of being exalted among the nations, they were abased among them, and they remain in their sin. But Christ came to refresh their souls through the pouring out of His own for them –

“He shall see the labor of His soul, *and* be satisfied.  
By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many,

For He shall bear their iniquities.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great,  
And He shall divide the spoil with the strong,  
Because He poured out His soul unto death,  
And He was numbered with the transgressors,  
And He bore the sin of many,  
And made intercession for the transgressors.” Isaiah 53:11, 12

**<sup>66</sup> Your life shall hang in doubt before you;**

*v'hayu khayekha teluim lekha mineged* – “And will become your life hang to you from before.” Again, Moses introduces a new word, *tala*. It is a verb meaning “to hang.” It is found only here and in Hosea 11:7. Figuratively it signifies uncertainty.

The words are obvious when considered. It will be as if nothing can be trusted from moment to moment. Each moment is one of doubt and the next will be as well. No matter what one attempts in order to provide a state of constancy, there will always be nothing but fear of life. This state will then continue twenty-four hours a day...

**<sup>66</sup> (con't) you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life.**

*u-pakhadta laylah v'yomam v'lo taamin b'khayekha* – “and you shall fear night and day and no you have assurance in life.” Another new word is given, *pakhad*. It is a verb meaning “to dread.” These words further define the previous clause.

The life of Israel hangs before it in doubt. As such, there is dread at all times. Throughout the night, and throughout the day. There is never a time when life will seem secure.

It is as if the entire nation is a soldier on a battlefield with bombs falling nearby constantly. There is never a moment where the fear of the “next one maybe being it” is over. Life, its continuance, has no foothold of surety at all. The sword of Damocles is always present. Of this verse, Luther says –

“I have never seen a passage which describes more clearly the misery of a guilty conscience, in words and thoughts so fitting and appropriate. For this is just the way in which a man is affected, who knows that God is offended, i.e., who is harassed with the consciousness of sin.” Martin Luther

This is a right analogy, and it calls into focus the words of the first clause, “Your life shall hang in doubt before you.” Israel rejected Christ, the crucified Savior. The knowledge of this event is known to them, and somewhere in the back of their minds, they have pieced it together.

They understand the symbolism of their writings, and the thought of their sin before God lingers because their sin hung before them on the cross, if only they will acknowledge it. But in not believing Him, it is their life that hangs in doubt. And because of this...

**<sup>67</sup> In the morning you shall say, ‘Oh, that it were evening!’ And at evening you shall say, ‘Oh, that it were morning!’**

Properly translated, it reads, “In the morning you will say, ‘Who will give me evening?’ and in the evening you will say, ‘Who will give me morning?’” (CG). It is as if a petition to God, but the Lord is left out of the conversation.

In other words, instead of appealing to the Lord, Israel stubbornly asks for anyone to help, but the Lord. It is reflective of the words of Amos 6:10 –

“Hold your tongue! For we dare not mention the name of the Lord.”

The Lord hangs before them. Their consciences intuitively know this, and yet they will call out in any direction except His. And their cry is...

**<sup>67 (con’t)</sup> because of the fear which terrifies your heart, and because of the sight which your eyes see.**

One can think of the most recent example set before the world, that of the holocaust. The Jews of Europe faced everything that has been presented in the verses today. They begged for day during the night, and they begged for night during the day.

The things they experienced brought them dread in their hearts, and what they saw brought terror to their eyes. Moses spoke out the words of terror and horror that would come upon the people. They are – meaning the law is – a mirror for them to behold. Its words direct their actions, and the resulting horrors, back upon themselves.

**<sup>68</sup> “And the LORD will take you back to Egypt in ships,**

It is the highest disgrace of all. Not only is it exile from the land, but it is exile back to the very place from which they had been redeemed. They walked out of Egypt as a free people, led by the Lord. But the Lord Himself will take them back in ships, meaning as slaves, as a people cursed of the Lord. And this will be...

<sup>68</sup> (con't) **by the way of which I said to you, 'You shall never see it again.'**

It says, *ba'derek amarti lekha* – “in the way I said to you.” One could assume that this is referring to not returning to Egypt as was seen in Deuteronomy 17. There, it said –

“But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the LORD has said to you, ‘You shall not return that way again.’” Deuteronomy 17:16

However, I would argue that this is speaking of the state of slavery. Rather than, “You shall not return that way again,” meaning going back to Egypt. Moses now speaks of the way, saying, “You shall never see it again.” Israel is being returned to something by the Lord, and it is in ships. Thus, they are bound as slaves.

As real slaves, according to Josephus, this was fulfilled under Titus. But without the law and without Christ, this has also spiritually been fulfilled in Israel. The law gave them the Day of Atonement. Christ is the fulfillment of that. Outside of the land, and without Christ, there is no atonement, and thus the people are, literally, slaves to sin –

“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. <sup>32</sup> And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’

<sup>33</sup> They answered Him, ‘We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How *can* You say, “You will be made free’?”

<sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. <sup>35</sup> And a slave does not abide in the house forever, *but* a son abides forever. <sup>36</sup> Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.’”

-John 8:31-36

This is what is being conveyed. Egypt is only a type of the true bondage that man suffers under. As for the literal fulfillment of this, Moses next says...

**\*<sup>68</sup> (fin) And there you shall be offered for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy you.”**

The translation is incorrect. It says, "And you shall sell yourselves there." It is in the plural, and it is the action of the people themselves. In other words, it is a petition to be sold into bondage just so that they could have a master over them in order to eat and have a place to sleep.

But it says that for Israel, *v'ein qoneh* – "and no buying." For their physical bodies, none would be interested. And for their spiritual selves, there is none to redeem. They had rejected the Lord and because of their sin, the devil is their owner.

With these words, one of the most mournful passages of all of Scripture comes to a close. What makes it so much the case is that it explains everything in advance. There is nothing that was hidden from them. The choice for obedience and blessing, or disobedience and cursing, rested solely with Israel.

The Lord set the two before them through Moses, and whatever resulted is solely the responsibility of Israel. But let none of us be smug in what has come upon them. They are simply a template of what will come upon each of us.

We can come to the Lord and be saved, or we will remain in the bonds of sin and death that He came to destroy. And just as the Lord has faithfully kept Israel, even through their destruction, so He will keep any whom He redeems.

Thank God for His faithfulness to unfaithful Israel. And thank God for His faithfulness to us. He is a great and wonderful God who has set us free from our bonds. Yes. Thank God for His tender mercies. Yes, thank God for JESUS!

*I came to You with nothing,  
Only buckets of my sins.  
You stretched your arms  
Around me  
And you said, "welcome in."  
I cried for forgiveness.  
You wiped my tears away.  
You emptied all the buckets  
When I called upon your name.*

*You told me that, "I'm loved,"  
You told me, "this's my home."  
You told me, "I'm forgiven!"*

*"No longer I'm alone"  
You told me, "live in peace."  
You told me, "I'm the Christ."  
"I'm the price for your sins  
and your everlasting life*

*I carried now the buckets  
No longer full of sins.  
But full of living water,  
Of mercies flowing in.  
I see other people  
caring buckets of despair.  
But mine are full of forgiveness,  
And good news to be shared.*

~Izabela Bednara

**Closing Verse:** *"What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! <sup>16</sup> Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? <sup>17</sup> But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. <sup>18</sup> And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."*

*-Romans 6:15-18*

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 29:1-9 (I Have Led You Forty Years in the Wilderness) (84<sup>th</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **The Blessings and the Curses**

You shall be left few in number  
Whereas you were as the stars of heaven in multitude  
Because you would not obey  
The voice of the LORD your God, such was your attitude

And it shall be, that just as the LORD rejoiced over you  
To do you good and multiply you, so to you I address  
So the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you  
-----and bring you to nothing  
And you shall be plucked from off the land  
-----which you go to possess

“Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples  
From one end of the earth to the other, so you will dwell alone  
And there you shall serve other gods  
Which neither you nor your fathers have known—wood and stone

And among those nations you shall find no rest  
Nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place  
But there the LORD will give you a trembling heart  
Failing eyes, and anguish of soul – there in your disgrace

Your life shall hang in doubt before you  
You shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life  
-----so I give you this warning  
In the morning you shall say, ‘Oh, that it were evening!  
And at evening you shall say, ‘Oh, that it were morning!

Because of the fear which terrifies your heart, so shall it be  
And because of the sight which your eyes see

And the LORD will take you back to Egypt in ships  
By the way of which I said to you, ‘You shall never see it again  
-----thus, it is true  
And there you shall be offered for sale to your enemies  
As male and female slaves, but no one will buy you

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise



Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## **Deuteronomy 29:1-9 (I Have Led You Forty Years in the Wilderness)**

In Amos 9, and which is referring to Israel, it says –

“I will plant them in their land,  
And no longer shall they be pulled up  
From the land I have given them,  
Says the LORD your God.” Amos 9:15

It is one of those verses that simply cannot be spiritualized, and so I like to remind people of it from time to time. It is speaking of a particular group of people, a particular land that they were given, and of an occurrence that can have only one meaning.

That meaning cannot be, “This was fulfilled when they were returned from Babylon.” This is because the people being addressed were sent into exile from their land again after that.

Nor can the meaning be, “This is fulfilled in Christ’s work during His first advent and the church has now replaced Israel.” Only a fool would attempt to make such a claim. The church is not given a land grant to where Israel is today. In fact, it is given no land grant at all.

Either the words are in error, and thus the Bible is not the word of God, or the words – without any other possible meaning – are that Israel the people will be brought back to Israel the land, and when that occurs, they will never be uprooted from the land again.

Any other analysis does damage to the intent of the words. But this should not surprise us that the Lord would bring them back and do this. The reason why is not because of them at all, but because of Him – His glory, His honor, His covenant-keeping.

The keeping of Israel, even through the destruction of Israel, is seen once again in our passage today. It is because of the righteousness of the Lord, and nothing that they have done, that this has come about.

**Text Verse:** *“But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,<sup>22</sup> even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe.” Romans 3:21, 22*

What is important to understand concerning Israel is that Isaiah said, even before there was a first exile, that there would be a second one –

“It shall come to pass in that day  
*That* the Lord shall set His hand again the second time  
To recover the remnant of His people who are left,  
From Assyria and Egypt,  
From Pathros and Cush,  
From Elam and Shinar,  
From Hamath and the islands of the sea. Isaiah 11:11

The return of Israel to the land in our day was clearly spoken of and it is something that will never be needed to occur again. God’s word tells us that this is the case.

The righteousness of God is reflected in the law. That should be taken as an axiom. “This is God’s law, and therefore, it reflects His righteousness.” That isn’t a problem at all. The problem isn’t found in the law. Rather, it is found in our inability to meet the demands of the law. As Moses says to Israel, “Therefore, keep the words of this covenant, and do them.”

If one was actually able to perform as Moses says, what would that mean concerning such a person? Think on that and we’ll find out before we close. Once you realize what the inevitable answer must be, you can see why even thinking it is an utterly crazy notion.

And this is why Paul says, “But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed.” He then explains what that means, saying, “...even the righteousness of God.” What is it that pleases God? It isn’t our attempts at being righteous, but in trusting in His provision of righteousness.

As Paul says, this is revealed in “the Law and the Prophets.” Israel is promised to never be uprooted from their land again. And this is, according to Isaiah, after a second exile.

That will take some doing. In failing to uphold the law, being uprooted from the land is an inevitable consequence. But we are assured in the word that they will be planted, and they will remain. That can only mean one possible thing as well... Jesus.

It's all to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

## **I. The Words of the Covenant (verse 1)**

### **<sup>1</sup>These *are* the words of the covenant**

The Hebrew Bibles will have this verse affixed to the end of Chapter 28 as a completing thought for the blessings and the curses. But the word translated as “these” does not necessarily speak of either what precedes or what follows. It simply speaks of something in the surrounding text.

In this case, Moses speaks of the covenant in the coming verses. Therefore, this verse is surely rightly fixed as an opening to Chapter 29, as he says in verse 29:12, “that you may enter into covenant with the Lord your God, and into His oath, which the Lord your God makes with you today.” He again refers to it in verse 29:15.

### **<sup>1 (con't)</sup> which the LORD commanded Moses to make**

*asher tsivah Yehovah eth Moshe likrot* – “which commanded Yehovah Moses to cut.” The word *karath* signifies to cut off, cut down, etc. A covenant is said to be “cut” because it involved the cutting of flesh and then the parties passing through the pieces of the animal.

As such, it was a witness to the severity of the covenant. One might say, “Just as this animal was cut in order to establish this covenant, so may it happen to me if I violate it.” In the case of this covenant, it is one commanded to be enacted by Moses at the command of the Lord. The other party is next stated...

### **<sup>1 (con't)</sup> with the children of Israel**

The Hebrew reads, “sons of Israel,” signifying those who represent the tribes from whom the people issue. Jacob, who is Israel, was the son of promise, and his twelve sons, along with his two adopted sons – meaning the sons of Joseph – comprise the family whom the Lord chose to continue to reveal Himself in the history of redemption. This is next specifically said to be...

### **<sup>1 (con't)</sup> in the land of Moab,**

This is now almost forty full years after the reception of the law at Sinai. It is in another country, and it is after an extended period of exile in the wilderness. And yet, the words are being spoken forth as law to which Israel is to be bound to.

The name Moab means, “From Father.” As such, the words anticipate that which comes from God, and which will be carried out by Him in the giving of Christ. For now, one might ask, “Under what authority does the right exist to heap more laws upon the people...”

<sup>1 (con't)</sup> **besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb.**

*milebad ha'berit asher karath itam b'khorev* – “from alone the covenant which cut with them in Horeb.” It is of note that this is the last time the name Horeb is used in Deuteronomy. It means “Arid,” “Waste,” or “Desolate,” coming from *kharav*, meaning to be dry or dried up.

It was first used in Exodus 3:1 when Moses came to the mountain and the Lord spoke to him from the burning bush. The idea that is being conveyed is that the word of the Lord, meaning that which provides life, is coming from the barren place. The Lord is doing something in the world to bring restoration. That process is uniquely tied into this covenant that was made at Horeb.

The words of the Lord, through Moses, which comprise this part of the law, are specifically said to be “apart” or “besides” those given at Horeb (meaning Sinai). What authority is there to add these words? That will be explained in a moment.

As far as the words here, they are similar to those that ended Chapter 26 of Leviticus. That was the chapter that detailed the blessings and the curses that could be expected to come upon Israel as spoken forth by the Lord.

This first verse of Deuteronomy 29 also follows right after the chapter that detailed the blessings and the curses of this book –

“These *are* the statutes and judgments and laws which the LORD made between Himself and the children of Israel on Mount Sinai by the hand of Moses.”

-Leviticus 26:46

“These *are* the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb.”

If the covenant was cut at Sinai, how can it be that more laws can be added to the covenant? The word “besides” is not indicating a new covenant, but that the words are added to the covenant besides that which has already been given.

The answer goes back to Exodus. The covenant was first agreed to in Exodus 19:7, 8 –

“So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him. <sup>8</sup> Then all the people answered together and said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do.”

Then, in Exodus 24, the ceremony for the cutting of the covenant was conducted, animals were sacrificed, and the blood was sprinkled. At that time, it said –

“Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, ‘All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient.’”

-Exodus 24:7

The words they spoke, *qol asher dibber Yehovah na'aseh v'nishma*, mean, “All that the Lord has said we will do, and we will hear.” The word used there, *shema*, means to hear, but hearing is often associated with obedience, such as “I want you to hear me,” which means “I want you to do as I say.”

However, one cannot be obedient unless he first hears. In the preceding chapter of Exodus, before this covenant rite was conducted, it said –

“Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. <sup>21</sup> Beware of Him **and obey His voice**; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name *is* in Him.

<sup>22</sup> But if you indeed **obey His voice** and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.” Exodus 23:20-22

In other words, despite the covenant being cut in Exodus 24, more words of instruction were already said to be coming from the Lord to which the people must be attentive. This is why the people said the words, “...and we will hear.” They committed to doing even before hearing.

The people didn't say that they would hear and then they would obey. They said that they would do, and then they will hear – meaning both hear and then do what has been heard. The Book of the Covenant which was presented to them, and which led to the cutting of the covenant, was not the entire body of the law. It is what the entire body of the law was based on.

After that, however, Israel violated that same covenant. While Moses was on the mountain receiving the continued law, the people fashioned the golden calf. In this, they violated the covenant, and the Lord had every right to destroy them based on their disobedience.

However, Moses petitioned for them, and the Lord – full of grace and mercy – forgave their sin –

“The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, <sup>7</sup> keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation.” Exodus 34:6, 7

It was at this time, while Moses was again on the mountain, that the Lord agreed to Moses' petition and said to him –

“Behold, I make a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among whom you *are* shall see the work of the LORD. For it *is* an awesome thing that I will do with you.” Exodus 34:10

The words confirmed that Moses' request was granted. The Lord said, *hinneh anoki koreth berit* – “Behold, I cut *a* covenant.” The Lord was confirming that the covenant would continue.

Israel had broken it and it could have been annulled. As such, they would have been liable to the entire weight of the penalty – meaning death – as pictured in the original shedding of the blood of the animals. But they had found grace.

Moses interceded for the people, and the Lord relented from fulfilling the terrifying terms of the covenant which they had violated. From here on, it is the Lord God that made, or “cut,” the covenant. It is one-sided and therefore if there was any

disagreement, Israel would bear the blame. Likewise, if there was harmony between the two, only the Lord would receive the glory.

What occurred in Exodus 34 did not mean that the original covenant was simply reinstated. Nor did it mean that there was a “new covenant.” In the forgiving of the people’s transgressions, the thought “describes rather His future rule as a constant, continuous establishment of a covenant” (Lange).

Therefore, the entire time of His dealing with Israel under the covenant is a transitional phase that only anticipates a New Covenant. This is confirmed many hundreds of years later in the words of Jeremiah –

“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—<sup>32</sup> not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord.<sup>33</sup> But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.<sup>34</sup> No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” Jeremiah 31:31-34

The word of the Lord through Jeremiah points back to the covenant that was broken by Israel after being brought out by the Lord. Thus, the law of Moses is a transitional phase of the Lord’s redemptive workings. It only anticipates a New Covenant at some point in the future.

Until that time, the Mosaic Law continued to be added to in Moab, and it was then explained and spoken forth by prophets during the time of its administration, right up until the coming of Christ who would fulfill it, annul it through His blood, and at the same time initiate a New Covenant.

Because of these things, there is no need for sacrifices to confirm the covenant. It is a part of the ongoing covenant that began at Horeb (Sinai). This is confirmed by what was said early in Deuteronomy as well –

“The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.” Deuteronomy 5:2



It is taken as an axiom there that what Moses says afterwards in Deuteronomy is all a part of this same covenant. But an important point concerning this on-going giving of the law is that it anticipates the call of the Gentiles as well as the restoration of Israel. That will be seen later, in Chapter 32 –

“Rejoice, O Gentiles, *with* His people;  
For He will avenge the blood of His servants,  
And render vengeance to His adversaries;  
He will provide atonement for His land *and* His people.” (vs 43)

Paul cites this in Romans 15 to show that even the Mosaic Covenant anticipated the inclusion of the Gentiles in what God is doing in His redemptive plans. Everything is tied up in the coming of Messiah, everything.

Looked at from this perspective, and understanding what He is doing, it is incredible that people believe the church has replaced Israel. What the Lord has done is for them and through them. The Gentiles are graciously grafted into what is promised to Israel. With this understood, the narrative continues...

*The covenant is made, and it will stand  
Even if you fail to do your part of it  
You may be exiled from your land  
But I will keep you always; to this, I commit*

*When you fail to keep and to do  
I will still be sure to uphold My part, My friend  
My words, like Me, are faithful and true  
And I will perform My word, even to the end*

*\*\*You, O God, are our only hope, it is true  
And to You, O God, shall our praises forever ring  
We shall hold fast to the One who is faithful and true  
And to Him shall our voices forever sing*

## **II. That You May Prosper (verses 2-9)**

**<sup>2</sup> Now Moses called all Israel and said to them:**

What Moses will do now is comparable to what Joshua will later do in Joshua 24. It is a way of reminding the people of the past so that they will pay heed into the future. In order to do this, he calls together the entire assembly. In their gathering, he says...

<sup>2</sup> (con't) **“You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt,**

The words “You have seen” are emphatic. It is as if he says, “You most certainly have seen.” Although it was forty years earlier, the elders were alive at the time and they can speak for all, witnessing to the truth of Moses’ words.

In this, Moses returns the minds of the people back to Egypt once again. He is doing this to make a point concerning the greatness of the Lord. If He has performed magnificently and fearfully in the past, He is fully capable of doing so in the future as well.

The covenant is what binds the two parties together, and the Lord has the right to judge every infraction against it. If the Lord did the great things that Moses now describes in order to establish His covenant with Israel, then how much more should He do great things against those who trample underfoot the covenant!

<sup>2</sup> (con't) **to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land—**

The Lord brought plagues against the mighty nation that Israel was in bondage to. Pharaoh ruled over them and yet, the Lord was victorious over him. At the same time, the Lord brought judgment against the servants of Pharaoh while sparing Israel. Likewise, the Lord brought destruction upon the land, and yet He spared the land of Goshen where Israel was.

The judgments were targeted, precise, and severe. Israel, even those before Moses now, saw this with their own eyes...

<sup>3</sup> **the great trials which your eyes have seen,**

The previous verse was in the plural – “Now Moses called all Israel and said to them: “You (pl) have seen all that the LORD did before your (pl) eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land.” This verse now switches to the singular, addressing the nation collectively –

“the great trials which your (sg) eyes have seen, the signs, and those great wonders.” As normally is the case, Cambridge arrogantly denies the words are from a single source, saying that the singular “betrays the composite nature of the passage.”

Anyone adding new verses in, and wanting them to look original, would have consistently used the plural. But when considering this from Moses’ seat as he addresses the people, the change from the plural to the singular is both natural and expected.

Not every person gathered before him was alive during the entire time from the exodus until arriving at Moab. The change to the singular acknowledges that.

As far as the words here, they reflect the sentiment spoken by him in Chapter 4, repeating what he said there to some extent –

“Or did God *ever* try to go *and* take for Himself a nation from the midst of *another* nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?” Deuteronomy 4:34

In this he begins with the word *massah*, meaning testing or trials. It is derived from *nasah*, to test, or try. This is probably referring to the trials of the people prior to Moses’ arrival. They were in hard bondage, they were afflicted and tested –

“Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage. <sup>24</sup> So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. <sup>25</sup> And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged *them*.” Exodus 2:23-25

<sup>3 (con’t)</sup> **the signs,**

The *othoth*, or signs, are things given to represent something else. The Lord gave Moses three signs to give to Israel – the rod which turned into a snake, the leprous hand, and the water which turned to blood. He also gave signs to Pharaoh concerning what would come upon them as the Lord accomplished His work. Next...

<sup>3 (con’t)</sup> **and those great wonders.**

*v'ha'mophtim ha'gedolim ha-hem* – “and the wonders, the great, the those.” The *mophteth*, or wonder, comes from *yaphah*, or beautiful. It speaks of that which is conspicuous and amazing.

This then refers to the plagues which came upon the land. And yet, it also speaks of the fact that Israel was spared at the same time. While Egypt was destroyed, Israel survived through the plagues – each time, it was a wonder in itself. Despite seeing these...

#### **<sup>4</sup> Yet the LORD has not given you a heart to perceive**

The words continue in the singular. There are those in the congregation that this doesn't apply to, like Joshua and Caleb. However, as a whole, Israel is being exactly described by their leader.

He uses the word *yada*, meaning “to know.” It is something that is ascertained by seeing. In the Bible, the heart is the seat of reasoning and intellect. But what occurs in the heart must be processed after information has been obtained. Israel has been presented with the sights –

<sup>2</sup>...“You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land— <sup>3</sup>the great trials which your eyes have seen, the signs, and those great wonders.” (vs 2,3)

Despite the sensory input, there is no perception as to the meaning behind what they have seen. This is then explained by the next words...

#### **<sup>4</sup> (con't) and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this very day.**

This is not referring to their literal eyes and ears. He has just told them that their eyes saw. In this, he has moved to metaphor and is equating the eyes and the ears to spiritual sensors. This is repeated by Jeremiah where he uses the word “heart” which is translated as understanding, as well as eyes and ears –

“Hear this now, O foolish people,  
Without **understanding**,  
Who have **eyes** and see not,  
And who have **ears** and hear not:” Jeremiah 5:21

This is a theme that carries on throughout the Old Testament, and it is repeated in the New, both when referring to Israel, such as when Paul cites Isaiah in Acts 28 –

“Go to this people and say:  
‘Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand;  
And seeing you will see, and not perceive;  
<sup>27</sup> For the hearts of this people have grown dull.  
*Their* ears are hard of hearing,  
And their eyes they have closed,  
Lest they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears,  
Lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn,  
So that I should heal them.’” Acts 28:26, 27

It is also a prayer that Paul made, desiring that his disciples would receive these spiritual sensors –

“that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, <sup>18</sup> the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup> and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power <sup>20</sup> which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, <sup>21</sup> far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.” Ephesians 1:17-21

As with Jeremiah just a moment ago, Paul’s words literally state “being enlightened the eyes of your heart.” The spiritual sensors are to work in accord with the intellect, producing discernment concerning the things of God. However, Moses tells Israel that they still had not arrived at this type of wisdom.

Considering the fact that the time of wilderness wandering is a mirror of the exile of Israel over these past two thousand years, it is evident that Moses’ words are being prophetically directed to Israel today.

After all this time, they still do not understand their role in the redemptive scenario, and they still do not understand that they are, even now, being directed by Moses to look and find Christ –

“But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the *veil* is taken away in Christ. <sup>15</sup> But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.

<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.”

-2 Corinthians 3:14-16

This lack of discernment by Israel is next explained to them beginning in the most basic way...

<sup>5</sup> **And I have led you forty years in the wilderness.**

The word is *holek*, to walk. More literally, it says, “And I walked you.” To walk signifies the conduct of one’s life. Israel is walking under the law.

In verse 8:2, it said that “the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness.” Now, Moses unites his words with those of the Lord, “And I have walked (meaning led).” Moses, typical of the law itself, represents the direction of the Lord.

Israel disobeyed the law and the Lord punished Israel. And yet, He led them through their time of punishment. Moses, as the lawgiver, conveyed the punishment that resulted, and Moses continued to lead Israel in their punishment. In other words, the law maintained its authority over them in their exile.

Nothing could be clearer than the typology we are seeing. Israel was punished under the law, Israel remains under the law, and Israel is restored based on the promises of the law – leading them to restoration and rest in Canaan, but in type, it anticipates restoration and rest in Christ.

<sup>5 (con’t)</sup> **Your clothes have not worn out on you,**

It is a most interesting set of words. Moses is referring to the *salmah*, or garment. That ultimately comes from *semel*, or image. The idea is that the garment takes on the image, or shape, of the person it is on. The image of Israel remained through their wanderings.

The words are to be taken literally. The Lord kept their garments from wearing out. This is the literal occurrence. However, it is to be understood typologically as well. The words have been carefully chosen to reveal what would happen to Israel in the future.

One would think that upon exile, Israel would be disbanded and simply take the image of those around them, like all of the other exiled nations of the world. But this did not happen. The garments not wearing out in the wilderness are typologically given to show us the Lord's supernatural care of preserving Israel in exile.

This is evident because this verse is a close repeat of verse 8:4 with a specific difference—

8:4 - Your (singular) garment not did wear out on you (singular).

29:5 - Not have worn out your (plural) garments on you (plural).

The people are Israel, and Israel is comprised of the people. We are being instructed in the Lord's care for Israel. Next, more remarkably, the words now go from the plural to the singular – just to make sure this is understood...

<sup>5</sup> (con't) **and your sandals have not worn out on your feet.**

It is incorrect. It says, "and your (singular) sandal not has worn out on your (singular) foot." The sandal is a symbol of authority over the place it rests. The sandal of Israel, on the foot of Israel, has not worn out, even in their exile.

They still retain the authority that was promised to them. Despite rejecting Christ, they will someday rule the world with Christ as their Head –

<sup>2</sup> "Now it shall come to pass in the latter days  
*That* the mountain of the LORD's house  
Shall be established on the top of the mountains,  
And shall be exalted above the hills;  
And all nations shall flow to it.

<sup>3</sup> Many people shall come and say,  
"Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,  
To the house of the God of Jacob;  
He will teach us His ways,  
And we shall walk in His paths."  
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,  
And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

<sup>4</sup> He shall judge between the nations,  
And rebuke many people;  
They shall beat their swords into plowshares,

And their spears into pruning hooks;  
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
Neither shall they learn war anymore.” Isaiah 2:2-4

For now, Moses is still schooling Israel on their lack of understanding...

**<sup>6</sup>You have not eaten bread, nor have you drunk wine or *similar* drink,**

Moses tells Israel that they have not participated in three different things during their time in the wilderness.

First, *lekhem*, or bread, is representative of that which sustains life. It can be used synonymously with food in general. Next is *yayin*, or wine. It represents our reasoning and that which will change our mind. An example of this is found in Jesus’ words of Matthew 9 –

“Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.” Matthew 9:17

Jesus was speaking of the law and grace. The new wine is the new dispensation of grace to come. The old wine was the dispensation of the law. If one were to introduce the new concept into the old, it would not work because the two were incompatible. Only if one put the new wine in the new wineskin and received the new wine would the mind be changed.

The third item is *shekar*, or intensely strong drink. That comes from *shakar*, to be drunk. It is almost always, but not always, used negatively. It is also almost always cited in conjunction with *yayin* (wine).

Shekar was not to be drunk by the priest while performing his duties, by the Nazirite during his time of separation to the Lord, and Solomon notes that it is not for kings to drink *shekar* (Proverbs 31:4). As those each imply separation to the Lord, then it can be inferred that *shekar* is typical of being closely in fellowship with others. This is certainly the case in Deuteronomy 14 –

“And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or **similar drink**, for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat



there before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household.”  
-Deuteronomy 14:26

However, this fellowship with others should not be at the exclusion of the Lord.

What this verse is saying is that Israel was wholly dependent on the Lord. They lacked the things that would normally keep people alive and united – food, wine, and strong drink. And yet, they remained a people. The Lord provided manna (Christ) and they drank the water from the rock (Christ) and He kept them as a people, even though they did not recognize Him.

Likewise, Israel in exile has lacked the Bread of Life (Christ), and yet they have been kept alive. They have not had a united cultural expression, and yet they have maintained their culture, and they have not had fellowship as a nation, and yet they have been nationally kept in fellowship – meaning they have remained favorable toward one another despite their separation.

Without recognizing the hand of the Lord in keeping them, they were kept by Him. All of this was done in the wilderness, and all of this was done while they were in exile...

<sup>6</sup> (con't) **that you may know that I *am* the LORD your God.**

Who is speaking here? *I'maan tedeu ki ani Yehovah elohekem* – “to end purpose you (all) may know that I Yehovah your (all) God.” Moses is relaying this, but he is speaking the law, and the law is spoken forth by the Lord. The Lord has a purpose for what He is saying, and what He is saying is based upon what He has been doing.

He has done all of these things with an end goal and purpose, which is for them to know what they have consistently failed to learn. It is that Yehovah is the Lord their God, and that Jesus is the incarnate Lord God. If this is not true, then there would be no reason, at all, to keep them as a people. The end purpose is Christ.

With that understood, Moses next turns to events that only just recently transpired...

**<sup>7</sup> And when you came to this place, Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan came out against us to battle, and we conquered them.**

“This place” means, east of Canaan. The account of the defeat of Sihon and Og is recorded in Numbers 21:21-35. These two represent the last two foes to be defeated before Israel would receive their inheritance.

Despite coming against Israel, they were both defeated, assuring Israel of their ability to enter into the promise. The Lord brought about the victory through them. Likewise, the two great foes of the end times will come out against Israel, and they will likewise be defeated. What they possessed will be possessed by Israel.

**<sup>8</sup> We took their land and gave it as an inheritance to the Reubenites, to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh.**

To be precise, the names are in the singular. “to the Reubenite, and to the Gadite, and to half-tribe the Manassite.” The land that was conquered was given to them as an inheritance.

This is especially recorded in Numbers 32. The account focused on the livestock of the people and their desire to not enter the inheritance because of it. But the main point is that the land was conquered by Israel, and it was possessed by several tribes of Israel.

Moses is reminding them, only a short time after the events took place, that it was the Lord who had brought them to this point, and that it was the Lord who led Israel and who then ultimately won the battles for them. Because of this care for them, and because of His ever-present hand upon them, they are admonished, once again, to think and to act upon that knowledge...

**<sup>9</sup> Therefore keep the words of this covenant, and do them,**

The Hebrew reads, “And you (pl. all) shall keep words the covenant, the this, and you (pl. all) shall do them.” One can keep and not do – “This is our law, but I am not going to do it.” Or one can “not” keep and yet do – “There is no law that says I should do this, but I am doing it because it is right.” Israel is instructed to keep and to do.

This is a heavy burden to bear if you think about it. In order to keep and do, the people must know. Otherwise, this would be impossible to perform.

One might not know the law at all. This is a person with no understanding. One may know the law and fail to do what the law says. That demonstrates understanding, but a lack of wisdom. And one can know the law and also do what the law says. That would

demonstrate a person with both understanding and wisdom. This is what Moses is conveying to the people.

The Lord had been with Israel, He had clearly displayed Himself and His capabilities to them all along, and He expected them to acknowledge Him by doing what He had (and continues to) instruct them. If they are willing to comply, there is a benefit...

**\*9 (fin) that you may prosper in all that you do.**

It is direct and bears an emphasis: *l'maan taskilu eth ka lasher taasun* – “to end purpose you (all) will prosper in all that you all (certainly) do.”

The word translated as “prosper” is *sakal*. It actually bears two separate meanings that unite as one. It means both to prosper and to be wise. It is used by Isaiah when referring to the Messiah –

“Behold, My Servant shall **deal prudently**;  
He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.” Isaiah 52:13

This is why some translations say, “Behold My Servant will prosper” (BSB). The Amplified Bible goes an extra step and includes both, to carry the meaning to its fullest intent – “Indeed, My Servant (the Messiah) will act wisely and prosper.”

Moses is certainly thinking on the same lines. In being wise (keeping and doing), the people will prosper. But, as just noted, one cannot do without knowing. There must be an understanding of the law to do the things of the law.

In understanding, there must also be a willingness to perform. And more, there must be a constant willingness to perform. There is not a day where one can take off. Any day without performing (keeping and doing) is a violation of the law.

This is the burden of the law. And it is this very thing that Israel must learn. The law, though good, is an impossible yoke upon the neck of the people. To say, “I have fulfilled the law all of my life, without failing,” is to say, “I am as righteous as God.”

It is a one-for-one correspondence, and it is something the Bible dismisses wholly and entirely. This is why the Bible repeatedly speaks of, and exalts, the righteousness of the Lord. We can do what is righteous, but we can never truly be righteous without it being imputed to us.

Hence, God sent Christ into the world to bring us to that state of perfection that He demands. And without it, there is only an infinite gap between us. Israel has yet to figure this out, and it will continue to be a costly lesson to them. But someday they will learn it. Moses will not enter Canaan because the law has no inheritance with the promise, and the typology must be maintained.

Israel must leave the law behind, trusting in Christ's fulfillment of it. When they come to that point, they will be in the sweet spot. And the same is true with countless people in the "Christian" world today. They keep bringing themselves back under this impossible weight, looking to merit God's favor apart from Christ.

Let us be wise and not go down that road. Instead, let us hold fast to the Lord, our Righteousness. Let us hold fast to Jesus.

**Closing Verse:** *"My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness  
And Your salvation all the day,  
For I do not know their limits.*

*<sup>16</sup> I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD;  
I will make mention of Your righteousness, of Yours only." Psalm 71:15, 16*

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 29:10-19 *Be sure to follow obediently in the way...* (That He May Establish You Today) (85<sup>th</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **I Have Led You Forty Years in the Wilderness**

These are the words of the covenant  
Which the LORD commanded Moses to make  
-----and Moses obeyed  
With the children of Israel in the land of Moab  
Besides the covenant which with them in Horeb He made

Now Moses called all Israel and said to them:  
"You have seen all that the LORD did; wonders so grand  
Before your eyes in the land of Egypt

To Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land—

The great trials which your eyes have seen  
The signs, and those great wonders He did display  
Yet the LORD has not given you a heart to perceive  
And eyes to see and ears to hear, to this very day

And I have led you  
Forty years in the wilderness; now your wandering is complete  
Your clothes have not worn out on you  
And your sandals have not worn out on your feet

You have not eaten bread  
Nor have you drunk wine or similar drink  
That you may know  
That I am the LORD your God; so that you would stop and think

And when you came to this place  
Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan  
Came out against us to battle  
And we conquered them, and from there we pressed on

We took their land and gave it as an inheritance  
To the Reubenites, to the Gadites, and to half the tribe  
-----of Manasseh too  
Therefore keep the words of this covenant  
And do them, that you may prosper in all that you do

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## **Deuteronomy 29:10-19 (That He May Establish You Today)**

In this passage, we will once again talk about the status of Israel in the world today. People can go too far in one direction or another very easily when considering them and their status before the Lord.

John Hagee says they are saved through adherence to the Mosaic Covenant, and he finds no reason to either evangelize them or otherwise tell them about their need for Christ.

Other preachers say that the church has replaced Israel and that there is no further purpose in the redemptive narrative for them as a people. In other words, Jews – who collectively are Israel – are just like anyone else. They are saved by faith in Christ and that's it.

There are those that say what Jesus did for individual Jews is different than what He has done for the Gentiles. This means that Jews are saved in one way and by one gospel, and that Gentiles are saved in another way, by another gospel.

There are those Gentiles who think that unless they follow the culture, customs, and law of Israel, they cannot be saved. And, of course, there are those who think the Jews should just be exterminated and that will take care of the world's problems.

**Text Verse:** *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’” Romans 1:16, 17*

From our text verse, you could immediately eliminate one or more of the incorrect ideas about the state of Jews in the world today. In fact, if you went to the book of Romans and studied only the verses that include the word “Jew” in them, you could probably resolve almost every wrong doctrine that arises in regard to them that I mentioned, and several others as well.

The problem is that we (meaning we in the church) run ahead with presuppositions about things without knowing – or at least without checking out – the entire story that God has laid before us. Those presuppositions may come from any of countless places. We hear them, we accept them, and we go with what we heard.

From that point on, our minds are made up, and we'd rather jump into the Lake of Fire than admit we are wrong. And this is certainly the case with countless other doctrines as well. It's just that the sermon today deals with Israel, the Law of Moses, and – inevitably – with the New Covenant.

As such, in looking at the broader picture – but based on the words of the passage for a starting point – we can make correct interpretations that we might be unable to make without studying this passage. This is the beauty of going through the law. We can reinforce correct doctrine, recalibrate our incorrect doctrine, and learn to reject teachers who have faulty doctrine.

So, let's get into it. Great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. That He May Establish You Today (verses 10-19)**

**<sup>10</sup> “All of you stand today before the LORD your God:**

All of the coming words of this verse are in the plural, and Moses highlights the scope of his words carefully: *atem nitsavim ha'yom kulekem liphne Yehovah elohekem* – “You stand the-day, all of you, before Yehovah your God.”

By saying everything in the plural, it is more than just “you Israel” being addressed, but “each of you in Israel” is being individually addressed. Each is accountable for what is to occur, and none can say, “I am not a party to this event.”

Further, Cambridge says the verb is probably reflexive, and this certainly seems to be correct – “You (each of you) have taken your stand today.” As such, it is a way of confirming that the action is voluntary and without coercion. With that understood, Moses continues his words, ensuring that absolutely nobody is left out of them...

**<sup>10 (con't)</sup> your leaders and your tribes and your elders and your officers,**

*rashekem shivtekem ziqnekem v'shoterekem* – “your heads, your tribes, your elders, and your officers.” The translation of these words varies. The KJV and some others make it three categories, saying, “your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers.” The NKJV makes it four categories, but it adds in a bunch of “ands” that are not in the Hebrew.

The words clearly specify four categories, saying, “Your leaders, your tribes, your elders, and your officers.” This may seem like niggling, but it is important to understand the all-inclusive nature of what is being conveyed. It is not merely the heads who are being addressed, but rather the heads and also all of those in the tribes along with the elders and officers. This is then explained by the words...

<sup>10</sup> (con’t) **all the men of Israel,**

Moses is speaking to the entire congregation of men. Not a single person is excluded from what is being conveyed. All are of Israel, and Israel is comprised of all. To further confirm this, and to also continue to express the all-encompassing nature of who is being referred to, Moses continues, saying...

<sup>11</sup> **your little ones and your wives—**

As the heads of the households, the males speak on behalf of these. The little ones and the wives are present, and they are – by default – spoken for because of the stand taken by the men. In entering into the covenant, none are excluded.

This is actually referred to by Peter in Acts 2. The Mosaic Covenant now being ratified is inclusive of all that occurs in it. As it includes the promise of a New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31), then what Peter says in Acts 2 can reasonably be said to be spoken of by him in reference to Moses’ words now –

“For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” Acts 2:39

As for the Mosaic Covenant now initially being expressed, the rights and the privileges, and the blessings and the curses will apply to all, without exception. That was clearly defined in Chapter 28, but it is noted again now by Moses. But this extends yet further...

<sup>11</sup> (con’t) **also the stranger who *is* in your camp,**

The words now go to the singular for the rest of the verse, speaking of Israel as a whole: *v’gerekha asher b’qerev makhanekha* – “and your (sg. Israel) stranger who in midst your camp.” It may be that not every Israelite would have a stranger who performed a menial task, but any in Israel would be included.



When the blessings come, these will participate in Israel's blessing. When troubled times come, these will not be exempt from what occurs. This is inclusive of those...

**11 (con't) from the one who cuts your wood to the one who draws your water—**

*mekhotev etsekha ad shoev memekha* – “from cutter your trees to drawer your water.” The idea is that of the lowliest in the land. They are the bearers of burden, and yet the covenant applies to them. This then is the reason for Joshua's inclusion of these categories concerning the Gibeonites –

“And that day Joshua made them woodcutters and water carriers for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, in the place which He would choose, even to this day.” Joshua 9:27

A covenant had been cut between Israel and Gibeon. As such Israel was obligated to perform the words of it, but they set the conditions for that by subordinating the Gibeonites to these lowly services henceforth. This is clearly and poignantly highlighted later at the time of Saul –

“Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David inquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, ‘*It is* because of Saul and *his* bloodthirsty house, because he killed the Gibeonites.’<sup>2</sup> So the king called the Gibeonites and spoke to them. Now the Gibeonites *were* not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; the children of Israel had sworn protection to them, but Saul had sought to kill them in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah.” 2 Samuel 21:1, 2

The covenant now being set forth by Moses protects the rights of all who come under its auspices. Saul violated those rights of the Gibeonites, and atonement had to be made for what occurred. That process of atonement continues to be described in that chapter. For now, Moses continues with his words...

**12 that you may enter into covenant with the LORD your God,**

The wording is very precise, and it carries a sort of pun on the word “Hebrew:” *l'averekha bivrit Yehovah elohekha* – “to your passing over in covenant Yehovah your God.” The word *avar*, to pass over (or through), is close in spelling to *ivrim*, or Hebrew, meaning Passer Over.

The idea here is that the Lord's covenant is set forth and the people must pass over (or through) it. It is as if the covenant is a passage that is taken. These words logically fit with the first clause of verse 10, "All of you stand today before the Lord your God...that you may enter into covenant with the Lord your God."

In essence, "You have made your stand in order that you may now pass through." The Aramaic Bible inserts the word "not" into their translation –

"That you will not pass over the covenant of LORD JEHOVAH your God and over the oath of LORD JEHOVAH your God which He covenanted with you today:"  
(Aramaic Bible)

The reason they have done this is that when a covenant is made, crossing over it implies a violation of it. This has been seen several times already, such as –

"then you shall say before the LORD your God: 'I have removed the holy *tithe* from my house, and also have given them to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not **transgressed** [lit: crossed over] Your commandments, nor have I forgotten *them*.'" Deuteronomy 26:13

However, the Aramaic does not convey the intent at all. One must first cross over (into) the covenant before he can cross over (transgress) the covenant. The Aramaic Bible failed to make this distinction.

The idea is that sin is not imputed without a law. Moses is expanding the laws of the covenant made at Horeb (Mount Sinai) now in Deuteronomy. Therefore, they must first be apprised of the terms before they can be blessed by, or held guilty of, the terms.

12 (con't) **and into His oath,**

The word is *alah*. It signifies a curse, an execration, or an oath. This is the first time it is used in Deuteronomy, and yet it will be seen five times in this chapter and once again in the next chapter. Ellicott defines it as an "imprecation in the name of God." In this, it will bring a curse upon the party who does not fulfill what is agreed to.

12 (con't) **which the LORD your God makes with you today,**

*asher Yehovah elohekha koret imekha ha'yom* – “which Yehovah your God cuts with you the-day.” The idea of cutting a covenant conveys that of the death of a sacrificial victim. Adam Clarke explains the process well, saying –

1. The parties about to contract were considered as being hitherto separated.
2. They now agree to enter into a state of close and permanent amity.
3. They meet together in a solemn manner for this purpose.
4. A sacrifice is offered to God on the occasion, for the whole is a religious act.
5. The victim is separated exactly into two equal parts, the separation being in the direction of the spine; and those parts are laid opposite to each other, sufficient room being allowed for the contracting parties to pass between them.
6. The contracting parties meet in the victim, and the conditions of the covenant by which they are to be mutually bound are recited.
7. An oath is taken by these parties that they shall punctually and faithfully perform their respective conditions, and thus the covenant is made and ratified.

If one thinks the symbolism through properly, what Christ has done is quite evident. The New Covenant was cut in His death. The idea is that God and man meet in the Victim, meaning Christ.

He is the God/Man and therefore we come to God passing through His humanity. At the same time, He is fully God, and so God passes through Christ's deity. Both meet at His cross where reconciliation between the two contracting parties have come together.

The Mosaic Covenant is not itself a means to an end. It is given to show God's standard. Christ came to live out that standard and then to serve as the greater point of meeting with God because of the failure of Israel to “punctually and faithfully perform their respective conditions.” For now, Moses continues with his purposes concerning the giving of the law. It is...

**<sup>13</sup> that He may establish you today as a people for Himself,**

*l'maan haqim otekha ha'yom lo l'am* – “to end purpose may stand you the-day to Himself to people.” The idea is that there is an end purpose in the cutting of this covenant which is to establish Israel as His own people.

One must question the thinking of people that say that the Lord is through with Israel. If anyone with even a modicum of biblical sense in him is asked if Israel has been under a curse for the past two thousand years, he will answer, “Of course they have.”

Every evil thing that was promised in the previous chapter, saying that it would come upon Israel, has come upon them during that time. Does anyone here today disagree with that? What does that imply? If Israel is under the curse of the covenant, it – by default – means that they are under the covenant, bound to it by obligation.

As this is so, it means that the Lord is also bound to it. That is why He has brought the curse of the covenant upon them. God has no more rejected Israel than He has rejected His promise to Abraham. The covenant stands, and it must be removed from them, or it remains binding upon them.

The words of this verse are all in the singular – “You Israel.” The Lord has established a New Covenant with Israel (again, Jeremiah 31:31). Until they enter into that covenant, they remain bound to the Old. Despite the controversy, this is... without controversy. This is clearly seen in the next words...

<sup>13</sup> (con't) **and *that* He may be God to you, just as He has spoken to you,**

The words are closely repeated by the Lord in Jeremiah 31:33 –

“But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

Of this, Charles Ellicott marvelously explains what people to this day cannot seem to understand –

“It must be carefully observed that this is the aspect of the covenant which makes Jehovah responsible for the fulfilment of the whole. ‘He takes all this trouble for the sake of establishing thee in His presence for a people’ (Rashi). The people’s part, as described in this verse, is only to accept the position. And thus the covenant of Deuteronomy 29 is brought into the closest similarity with that which is called the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31:31, Hebrews 8:8; the form of which is “‘I will’ be to them a God, and ‘they shall’ be to me a people.” God undertakes for the people’s part of the covenant as well as His own. In Deuteronomy the first half of the New Covenant appears here in Deuteronomy 29, ‘that He may be unto thee a God.’ The second part appears in Deuteronomy 30:6-8, ‘The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart . . . to love the Lord thy God.’” Charles Ellicott

The onus is on the Lord in regard to what is stated here. The onus on Israel is to do what the Lord has stated in the law. If they fail, they will suffer the consequences of the covenant, but the Lord's responsibility goes beyond administering the blessings and the curses to the full performance of Israel in getting through the covenant as a people and entering into the New Covenant as a people.

As this has never happened, the onus is still on the Lord for that to come about. That is the purpose of the predictive prophecies that are yet to be fulfilled. They are to remind Israel, and they are to remind replacement theologians, that there is still a plan and a purpose for Israel in the world. This is, again, seen in the next words...

<sup>13</sup> (con't) **and just as He has sworn to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.**

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are all mentioned together seven times in Deuteronomy. In all six of the other times, they are mentioned in relation to the land of promise. For example –

“See, I have set the land before you; go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to your fathers—to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—to give to them and their descendants after them.” Deuteronomy 1:8

In Chapter 9, the land grant must be inferred from the surrounding context. But that is even the case in this chapter where Israel's grant of the land is referred to half a dozen times in verses 22-28.

If the land is the promise, and if Israel is still under the covenant, as is testified to in them being under the curses of the covenant, then it must be that the people will be brought back into the land in order to be brought into the New Covenant.

And this is exactly what the prophets testify to time and again as the Old Testament progresses and even as the book of Revelation confirms as well. Understanding this, Moses continues...

<sup>14</sup> **“I make this covenant and this oath, not with you alone,**

The words now return to the plural: “with you (all).” In other words, Israel is the collective, but it is not only with those individuals who are standing before Moses at this time. If that were so, then the covenant would end when the last person there died...

**<sup>15</sup> but with *him* who stands here with us today before the LORD our God, as well as with *him* who is not here with us today**

Of this, the John Lange commentary incorrectly states –

“The covenant was to embrace not merely the descendants of those now living, Israel in its generations, but in its true idea and apprehension, all nations—those far off.—A. G.”

This is entirely wrong. The Mosaic Covenant is given to Israel, and to Israel alone. That will be seen more clearly in a moment. For now, almost all of the translations say “but” at the beginning of this verse.

Unless all the clauses are taken together, the word “but” confuses the thought that is being presented. Hence, translators must paraphrase the words of the final clause, saying, “as well as,” “also,” or something like that –

<sup>14</sup>“I make this covenant and this oath, not with you alone, <sup>15</sup> but with *him* who stands here with us today before the LORD our God, as well as with *him* who is not here with us today.”

The word *ki* is used. It means “for.” Translating it that way brings the proper sense to what is being said –

“And not with you alone I cut this covenant and this oath: for whom being here with us standing today before Yehovah our God, and whom no here with us today.” (CG)

Though my translation is cumbersome because it is more literal, you can see that it is referring to one act. The covenant is cut with Israel, regardless as to when an Israelite enters into the stream of existence. That is why the plural began the words in verse 14.

If you think this through, it shows you the joy, the severity, and the hope of being born into this group. They will be blessed or judged with this group under this covenant, but they also possess the promises granted by it of Messiah and final restoration when they – as a nation – enter into the New Covenant.

Throughout all of the ages, the words of Moses are binding upon those who are born into Israel until they come into the New Covenant. Again, the doctrine of replacement theology fails entirely when the words of Moses are properly considered.

What he is saying has absolutely nothing to do with the inclusion of Gentiles into the New Covenant. It is solely addressed to this group of people and in regard to the covenant now being established. Hence, the New Covenant, which comes forth from the Mosaic Covenant, belongs – first and foremost – to Israel. Again, Jeremiah 31:31 absolutely confirms that.

Having said that, the inclusion of Gentiles into the New Covenant is clearly presented in both the Old Testament as well as the New –

“Rejoice, O **Gentiles**, *with* His people; For He will avenge the blood of His servants, And render vengeance to His adversaries; He will provide atonement for His land *and* His people.” Deuteronomy 32:43

“Indeed He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the **Gentiles**, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.’” Isaiah 49:6

“Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—<sup>12</sup> that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.<sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” Ephesians 2:11-13

Admittedly, this type of theology can be mentally taxing and difficult to sort through, but in carefully following Moses’ words of Deuteronomy, you will avoid numerous poor or heretical doctrines that have flooded the church.

Replacement theology, Hebrew Roots, and hyperdispensationalism are all addressed and refuted by what we have looked at today alone. For now, Moses continues forward by looking back...

**<sup>16</sup> (for you know that we dwelt in the land of Egypt and that we came through the nations which you passed by,**

The word *avar*, or “passed through” is used twice. It is very specific, “for you know which we dwelt in land Egypt, and which we passed through in midst of the nations – which you passed through.”

Cambridge claims this is an *idem per idem*, or tautology, where one expression defines the other with the same thought. This is incorrect. Moses is not defining one thing with the other. He first says, “which we passed through,” and then “which you passed through.”

He is saying that he, along with Israel passed through in the midst of the nations, signifying that they saw how those nations lived, but they – Israel – continued to pass through. The lesson isn't for Moses, it is for Israel. He will continue to explain this...

### **17 and you saw their abominations**

Moses doesn't say, “and we saw their abominations.” Rather, he is instructing Israel who will live under this law, and who would be obligated to it. Also, this is a new word, *shiquts*, meaning a detested thing. Also...

### **17 (con't) and their idols which were among them**

Moses next mentions the *gilul*. The word comes from *galal*, meaning “to roll.” As such they are logs or circular stones that are round. However, it could be that they are idols that are placed on carts and rolled around. Either way, they are...

### **17 (con't) —wood and stone and silver and gold);**

As such, they are just things. They were laying in the ground and had to be dug up and fashioned, or they were standing as trees and had to be cut down and fashioned. Wherever the materials came from, they had to be worked and fashioned by the hands of man.

Thus, they are not gods are all. They are just worthless, detestable idols that can accomplish nothing and that can save nobody. Moses is contrasting them to the Lord who, in fact, delivered them from Egypt and who then safely brought them through the nations and to the shores of the Jordan.

They had defeated the nations that came against them, and they were ready to enter the land of promise. The Lord had done all of this for Israel. Moses has reminded them of these things...

**18 so that there may not be among you man or woman or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God, to go *and* serve the gods of these nations,**



Some translations, like the NKJV, make verses 16 & 17 parenthetical. If that is correct, it would read –

“I make this covenant and this oath, not with you alone, but with *him* who stands here with us today before the LORD our God, as well as with *him* who is not here with us today ... so that there may not be among you man or woman or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God, to go *and* serve the gods of these nations, and that there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness or wormwood.”

This is possible. The same word, “oath,” will be used again in verse 19 (translated as “curse”). Thus, it is a warning from having their hearts turn away from the Lord. If they do, the curses will come upon them. Despite this, Moses’ words in Deuteronomy presuppose that the people will turn away from the Lord.

If there is a full stop after 15, with no parenthesis to follow, it would look like this –

“For you know that we dwelt in the land of Egypt and that we came through the nations which you passed by, and you saw their abominations and their idols which *were* among them—wood and stone and silver and gold—so that there may not be among you man or woman or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God, to go *and* serve the gods of these nations, and that there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness or wormwood...”

In this, Moses’ is saying that in dwelling in Egypt and in being brought through the nations, they were to learn not to turn away from the Lord who led them and performed wonders among them. That is what the author of Hebrews relays, using the same thought as now. The people saw the works of the Lord, and yet they turned away anyway –

“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; <sup>13</sup> but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”  
Hebrews 3:12, 13

Without being dogmatic either way, Moses says...

<sup>18</sup> (con’t) **and that there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness or wormwood;**

Here, three new words are introduced. The first is *shoresh*, or root. In this case, it is a figurative root. The next word is *rosh*, or poison. That comes from *rosh*, meaning a head. Hence, it is a plant with a poisonous head, like the poppy. And thirdly is the word *laanah*, signifying wormwood, like the hemlock.

In this, the Hebrew reads “bitterness and wormwood,” not “bitterness or wormwood.” The one root is doubly poisonous. There is first the turning away from the Lord God, and there is then going to serve the gods of the nations. The same root produces both poisons. This verse is used again by the author of Hebrews when he says...

“Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: <sup>15</sup> looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled.”

-Hebrews 12:14, 15

This is just what Moses is now warning of, meaning the defiling of others when the root comes forth. In verses 19-21, he will refer to the man who so turns from the Lord. And then suddenly in verses 22-28, it will speak of all of the people being uprooted and the land being cursed.

In other words, the actions of one could – and will eventually – affect the entire nation. Though neither of these words is used to describe Manasseh, the effects of his life are exactly the outcome that Moses is now describing –

“Nevertheless the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath, with which His anger was aroused against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him. <sup>27</sup> And the LORD said, ‘I will also remove Judah from My sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, ‘My name shall be there.’”

-2 Kings 23:26, 27

The Lord said this even after the coming of good King Josiah. The good that he did could not overcome the evil of his grandfather, Manasseh. To describe such a person, Moses says...

**<sup>19</sup> and so it may not happen, when he hears the words of this curse, that he blesses himself in his heart,**

It is the same word translated as “oath” in verse 14. The oath is that which will bring an imprecation upon the person if it is not adhered to. He hears the words of the oath and ignores the warning. Instead, this person goes on...

<sup>19</sup> (con’t) **saying, ‘I shall have peace, even though I follow the dictates of my heart’—**

Here is a new word, *sheriruth*, meaning “stubbornness.” It comes from *sharar*, meaning an enemy. In other words, the heart senses what is going on in it is wrong (as if facing an enemy). It is the dilemma that Paul writes about in Romans 7 –

“I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. <sup>22</sup> For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. <sup>23</sup> But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” Romans 7:21-23

Paul at least acknowledges the battle being faced, but this person, though knowing what is going on, still follows after that wrong sense in his heart without a care. With such a corrupt thought in mind, Moses uses an idiom to describe this warped soul...

\*<sup>19</sup> (fin) **as though the drunkard could be included with the sober.**

*l’maan sepot ha’ravah eth ha’tsemeah* – “to end purpose join the watered with the thirsty.” It is a set of words that is widely translated. “This will bring disaster on the watered land as well as the dry.” (BSB). “This will lead to the sweeping away of moist and dry alike” (ESV). “To add drunkenness to thirst” (KJV). “In order that the watered land dwindles away along with the dry [destroying everything].” (Amplified). “Lest the sinner destroy the guiltless with *him*.” (BST). “You will cause the rest of Israel to be punished along with you” (CEV). “And the drunken may consume the thirsty” (Douay-Rheims).

The general idea is that disaster will come upon all alike when such occurs. Israel is a corporate body, and they will suffer corporate punishment. That was seen in the first verses today. The entire nation, and all who issue from them, and all those who are joined to them, are entered into the covenant.

It is the same general idea expressed by the Lord when He prophesied of the coming destruction upon Israel –

“And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. <sup>28</sup> But Jesus, turning to them, said, ‘Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. <sup>29</sup> For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, “Blessed *are* the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!” <sup>30</sup> Then they will begin “to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us!’” <sup>31</sup> For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?”

-Luke 23:27-31

Being a corporate body, the innocent would be swept away with the guilty.

*We now stand before the Lord our God  
To enter with Him into the covenant and the oath too  
We shall pass through with our feet shod  
Prepared to meet Him; so, we are set to do*

*O Lord, righteousness belongs to You  
This covenant can only bring to us shame of face  
Surely, only wickedness we can do  
And upon Your glorious name, we will bring disgrace*

*And so, the curse and the oath will come upon us  
Until we turn our hearts back to You  
When we call out for mercy through the Lord Jesus  
Then You will hear because You are faithful and true*

## **II. Obtaining the Inheritance**

In verse 12, it was noted that the covenant was being cut in order to establish Israel as His people so that the Lord would be their God, in accord with the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. That was a land promise.

However, the Lord also cut a covenant with Abraham which was based on faith, not on the law that is now being cut. That is recorded in Genesis 15. Paul, using that as a case for salvation through faith and not through the law says the following in Galatians 3 –

<sup>10</sup>“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed *is* everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.’ <sup>11</sup> But that no one is justified by the law in the

sight of God *is* evident, for ‘the just shall live by faith.’ <sup>12</sup> Yet the law is not of faith, but “the man who does them shall live by them.”

<sup>13</sup> Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree’), <sup>14</sup> that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

<sup>15</sup> Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though *it is* only a man’s covenant, yet *if it is* confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. <sup>16</sup> Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed,’ who is Christ. <sup>17</sup> And this I say, *that* the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. <sup>18</sup> For if the inheritance *is* of the law, *it is* no longer of promise; but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.”

Paul’s words speak of the inheritance coming by promise and that it was based on faith. Obviously, this is so because this occurred four hundred and thirty years before the giving of the law. God spoke, Abraham believed, and the promise was made.

Paul demonstrates that the law has no part in obtaining the inheritance. If it did, then the promise would have been worthless. But the promise came via a covenant. Abraham did nothing except believe and God made the covenant – only He passed through the parts of the animal.

Therefore, if He failed to give the inheritance by faith, He would violate His own covenant. Such cannot be. This is why Christ came. The land, though seemingly the inheritance, is only a typological representation of it.

This does not negate a literal inheritance of the land of Canaan by Israel. And, indeed, both Isaac and Jacob were promised that the land would belong to their descendants. And so, for corporate Israel, the typology must meet up with the Antitype.

This is why they are back in the land. The gathering of the people in the land will lead to the act of faith in Christ. As Adam Clarke noted, both sides needed to “punctually and faithfully perform their respective conditions.”

The impossibility of Israel performing their side of the covenant has been seen, and will be seen. However, Christ, the true Israel, was able to perform. In His performance, the

New Covenant was cut in His death. It is only there, at the cross of Christ, that Israel will find their righteousness. His performance (and thus His righteousness) imputed to them.

The promise to Abraham must stand. It is a promise that was granted based on his faith, not by works. As this is so, then Israel, and indeed all people, must follow in the pattern of Abraham. The law cannot negate what was already established by God in Christ. So let us not ignore that lesson.

Instead, let us find that righteousness, which is not of the law, but which nonetheless comes from the fulfillment of the law. Let us trust in Christ and what He has done, and then – only then – let us live out our works that we were created for in Christ Jesus.

And let us be grateful to God for what He has done all the days of our lives. The wonderment of God in Christ is too spectacular to diminish by falling back on deeds of our own supposed righteousness in order to somehow merit God's favor.

When we feel our hearts tugging in that direction, let us stop that chatter right away, and let us renew our thanks to Him for Jesus. For Jesus. For our Lord JESUS!

**Closing Verse:** *“Behold, the days are coming,’ says the LORD,  
‘That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness;  
A King shall reign and prosper,  
And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.  
6 In His days Judah will be saved,  
And Israel will dwell safely;  
Now this is His name by which He will be called:  
THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”* Jeremiah 23:5, 6

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 29:20-29 *Things hidden even from kings...* (The Secret Things)  
(86<sup>th</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

**That He May Establish You Today**

“All of you stand today before the LORD your God:

Your leaders and your tribes as well  
And your elders and your officers  
All the men of Israel

Your little ones and your wives—  
The stranger who is in your camp too  
From the one who cuts your wood  
To the one who draws your water for you

That you may enter into covenant with the LORD your God  
And into His oath, which the LORD your God makes  
-----with you today  
That He may establish you today as a people for Himself  
And that He may be God to you, so I relay

Just as He has spoken to you  
And just as He has sworn to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac  
-----and Jacob too

“I make this covenant and this oath, not with you alone  
But with him who stands here with us today, so I convey  
Before the LORD our God  
As well as with him who is not here with us today

(For you know that we dwelt in the land of Egypt  
And that we came through the nations which you passed by  
-----doing as the Lord told  
And you saw their abominations and their idols  
Which were among them—wood and stone and silver and gold)

So that there may not be among you  
Man or woman or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today  
-----such would not be good  
From the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations  
And that there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness  
-----or wormwood

And so it may not happen, when he hears the words of this curse  
That he blesses himself in his heart, saying, ‘I shall have peace

Even though I follow the dictates of my heart  
As though the drunkard could be included with the sober  
-----that type of thinking must cease

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...



## **Deuteronomy 29:20-29** **(The Secret Things)**

In our Leviticus 26:14-39 sermon, entitled Assured Curses, we opened with the words of Mark Twain who confirmed the words of cursing that were laid upon Israel the people and Israel the land. It is right to revisit those words in order to understand and remember the truth of what is now presented in Deuteronomy –

Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes. Over it broods the spell of a curse that has withered its fields and fettered its energies. Where Sodom and Gomorrah reared their domes and towers, that solemn sea now floods the plain, in whose bitter waters no living thing exists—over whose waveless surface the blistering air hangs motionless and dead—about whose borders nothing grows but weeds, and scattering tufts of cane, and that treacherous fruit that promises refreshment to parching lips, but turns to ashes at the touch. Nazareth is forlorn; about that ford of Jordan where the hosts of Israel entered the Promised Land with songs of rejoicing, one finds only a squalid camp of fantastic Bedouins of the desert; Jericho the accursed, lies a moldering ruin, to-day, even as Joshua's miracle left it more than three thousand years ago; Bethlehem and Bethany, in their poverty and their humiliation, have nothing about them now to remind one that they once knew the high honor of the Saviour's presence; the hallowed spot where the shepherds watched their flocks by night, and where the angels sang Peace on earth, good will to men, is untenanted by any living creature, and unblessed by any feature that is pleasant to the eye. Renowned Jerusalem itself, the stateliest name in history, has lost all its ancient grandeur, and is become a pauper village; the riches of Solomon are no longer there to compel the admiration of visiting Oriental queens; the wonderful temple which was the pride and the glory of Israel, is gone, and the Ottoman crescent is lifted above the spot where, on that most memorable day in the annals of the world, they reared the Holy Cross. The noted Sea of Galilee, where Roman fleets once rode at anchor and the disciples of the Saviour sailed in their ships, was long ago deserted by the devotees of war and commerce, and its borders are a silent wilderness; Capernaum is a shapeless ruin; Magdala is the home of beggared Arabs; Bethsaida and Chorazin have vanished from the earth, and the "desert places" round about them where thousands of men once listened to the Saviour's voice and ate the miraculous bread, sleep in the hush of a solitude that is inhabited only by birds of prey and skulking foxes. Palestine is desolate and unlovely. And why should it be otherwise? Can the curse of the Deity beautify a land? Mark Twain, 1869

**Text Verse:** *"The joy of our heart has ceased;  
Our dance has turned into mourning.*

<sup>16</sup> *The crown has fallen from our head.*

*Woe to us, for we have sinned!*

<sup>17</sup> *Because of this our heart is faint;*

*Because of these things our eyes grow dim;*

<sup>18</sup> *Because of Mount Zion which is desolate,*

*With foxes walking about on it.*

<sup>19</sup> *You, O LORD, remain forever;*

*Your throne from generation to generation.*

<sup>20</sup> *Why do You forget us forever,*

*And forsake us for so long a time?*

<sup>21</sup> *Turn us back to You, O LORD, and we will be restored;*

*Renew our days as of old,*

<sup>22</sup> *Unless You have utterly rejected us,*

*And are very angry with us!” Lamentations 5:15-22*

Of our passage today, the Jamieson-Faucet-Brown Commentary states the following, somewhat mirroring the thoughts of Mark Twain –

“The picture of a once rich and flourishing region, blasted and doomed in consequence of the sins of its inhabitants, is very striking, and calculated to awaken awe in every reflecting mind. Such is, and long has been, the desolate state of Palestine; and, in looking at its ruined cities, its blasted coast, its naked mountains, its sterile and parched soil—all the sad and unmistakable evidences of a land lying under a curse—numbers of travellers from Europe, America, and the Indies (‘strangers from a far country,’ De 29:22) in the present day see that the Lord has executed His threatening. Who can resist the conclusion that it has been inflicted ‘because the inhabitants had forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers. ... and the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book?’”

The tragedy of Israel’s past, after their years of glory, was clearly prophesied by Moses. Nothing can be more evident from his words of this passage.

But even though the reason for the first exile was understood by them – having been acknowledged in their own writings – the reason for their second exile appears to be some sort of mystery to them, as if it is somehow an aberration that never should have occurred.

However, they were clearly told – before that exile came – by Jesus and by His apostles exactly what was needed to keep them from the disasters they have faced. Their

stubborn refusal to acknowledge Christ as Lord has brought, and will continue to bring, upon them many woes.

The word is written. The land was given to Israel. In their disobedience, they were to be exiled and chased throughout the world. This is the word of the Lord, and it is the guiding document concerning the state of Israel in the world at any given time.

Was the second exile of Israel an aberration? Obviously not. But if it was not, there had to be a reason that it came about. And if there is a reason, the word certainly includes what it is. And it does. Because they have not yet acknowledged what brought it about, it means that troubled times are still ahead for them.

They must be brought through the refiner's fire in order to make them a people once again prepared for the Lord. When that happens, the Lord – their Lord – will return to them. The secret things, indeed, belong to the Lord. But those things the Lord has revealed belong to His people. All they need to do is to search them out, and they will find Jesus. In Him alone is found salvation for every soul, and in Him alone is found the salvation of Israel.

Great things, such as coming to Jesus to be saved are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

## **I. Every Curse That Is Written in This Book**

For context, and because the words to come are based on the words that completed the previous sermon, the last verses from last week need to be reviewed –

“I make this covenant and this oath, not with you alone, <sup>15</sup> but with *him* who stands here with us today before the LORD our God, as well as with *him* who *is* not here with us today <sup>16</sup> (for you know that we dwelt in the land of Egypt and that we came through the nations which you passed by, <sup>17</sup> and you saw their abominations and their idols which *were* among them—wood and stone and silver and gold); <sup>18</sup> so that there may not be among you man or woman or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God, to go *and* serve the gods of these nations, and that there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness or wormwood; <sup>19</sup> and so it may not happen, when he hears the words of this curse, that he blesses himself in his heart, saying, ‘I shall have peace,

even though I follow the dictates of my heart’—as though the drunkard could be included with the sober.” Deuteronomy 29:14-19

With this understood as the immediate context, Moses now explains what the consequences for such an unacceptable attitude will be for this person, saying...

<sup>20</sup> **“The LORD would not spare him;**

The words refer to the person who follows the dictates of his own heart, rejecting the words of the covenant and yet saying, “I shall have peace.”

The idea is that of a self-righteous person. In essence, “I am of Israel, God has called us as His people, and therefore I can do as I please and still find peace. In this, Moses says, *lo yoveh Yehovah seloakh lo* – “no willing Yehovah pardon to him.”

It is the sin of presumption, and it is an intolerable sin. As such, and using the same word as Moses, the Lord asks the question of Israel through Jeremiah –

“How shall I **pardon** you for this?

Your children have forsaken Me

And sworn by *those that are* not gods.

When I had fed them to the full,

Then they committed adultery

And assembled themselves by troops in the harlots’ houses.

<sup>8</sup>They were *like* well-fed lusty stallions;

Every one neighed after his neighbor’s wife.

<sup>9</sup>Shall I not punish *them* for these *things?*’ says the LORD.

‘And shall I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this?’” Jeremiah 5:7-9

David committed great sin before the Lord, and yet he was forgiven for what he did. It is the exact same sin that Jeremiah addressed in his words, adultery. And yet, when confronted with his sin, David not only acknowledged it, but he was filled with remorse over his actions –

“Have mercy upon me, O God,

According to Your lovingkindness;

According to the multitude of Your tender mercies,

Blot out my transgressions.

<sup>2</sup>Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,

And cleanse me from my sin.

<sup>3</sup> For I acknowledge my transgressions,  
And my sin *is* always before me.

<sup>4</sup> Against You, You only, have I sinned,  
And done *this* evil in Your sight—  
That You may be found just when You speak,  
And blameless when You judge.” Psalm 51:1-4

David not only acknowledged his sin, but he took the time to openly confess it to the world through a psalm. And for 2900 years now, his example has been set forth for all of us to know what is acceptable to the Lord and what is not. The Lord cannot deal graciously with the one who sins presumptuously against Him. Rather, Moses says...

<sup>20</sup> (con't) **for then the anger of the LORD and His jealousy would burn against that man,**

The Hebrew is active, alive, and emphatic: *ki az yeshan aph Yehovah v'qinato ba'ish ha'hu* – “for then will smoke nostril Yehovah and his anger in the man the he.” The smoking nostril reminds the hearer of the smoke and terrifying display of fire upon Sinai, the only other time this word has been used –

“Now Mount Sinai *was* completely in **smoke**, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly.” Exodus 19:18

A violation of the law can be forgiven through the allowances of the law. But there is no allowance that can overcome the presumptuous heart that will not abase itself before the Lord. The Day of Atonement was given for forgiveness, but it called for abasement –

“For any person who is not afflicted *in soul* on that same day shall be cut off from his people. <sup>30</sup> And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. <sup>31</sup> You shall do no manner of work; *it shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. <sup>32</sup> It *shall be* to you a sabbath of *solemn* rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth *day* of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath.” Leviticus 23:29-32

The word twice translated as “afflict” signifies to bow down or afflict in humility. If this provision of the law cannot be met, there is no remedy for that person. Thus, the Lord’s nostril will smoke...

<sup>20</sup> (con't) **and every curse that is written in this book would settle on him,**

Again, the words are very poignant, purposeful, and emphatic: *v'rovetsah bo kal ha'alah ha'kethuvah ba'sepher ha'zeh* – “and will lie in him every the oath the written in the book the this.”

The word *ravats*, or “lie,” comes from a primitive root signifying “to crouch (on all four legs like a recumbent animal)” (Strong). As such, it is as if the entire weight of every oath of the law has lain upon him.

Rather than the curse itself, it is the oath (*alah*) referred to in verses 12 and 14 that is sworn and leads to the curse. Again, Jeremiah gives the sense of such a man's thoughts who is filled with this type of presumption –

“They continually say to those who despise Me,  
‘The LORD has said, “You shall have peace’;  
And to everyone who walks according to the dictates of his own heart, they say,  
‘No evil shall come upon you.’” Jeremiah 23:17

Rather than peace and no evil, there will be terror and the oaths of the law coming upon them. But let us not remove ourselves too far from the One who was willing to take this upon Himself to allow those who are willing to come to God through Him in humility –

“Surely He has borne our griefs  
And carried our sorrows;  
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,  
Smitten by God, and afflicted.  
<sup>5</sup> But He *was* wounded for our transgressions,  
*He was* bruised for our iniquities;  
The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him,  
And by His stripes we are healed.  
<sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray;  
We have turned, every one, to his own way;  
And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” Isaiah 53:4-6

The weight of the oaths of the law alighted upon Christ for those who will afflict their souls before the Lord. For those of Israel who rejected this, the Lord – through Moses – has another word...

<sup>20</sup> (con't) **and the LORD would blot out his name from under heaven.**

Rather than “under heaven,” the Hebrew reads “under the heavens.” It means that there will be no remembrance of that person on the earth. His name will be cut off, and the line that issues from him will end. As such, it will be as if he never existed.

<sup>21</sup> **And the LORD would separate him from all the tribes of Israel for adversity,**

The word translated as “adversity” is “evil.” The Lord will bring evil upon the man who so presumptuously acts against Him. Where he finds peace in himself and his actions, they are – in fact – perverse and contrary to the law.

Such a person would be set apart from all the tribes, meaning cut off from the inheritance and the covenant promises. For such a person, there can be no forgiveness. His doom will hang over his head until he is destroyed. The thought is reflective of the words of Jeremiah towards those who had acted this way before the Lord –

“Behold, I will watch over them for adversity and not for good. And all the men of Judah who *are* in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by famine, until there is an end to them.” Jeremiah 44:27

Again, the promise is explicitly stated that it will be...

<sup>21</sup> (con't) **according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this Book of the Law,**

Moses' words are again focused, firm, fixed, and emphatic: *kekol alot ha'berit ha'kethuvah b'sepher ha'torah ha'zeh* – “according to all oaths the covenant the written in book the Torah the this.” And again, it says “oaths,” not “curses.”

Not all of the curses will fall upon any particular person, but all of the oaths – leading to the curses – will. That which is written in the book of the Law shall be performed according to the word of the Lord who so inspired it through Moses.

So far, in these past few verses, it has spoken of an individual – he, himself, his, I, my, him, that man, and so on. Now, with the coming verse, that begins to change...

<sup>22</sup> **so that the coming generation of your children who rise up after you,**

It is referring to many years in the future, certainly after the Babylonian exile, and even at the time after the Roman exile. The generation of children who would rise up would see the effect of the presumptuous generation and understand...

**22 (con't) and the foreigner who comes from a far land,**

Nothing is more certain in the historical record than this. It may be that Jews saw the land and spoke among one another of its state, but the record of foreigners describing the desolation of the land is abundant. Of these groups, they...

**22 (con't) would say, when they see the plagues of that land**

The word is *makah*, coming from *nakah* – “to strike.” It is the word used to describe the stripes laid upon the back of a person who is punished according to the law. As such, it is as if the land has been beaten with a massive rod, crushing down buildings, houses, fields, and so on. The sense should be that of welts laid upon the land in anger and fury...

**22 (con't) and the sicknesses which the LORD has laid on it:**

*v'eth takhalueha asher khilah Yehovah bah* – “and diseases which has made sick Yehovah on it.” It is a new word, *takhalu*. It signifies a malady or disease. It will only be found five times, but the most notable instance that gives the sense of what it signifies is probably that of 2 Chronicles 21, referring to the crummy king Jehoram –

“and it comes to pass, from days to days, and at the time of the going out of the end of two years, his bowels have gone out with his sickness, and he dies of severe diseases, and his people have not made for him a burning like the burning of his fathers.” 2 Chronicles 29:18, 19 (LSV)

Thus, the sicknesses of the land probably refers to the blights and plagues that affected the water, the foliage, and so on. It probably also refers to the sicknesses that became endemic in the land during this period.

And this is true. The land eventually was filled with malaria, trachoma, smallpox, cholera, dysentery, tuberculosis, high infant mortality, and so on. What is noteworthy is that these are attributed to the hand of the Lord. The land became unusable for certainly two reasons.



The first is that Israel was destroyed, and thus the land was too. It became uninhabited by them because they were exiled from it. But the second reason is equally important. The land was given to Israel. While they were in exile, if the land became productive, it would have been – as it is today – coveted after.

As such, there would have been people who settled in and made it productive. This did not happen. Due to its history, as well as its strategic location, it was fought over, but it was never really occupied in the sense that it became productive. The Lord ensured that the land would someday be filled by Israel once again. And this is exactly what both the Bible prophesied of, as well as what has occurred. Of this land of desolation, the people would exclaim...

**<sup>23</sup> ‘The whole land is brimstone, salt, and burning;**

*gapherit va’melakh serepha kal artsah* – “brimstone and salt, burning all [the] land.” The words give the sense of heat, anguish, and desolation upon the land. Nothing is productive, and nothing apart from the Lord’s favor could make it so. Because of this...

**<sup>23 (con’t)</sup> it is not sown, nor does it bear, nor does any grass grow there,**

The words now speak of a lack of rain. No one will sow if there is no rain to cause seed to grow. More than that, nothing hardy will even sprout up on its own. And more, even grass – which needs but a short span of rain to come forth – will fail to grow. The land itself will be left ruined because the rains have ceased. It will be...

**<sup>23 (con’t)</sup> like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim,**

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is explicitly stated in Genesis 19, but the destruction of Admah and Zeboiim is implied. They were in the same area and the same fate came upon them.

Here, Moses introduces the word *mahpekah*. It is a noun used to describe the state of being overthrown. What will occur in the Land of Promise is directly equated to what occurred with these four cities...

**<sup>23 (con’t)</sup> which the LORD overthrew in His anger and His wrath.’**

*asher haphak Yehovah b’apo u-ba’khamato* – “which overthrew Yehovah in nostril and in heated rage.” The words are anthropomorphic, ascribing the actions of a raging man

to that of the Lord. The sense is that His nostril is fuming and smoking, His forehead is flushed red with anger, and He lashes down upon the land in His fury.

What is being done in these verses is to equate the entire land to the area around the Dead Sea. In Genesis 13:10, that land was described as idyllic –

“And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar.”

That is comparable to the description of Canaan by Moses –

“For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; <sup>8</sup>a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; <sup>9</sup>a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones *are* iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper.”

-Deuteronomy 8:7-9

However, just as the Lord destroyed the area of the Dead Sea, turning it into an absolute wasteland, so He will overthrow and ruin the good land of Canaan. In this...

#### **<sup>24</sup> All nations would say, ‘Why has the LORD done so to this land?’**

What is apparent is that what has happened will be ascribed to the Lord, meaning the One true God – even if those who ask this don’t know what His name actually is. This will be perfectly evident simply because the land was fully inhabited, from Dan to Beersheba.

There will be (and there remains to this day) evidences throughout the entire land that it was once filled to the brim with people. When people look at the empty cities and lands that once bustled throughout Asia, South America, and elsewhere, the same question arises. “What tragedy did God bring upon this place?”

We ascribe to God the ruin of such places because we know that the hand of God brings such ruin. In the case of Israel, anyone who went through it would see the devastation and know that God (the Lord) had brought about the disaster. In this, the next question arises...

<sup>24</sup> (con't) **What does the heat of this great anger mean?**

*meh khori ha'aph ha'gadol ha'zeh* – “What heat the nostril the great the this?” In whatever way someone perceives the anger of the Lord, it is usually an anthropomorphic thought. As such, to think of Him raging, with fire and smoke coming out of His nostrils and stomping on the land is not an uncalled-for image. The question for such a mental image is, “What does it mean?”

<sup>25</sup> **Then *people* would say: ‘Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt;**

The words in these verses are restated, but still closely repeated by Jeremiah –

“And many nations will pass by this city; and everyone will say to his neighbor, ‘Why has the LORD done so to this great city?’ <sup>9</sup> Then they will answer, ‘Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God, and worshiped other gods and served them.’” Jeremiah 22:8, 9

Even in Israel’s exile, there have remained people in the land. It has never been completely barren. Little groups of people were left during the Babylonian exile, as is recorded in Scripture. And small pockets of people remained in the land ever since the exile by the Romans as history has shown.

These would be the people who knew the history and passed it down, or who had a Bible handy and knew the recorded history. As such, they could easily explain the events recorded in this verse, thus fulfilling the prophecy of the verse in the process.

A covenant was made, the promises of blessing and abundance are clearly evidenced in the once filled and productive land, and yet, the land is now destroyed. The covenant was violated by the people and the desolation was brought about by the offended Lord.

What is perfectly evident is that these words indicate both a physical as well as a spiritual state of ruin. The land is clearly destroyed, but the destruction of the land is based on the ruination of the people. The covenant is violated, and the resulting curses have fallen upon both the land and the inhabitants.

It is a clear indication that Israel, being cut off from its land, means that Israel has been cut off from the Lord. This should give Israel of today pause. If they have been cut off from the Lord, they are cut off from the Lord.

Their restoration to the land is an act of grace, not an acknowledgment that they are suddenly right with Him. Such is not the case. If they would simply take the blinders off before reading the word of the Lord, they could come to no other conclusion.

But until they are willing to see that the narrative is not about them, this will never happen. This is painfully evident from what got them into the pickle in the first place...

**<sup>26</sup> for they went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods that they did not know and that He had not given to them.**

The covenant forbid Israel to do exactly what they did. There is little in their recorded history that does not include this truth. They rejected the Lord and served every possible god but Him. At times, they worshipped Him by using fashioned gods as well. In both, they were guilty of forsaking the word of the Lord and the precepts of the covenant.

Jeremiah clearly speaks of the fulfillment of Moses' words –

“And it will be when you say, ‘Why does the LORD our God do all these *things* to us?’ then you shall answer them, ‘Just as you have forsaken Me and served foreign gods in your land, so you shall serve aliens in a land *that is* not yours.’”

-Jeremiah 5:19

All of these things are true and are undeniable. But this doesn't explain the transition from the singular person in the earlier verses to the plural – you (plural), they, their, them, etc. Why did Moses do this? The answer is found throughout the writings and the prophets, and it can be summed up with an exacting example –

“Manasseh *was* twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Hephzibah. <sup>2</sup> And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.” 2 Kings 21:1, 2

“and I will not make the feet of Israel wander anymore from the land which I gave their fathers—only if they are careful to do according to all that I have

commanded them, and according to all the law that My servant Moses commanded them.”<sup>9</sup> But they paid no attention, and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.” 2 Kings 21:8, 9

“Nevertheless the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath, with which His anger was aroused against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him.<sup>27</sup> And the LORD said, ‘I will also remove Judah from My sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, ‘My name shall be there.’”

-2 Kings 23:26, 27

The king is the leader of the people. In the departure of the king from the Lord, the people will naturally follow suit. The two are inextricably tied together in a unique way. As such and because of this truth, Moses continues with the words of those who see what has come upon Israel...

**<sup>27</sup> Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against this land, to bring on it every curse that is written in this book.**

Here, the word “curse” is correct. The oath leads to the curse. The turning of the king brings about the turning of the people, and in their turning, “every curse” that is written in the book is brought upon the land and thus the people.

Moses exactly predicts what will occur as well as what the verbal response from the people will be when they are asked about the matter. But more, he implies that those who convey what has occurred will, in fact, have a copy of the book to confirm what has been stated by the Lord.

It isn't that they had to guess. The preservation of the word of the Lord is implied in what is stated in this verse, and that same word is being conveyed to those who had asked the question – meaning the children of the future and the foreigner from the far land.

But who is it that will pay heed to the words of predictive prophecy that are so perfectly fulfilled in the people and in the land? It sure wasn't those in whom the words were fulfilled...

**<sup>28</sup> And the LORD uprooted them from their land**

*v'yiteshem Yehovah meal admatam* – “And uprooted them Yehovah from their ground.” Here is a new word, *nathash*. It signifies to pull or pluck up, or to uproot. It will be used frequently by Jeremiah. Instead of “land,” Moses says, “ground,” thus making a play on the words. They were uprooted as a plant is pulled from the ground, and this was...

<sup>28</sup> (con't) **in anger, in wrath, and in great indignation,**

*b'aph u-b'bekhemah u-b'qetseph gadol* – “in nostril, and in heated rage, and in indignation great.” The words are exactly repeated by Jeremiah –

“I Myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger and fury and great wrath.” Jeremiah 21:5

Again, the words are anthropomorphic. It is as if a man is in a garden, raging and tearing up the plants with his nostril fuming and his forehead burning with anger. He pulls up the plants...

<sup>28</sup> (con't) **and cast them into another land, as *it is this day.*'**

Here, the word is *erets*, or land. They are pulled up from their ground and cast, not planted, upon another land. With no roots, they will not prosper and can be moved without any effort to and from the lands around them.

The words *ka'yom ha'zeh*, or “according to day, the this,” mean that during all of their time in exile, and during all the time that the land is barren and destroyed, the saying will be said. “This is what happened, this is why it happened, and this is the result that you now see, even today.”

The shame of the statement is intended to reach out around the world and explain why Israel is broken up into little pockets of miserable people in the lands of their exile. As such...

<sup>29</sup> **“The secret *things belong* to the LORD our God, but those *things which are revealed belong* to us and to our children forever, that *we may do all the words of this law.*”**

The Hebrew consists of fewer words. Literally, it reads “The hidden to Yehovah our God, and the uncovered (exposed) to us and to our children until forever to do all words, the Torah, the this.”

The number of ideas as to what is being said here is lengthy. Many scholars abuse the text as it is written. One thing seems likely is that the words include the thought of going into captivity. The reason is that the word translated as “uncovered” (or revealed) is used very often elsewhere and is translated as “captive.”

The reason is because when one goes into captivity, he is exposed or uncovered. Jeremiah, who has used Moses’ words time and again today, uses this word in that way numerous times, such as –

“The cities of the South shall be shut up,  
And no one shall open *them*;  
Judah shall be carried away captive, all of it;  
It shall be wholly carried away captive.” Jeremiah 13:19

Grammatically, the words “to do” could refer to either the Lord or the people. And so, it must be questioned who the subject is –

“The hidden to Yehovah our God (and the uncovered to us and to our children until forever) [for the Lord] to do all words of this Torah.”

Or

“The hidden to Yehovah our God, and the uncovered to us and to our children until forever [for us] to do all words of this Torah.”

Unlike the rest of the entire chapter, this verse has been presented in the first-person plural – “we Israel.” Moses includes himself in the words, a very rare occurrence in Deuteronomy. Without being dogmatic about it, especially because nobody else even considers this, I would suggest this may be a double entendre.

One meaning then would be that the verse is speaking about the intentions of the Lord. The Lord has concealed (hidden) things concerning the future, even in the word. But He has also given explicit instructions in it which are – on the surface – knowable and expected. Hence, he says, *laasot eth kal divre ha'torah ha'zot* - that [we] may do all the words of this Law.

As the law is revealed, it is expected to be followed, but the law (through the prophets) will continue to reveal more. Eventually, those prophecies will align with their prophetic fulfillment. As such, the words of the law itself will no longer be hidden. For example, Paul’s words in Romans 10:8 show that Deuteronomy 30:14 was a reference to Christ and His work.

The second meaning would then be that the hidden things are the prerogative of the Lord, but the captivity (being exposed) belongs to Israel forever because they are bound to the law of which they cannot “do.” However, at the time of Moses, in the hidden things of the Lord are included all of His “doing” all of the words of the Torah. Eventually, He came, and He did all the words of the Torah.

If this is a correct interpretation, it is summed up in Jesus’ words –

“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. <sup>18</sup> For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.”

-Matthew 5:17, 18

As such, the choice belongs to all people, even those not under the law. The reason is that the law is God’s standard. Fulfilling the law is God’s mark of perfection. Whether one is under law or not, perfection is the standard.

None apart from the law have the law to attempt to attain perfection, and none under the law have the ability to attain perfection through the law. What all men need is Christ Jesus’ perfection, who fulfilled the law.

In the Hebrew of this verse, there are special points above the words “to us and to our children.” They are known as *puncta extraordinaria*, or “extraordinary punctuation.”

It is not known what their meaning is, but we can now speculate that this is exactly what is being referred to, meaning Israel’s permanent inability to meet the demands of the law, and for them to look to the Lord in place of it for their justification and their righteousness.

And this is what all people are to do. Surprisingly, God has made a way available to us to be reconciled to Himself. I say, surprisingly because He was under no obligation to do so, and in order to do so, He would have to do the incredible.

The process would be painful, abasing, and impossible for many to even believe. But He did it. The Lord God Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth did the unimaginable for His creatures. Let us not turn away from so great a salvation. Let us come to Christ and forever sing praises to the God to whom belong the secret things.



**Closing Verse:** *"I will give you the treasures of darkness  
And hidden riches of secret places,  
That you may know that I, the LORD,  
Who call you by your name,  
Am the God of Israel."* Isaiah 45:3

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 30:1-10 *This is where your point of righteousness will start...*  
(The Lord Your God Will Circumcise Your Heart) (87<sup>th</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **The Secret Things**

"The LORD would not spare him; for then the anger of the LORD  
And His jealousy would burn against that man, even times seven  
And every curse that is written in this book would settle on him  
And the LORD would blot out his name from under heaven

And the LORD would separate him from  
All the tribes of Israel for adversity  
According to all the curses of the covenant  
That are written in this Book of the Law, so shall it be

So that the coming generation of your children  
-----who rise up after you  
And the foreigner who comes from a far land, would say  
When they see the plagues of that land  
And the sicknesses which the LORD has laid on it that day...

'The whole land is brimstone, salt, and burning  
It is not sown, nor does it bear, nor does any grass grow there  
Like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim  
Which the LORD overthrew in His anger  
-----and His wrath He did not spare

All nations would say, 'Why has the LORD done so to this land?'

What does the heat of this great anger mean? We don't understand

Then people would say: 'Because they have forsaken the covenant  
Of the LORD God of their fathers, and you understand  
Which He made with them  
When He brought them out of Egypt the land

For they went and served other gods and worshiped them  
Gods that they did not know and that He had not given to them  
-----and Him they forsook  
Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against this land  
To bring on it every curse that is written in this book

And the LORD uprooted them  
From their land – in anger He did display  
In wrath, and in great indignation  
And cast them into another land, as it is this day

“The secret things belong to the LORD our God  
But those things which are revealed – of which we saw  
Belong to us and to our children forever  
That we may do all the words of this law

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## Deuteronomy 30:1-10 (The Lord Your God Will Circumcise Your Heart)

I must admit that there is a progression of thought in this passage that was rather difficult for me to pin down, and there are some clauses within it that took a lot of effort to think through.

A couple of the scholars, Keil and Lange, I read for each sermon had some invaluable insight into the Hebrew that helped me out, but their analyses were so difficult to understand that I spent half my time just trying to make sense of what they were saying.

Get a load of Lange's comments from a portion of his thoughts about verse 2. And mind you, this is just a short portion of them –

“To put an end to the captivity, to turn the imprisonment. GES., HUPF., as already J. H. MICHAELIS, KNOBEL, in a transitive sense likewise, but questionable (since it gives the Kal the force of the Hiphil); to turn back the captivity, or the captives. **שְׁבִית** (שְׁבִית) as it is alternately pointed by Masoretic punctuators) from **שָׁבָה** **shavah** to sweep away, to lead captive, is an abstract form designating the condition. It is impossible, in this connection, to take the abstract for the concrete, since the leading back of the captives, the gathering of Israel from the heathen, appears as the consequence of **אֶת־שְׁבוֹתָךְ** **ושָׁב**—. Comp. Jer. 29:14; 30:3, 18. As there the consideration of what had been experienced, *i.e.*, the bringing it back to heart, preceded the return of Israel to the Lord, so now, the leading back of Israel, the gathering of His people out from all the nations, follows upon the return of the Lord to His people. The expression, **have compassion upon thee**, which as is conceded, appears in the earlier prophets, and has no necessary connection therefore with the Babylonian exile, but as there used refers rather to the time of the Messiah, is moreover satisfactorily explained.”

There are some good insights, but he sure could have stated them in a much easier way. If you think my sermons get complicated, just try to understand what these are saying. As for the passage, despite its complexities, the overall message is rather simple, “You will be restored someday, and the Lord will rejoice over you.”

Who is being referred to, and when is it speaking of? That is what we will go over in detail today...

**Text Verse:** *“For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim. <sup>5</sup> Afterward the children of*

*Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days.” Hosea 3:4, 5*

Another commentary I read, but which is less worried about the details and more concerned with the overall picture of what is being said is the Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary. I didn't need their comments for the sermon, but I appreciated what they had to say enough to let you hear a portion of their thoughts –

“The hopes of the Hebrew people are ardently directed to this promise, and they confidently expect that God, commiserating their forlorn and fallen condition, will yet rescue them from all the evils of their long dispersion. They do not consider the promise as fulfilled by their restoration from the captivity in Babylon, for Israel was not then scattered in the manner here described—'among all the nations,' 'unto the utmost parts of heaven' (De 30:4). When God recalled them from that bondage, all the Israelites were not brought back. They were not multiplied above their fathers (De 30:5), nor were their hearts and those of their children circumcised to love the Lord (De 30:6). It is not, therefore, of the Babylonish captivity that Moses was speaking in this passage; it must be of the dispersed state to which they have been doomed for eighteen hundred years. ... But undoubtedly it will receive its full and complete accomplishment in the conversion of the Jews to the Gospel of Christ.” Jamieson-Fausset-Brown

The Jews are looking for one thing, what they will get is not at all what they now expect. But be sure of this, what they get will be infinitely greater than what they now expect. The commentators are right, it is future to us now, and it is all about Jesus and His relationship with the Jews.

Let's not insert the church where it does not belong. These verses today have nothing to do with the church. They speak of a day, future to us now, when Israel will again be in a right standing with God. The way the world looks now, that day may not be far off.

We'll see. For now, great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. The Lord Your God Will Gather You (verses 1-6)**

**<sup>1</sup>“Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you,**

Moses now sums up the contents of Chapters 27-29. A great deal has been spoken forth in those chapters concerning the state of the people in relation to the law that has been given. Chapter 27 referred to the proclamation of the curses upon Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. The final proclamation summed up the entire matter, though –

“‘Cursed *is* the one who does not confirm *all* the words of this law by observing them.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’” Deuteronomy 27:26

Chapter 28 defined the blessings and the curses that would come upon the people for obedience or disobedience. However, understanding the all-encompassing nature of those final words of Chapter 27, it appears to be a given that bad times lay ahead for the people, even if the blessings initially came upon them.

In Chapter 29, Moses clearly stated that the covenant was being made not just with the people there before him, but all who would issue from them who are called “Israel.” The binding nature of the law cannot be escaped from by the nation.

In his words, he went from the singular “The Lord would not spare him” (29:20), and he moved to punishment upon the whole land, saying, “when they see the plagues of that land and the sicknesses which the Lord has laid upon it” (29:22). The implication is that the entire nation has departed from the Lord.

That is then confirmed in the words, “Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt” (29:25). As such, the words of cursing finished with, “And the LORD uprooted them from their land in anger, in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as *it is* this day” (29:28).

With that stated, Moses closed out the chapter with the words, “The secret *things* belong to the LORD our God, but those *things* which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law” (29:29).

With that context understood, and with the thought of Israel being in a state of exile from the land, while at the same time the land simmers and burns in the heat of the Lord’s anger and wrath, the beginning words of Chapter 30 include – “when all these things come upon you.”

Moses takes it as an axiom that they will, in fact, come upon them. He does not say “if.” The word signifies “that,” “for,” “when,” and so on. The words “all these things” are exactly what we just detailed. They encompass...

<sup>1</sup> (con’t) **the blessing and the curse which I have set before you,**

Moses acknowledges that all of it would come upon Israel, both the joy of the blessing and the terror of the curse. He has clearly, fully, and in minute detail expressed everything that would come to pass. The words have been presented to them, and they are recorded for all generations to consider.

Nothing needed has been kept secret, but the Lord has revealed the future to them through Moses. Those things that the Lord has kept secret are His alone, but that which has been presented is fully sufficient to alert Israel to what is coming and thus who is to blame when it does. Of these words so far, Charles Ellicott (1819-1905) says –

“The curse is still upon them, and therefore this chapter contemplates the possibility of a restoration still to come. Some would go much further than this. But thus much is undeniable.” Charles Ellicott

This flies in the face of replacement theology. If Israel is still under the curse (which even replacement theologians are willing to admit), then it means that they are still under (bound to) the covenant by which the curse finds its authority. One cannot say “Israel is out” while Israel is still in. It is illogical, incompetent, and inconsistent.

As one can see from Moses’ words though, it is, unfortunately, the case that eventual failure is the expectation, and the curses are to be the anticipated result of the failure. In that state, having received all of the curses, including the state of being in exile...

<sup>1</sup> (con’t) **and you call *them* to mind**

*va’hashevota el l’vavekha* – “And you return unto to your heart.” The heart reflects the cognitive thinking of man, the mind. It is that which Israel uses to reflect on their state. It must be noted that all of the words of this verse are in the singular, “you Israel.” This is unlike what occurred in Daniel 9 –

“In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans— <sup>2</sup> in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years *specified* by the word of

the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup>Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.” Daniel 9:1-3

Daniel called to mind the things that had been written, and he petitioned the Lord because of them. But what is spoken of here is a national acknowledgment of their condition.

Today, there are some Jews that will acknowledge, “Boy, we really got what we deserved,” just as Daniel did. He went on through much of that chapter detailing how deserving they were of all of the calamity that came upon them. For the most part though, Israel of today finds every reason except for their own national failure as to why all the ills they have experienced have come upon them.

Therefore, their return to the land cannot be a fulfillment of what is stated now by Moses. That is solely an act of grace by the Lord, preparing them for what lies ahead. Further, their being in the land now does not negate that a literal fulfillment lies ahead for the next words...

<sup>1 (con't)</sup> **among all the nations**

It is true that Israel has a homeland, and that it is filled with the people of Israel. But it is also true that a majority of them are still not in the land. They are still “among all the nations.” But this is an unnatural state. If they are Israel, they belong in Israel.

A Japanese belongs in Japan. If a person moves to America from Japan, and if that person becomes an American, he is no longer a Japanese. He, and those after him, are Americans of Japanese descent. However, Jews generally identify with their culture first.

There is nothing wrong with this. It is just how it is. Whatever one identifies with most, that is what he is. As a Jew derives his cultural identity from Israel, then it would logically follow that he is in a state of separation when he is not in the land by which he is identified. This is the condition known as exile. For those of Israel who are not in the land of Israel, it is...

<sup>1 (con't)</sup> **where the LORD your God drives you,**

Israel was in the land, they disobeyed the Lord, and they were exiled from the land. From that time on, those who are not in the land are in exile. If this was not so, they would simply do what everyone else does and join to the nation where they now live.

If you go to England, there are people from India, Africa, Pakistan, Malaysia, China, and so on. They came to England over the years, and they have – if they are willing to be a part of the English culture – identified with England. They can be proud of their heritage, but they also identify with England, deciding that is their permanent place to hang their hat.

Jews will also do this. They serve in the military in the US, they identify with the US, and so on. But for many, their primary identification remains being “Jewish.” It is what defines them. This is why they were paraded around with yellow stars in Germany. The bonds of their culture remained at the forefront of who they are. Again, this isn’t right or wrong, it is just how it is.

The Lord anticipated that, and He has, in their continued disobedience, done to them exactly as He said He would, and exactly as Moses affirms would occur. Understanding these things, Moses continues...

**<sup>2</sup>and you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice,**

*v’shavta ad Yehovah elohekha v’shamata b’qolo* – “And you return as far as Yehovah your God and obey His voice.” The thought and the words are similar to Deuteronomy 4:30 –

“When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice.”

Both there, and here in Chapter 30, the words are in the singular – “you Israel.” And in both, the word translated as “to” is *ad*. It signifies “as far as” or “even to.” Israel is in exile, they are in distress, it is the latter days, and so on. Over the years, they may have turned from their ways, but not to the Lord.

What Moses is saying in both Deuteronomy 4:30 and again here, is that Israel will someday turn *as far as* or *even to* the Lord. In other words, this is a complete returning to Him, not just a turning to Him at some particular point in order to meet a timely need. John Lange says, “including the goal as one attained.”



Relying on their own righteousness, and in heeding the placating thoughts of the rabbis of the past whose words comprise the Talmud, Israel has never come to this point. Someday, they will put all of that nonsense behind them and turn until they attain the goal, coming to the Lord alone. This turning will be...

<sup>2</sup> (con't) **according to all that I command you today,**

The words refer to everything spoken of by Moses in Deuteronomy – every law, every precept, every anticipated event. The expression “I command you today” has been repeated more than twenty times since Deuteronomy 4:40. As such, it must be remembered that this then includes the clear commands concerning the “Prophet like me” spoken in Chapter 18.

That Prophet was clearly presented to Israel, and it is He that fulfilled the Mosaic Code, and then both annulled it and initiated a New Covenant in His blood. But it is only annulled for those who accept that it is so. For those who do not, they remain under the Law of Moses, and thus under the curse of the law.

For Israel, when they turn to the Lord, acknowledging Christ – as is clearly presented in what Moses is conveying – they will then have fulfilled the precepts of the law as now given by him...

<sup>2</sup> (con't) **you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul,**

What is spoken of is a national turning. The word “you” is in the singular. It is undoubtedly not speaking merely to each individual, but to the nation sitting before him now, which is inclusive of “your (singular) children.”

At some point, the nation will have a collective turning, even to (as far as) the Lord, and it will be “in all to your (singular) heart and in all your (singular) soul.” Understanding this timing, the thought which began in this first clause now continues...

<sup>3</sup> **that the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity,**

The words seem simple. One can read them and quickly pass on to the next verse. And yet, the Hebrew is so precise and carefully stated that scholars have lengthy commentaries on it: *v'shav Yehovah elohekha eth shevutekha* – “And return Yehovah your God your (singular) fortunes.”

Moses introduces a new word here *shevuth*. It comes from *shavah*, meaning “to take captive.” Hence, it is generally translated as “from captivity.” Two major translations are given though –

“then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity” (NASB)

“then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes” (ESV)

Keil clearly presents what is being conveyed –

“the Lord will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and gather thee again’ אֶת־שְׁבוּתֹתֶיךָ *does not mean to bring back the prisoners, as the more modern lexicographers erroneously suppose (the Kal שָׁוָה never has the force of the Hiphil), but to turn the imprisonment, and that in a figurative sense, viz., to put an end to the distress...”*

In other words, whether it is translated as “from captivity” or “restore your fortunes,” it signifies the ending of the distress of the people. This is important because of the continued words of the verse.

As an interesting insight into this verse, the Greek translation says, “and the Lord will heal your sins.” How they came to that is difficult to understand unless they logically understood that the fortunes cannot be restored unless the sins are forgiven. The thought is certainly reminiscent of Romans 11 –

“And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:

‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion,

And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;

<sup>27</sup> For this *is* My covenant with them,

When I take away their sins.’” Romans 11:26, 27

For now, Moses provides parallelism to confirm the restoration of Israel, saying...

<sup>3</sup> (con’t) **and have compassion on you,**

In the returning of the captivity (restoring the fortunes), compassion is given. The second thought restates but repeats the previous thought. With that noted, Moses then says...

<sup>3 (con't)</sup> **and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you.**

Moses repeats the same word as the first clause, *v'shav* or “and return,” saying: *v'shav v'qibetskha mikal ha'ammim* – “and return and gather you (singular) from all the peoples.” The words then are a resumption of the thought –

“And return Yehovah your God your fortunes.”

“And have compassion on you.”

“And return and gather you from all the peoples.”

What has happened in these verses is first a turning of the heart of the people in order to obey the Lord's voice. In turn, the Lord returns to restore Israel. The second is a consequence of the first. The gathering of Israel comes after – as a result of – the turning of the collective heart.

Therefore, what has happened since 1948 is not a fulfillment of these words. The restoration of Israel to the land has happened, that is true, but their true restoration is yet ahead. This gathering of the people is something that will occur after, not before, the tribulation period. That will be seen as Moses continues...

**<sup>4</sup> If *any* of you are driven out to the farthest *parts* under heaven,**

The Hebrew reads “the heavens.” Israel will be scattered to the ends of the earth. The words here do not reflect what occurred during the Babylonian captivity. It is clearly a prophecy of a worldwide dispersion. Despite the vastness of the exile...

**<sup>4 (con't)</sup> from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you.**

The Lord, through Moses, promises that at the time of their returning to Him as is defined in the law, and which includes the acceptance of Christ as their Messiah, there will be a gathering of the exiles. This is certainly what Jesus is referring to –

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>30</sup> Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. <sup>31</sup> And He will

send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

-Matthew 24:29-31

The elect Jesus refers to are those Jews who will come to trust Christ during the tribulation period. They have nothing to do with the church which is inclusive of Jews who have already received Christ. Moses is speaking to Israel and Christ is speaking to Israel.

But more, the elect are not necessarily the people who are in Israel now. If they were, Jesus would not have said this just a few verses earlier in Matthew –

“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), <sup>16</sup> “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>17</sup> Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. <sup>18</sup> And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. <sup>19</sup> But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! <sup>20</sup> And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. <sup>21</sup> For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. <sup>22</sup> And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.” Matthew 24:15-22

If everyone in Israel was “the elect,” there would be no need to address those who heeded His words in Judea, imploring them to flee to the mountains. The elect will heed, those who do not are not of “the elect.”

When the addressees or the dispensations are mixed, error in theology is the natural and inevitable consequence. The restoration of Israel, as spoken by Moses now, is still future to us at this time.

**<sup>5</sup> Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it.**

It is those who heed the words of Moses, and who thus heed the words of Jesus that will be brought into this land to possess it. This then speaks of the millennial kingdom, not of what is going on in Israel today.

Again, it is true this is the same body of people, obviously, because Jesus tells those who are of this body (meaning Israel), but who are also willing to pay heed to His words (meaning the elect), to flee to the mountains. It is these who are referred to with the words...

<sup>5</sup> (con't) **He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.**

The reference here cannot be speaking of Israel at this time. It is true they are prospering and multiplying, but it is also true that the Lord prospering them (literally “do you good”) more than their fathers is not true at this time.

The state of peace described in Israel at the time of Solomon has never been realized in modern Israel, and that must be taken into consideration along with all other points. This will truly only be fulfilled in the millennial kingdom. What Moses next says clearly reveals this...

<sup>6</sup> **And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants,**

The words of this verse cannot be speaking of the time after the Babylonian captivity. Hence, none of what is said here can. This is speaking to Israel the nation, in the singular, and therefore it can only be referring to them. The promise of circumcision of the heart is the same basic thought as the Lord writing His law on the heart.

The two concepts are set in parallel. One speaks of a change in heart, the other speaks of what that change in heart signifies. It is an action of the Lord, and it is something that only occurs in conjunction with the New Covenant. Thus, replacement theology has no standing. This can only be speaking of Israel, not the church.

It is true that both Moses and Jeremiah tell the people to circumcise their hearts to the Lord, but that is a way of telling the people to turn their minds to Him and to think with clarity concerning Him. However, it is not the same as when the Lord performs the action.

To truly have a circumcised heart is to turn to the Lord in Christ, and then to have Christ convert the heart. To understand this, a logical progression of verses needs to be considered –

“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— <sup>32</sup> not according to the

covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. <sup>33</sup> But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

-Jeremiah 31:31-33

“For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, nor *is* circumcision that which *is* outward in the flesh; <sup>29</sup> but *he is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly; and circumcision is *that of the heart*, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God.” Romans 2:28, 29

“In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, <sup>12</sup> buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.”

-Colossians 2:11, 12

Paul confirms that the precept of the New Covenant circumcision of the heart applies to Gentiles as well as Jews, but Moses’ words only apply to Israel the nation (you, singular). When the Lord finally does His work in them, because they directed their hearts toward Him (meaning Christ who performs the circumcision), it will finally result in their ability...

<sup>6 (con’t)</sup> **to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.**

The action of the Lord, His circumcising Israel’s heart, is a result of Israel’s turning the heart to Him in order to obey His voice. In that, they are restored, and in that the heart is circumcised. The result is their ability to love Him with all the heart and all the soul of the nation, (it is singular).

And there is an ultimate reason behind this, which is, *l’maan khayekha* – “to end purpose your (singular) life.” The wording here brings to remembrance the words that described Jacob (who pictured Israel the people) when he realized Joseph (who pictured Christ) was alive. Literally, it said, “and lives spirit *of* Jacob.”

What Moses is saying here is not referring to physical life any more than what was said of Jacob. Rather, it speaks of the spiritual reconnection to God that was lost in Adam. Israel as a nation will have that collective revival of the heart, and they will collectively

be made alive when they come to Christ – just as was typologically anticipated in the story of Joseph.

*Listen to the statutes and the judgments too  
Pay heed to the word that you hear  
Everything is laid out that you are to do  
Keep them with you always; be sure to keep them near*

*Think on what the Lord is telling you  
Consider what needs to be done  
Will you trust in your own ability, these things to do?  
If so, you must accomplish every single one*

*Think on what the word is telling you  
Consider again what needs to be done  
Will you trust in your own ability, these things to do?  
Or will you by faith simply trust in His Son?*

## **II. When You Turn to the Lord (verses 7-10)**

**<sup>7</sup>“Also the LORD your God will put all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you.**

Rather than “curses,” it should say “all the oaths.” Everything that the Lord swore would come upon Israel will instead come upon their enemies. One might say, “This can’t be speaking of the millennial kingdom then.” But that one would be wrong.

One of the promised blessings of Deuteronomy 28 was rain. One of the promised curses was the rain being changed to powder and dust. That is a promise of the millennium –

“And it shall be *that* whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. <sup>18</sup>If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they *shall have no rain*; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.” Zechariah 14:17, 18

There will be death in the millennium as well. This tells us that things may be different from our current state, but the evil inclinations of the heart of man will not be changed. Things will continue on in the manner they now exist in that regard.

But even without that, the verb translated as “persecuted you” is in the perfect tense. Those who persecuted Israel will suffer for their actions. That is clearly evidenced in Jesus’ words of Matthew 25 –

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.” Matthew 25:31-33

This is a judgment of the nations, and it is a judgment directed at the treatment of Israel by those nations. How His people are treated will reflect what the Lord does with them. As for Israel...

**<sup>8</sup> And you will again obey the voice of the LORD and do all His commandments which I command you today.**

The word “you” is emphatic – “And YOU...” This sets Israel off from those in the previous verse. “They did this to you, but YOU will...” But what Moses says must now be considered. First, it doesn’t say “again obey.” It says, “And you will return and obey.”

There was never a time when Israel faithfully obeyed all the commandments which Moses commanded them. If there was, they would not have needed Jesus. They would have fulfilled the law. With that understood, what does it mean that Israel will do all the Lord’s commandment which Moses commands them?

One view is that the Law of Moses will again be in effect during the millennium. The temple described by Ezekiel has sacrifices. Isaiah 66 seemingly refers to dietary laws, New Moon and Sabbath observances, and so on during this time. If this is so, then the words of Hebrews that the law is annulled, obsolete, and set aside in Christ are contradictory.

The correct view is that in coming to Christ, who fulfilled the law, Israel is fulfilling all of the laws of Moses. He accomplished for them, and indeed for all who come to Him, everything that the law only anticipates and pictures. A law that is annulled is done with. Israel has not yet learned that. Until they do, they will not be included in what God has done.



**<sup>9</sup>The LORD your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good.**

The verse begins with And. “And the Lord your God will.” There is a mutual aspect to the words. Israel will do this, and the Lord will do that.” Further, the words continue in the singular, just as they have through the entire passage.

Israel will abound in all the ways promised here. It is reflective of the words of the blessing promised in Deuteronomy 28. Everything they set their hand to will be blessed. It will be a time of abundance and prosperity for them –

“Those whom He shall cause to take root in Jacob;  
Israel shall blossom and bud,  
And fill the face of the world with fruit.” Isaiah 27:6

It is one of a very long list of the blessings that will be realized during the millennium. And there is a reason for this...

**<sup>9 (con't)</sup> For the LORD will again rejoice over you for good**

Again, the word “again” gives the wrong sense. It says, “For will return Yehovah to rejoice over you to good.” The comparison is to the fathers of the next clause, not to Israel of the past. The Lord will return to rejoice over Israel...

**<sup>9 (con't)</sup> as He rejoiced over your fathers,**

The question that must be asked in order to understand this is, “Who are ‘your fathers?’” The answer is found in the singular. Moses has not spoken in the plural even once so far. Therefore, it is speaking of the fathers of Israel, not the fathers of the people of Israel.

It is a clear indication that the previous verse is not speaking of the people obeying the Law of Moses, but of following Christ who obeyed (and thus fulfilled) the Law of Moses.

The fathers, those before the law – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – who are being referred to here, did not have the law. They lived by faith, just as is recorded in Hebrews 11. In this, the Lord rejoiced over them. It is not observance of the law, but the obedience of faith that pleases the Lord. This is then highlighted in the next words...

**<sup>10</sup> if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law,**

The word “if” is incorrect. It says: *ki tishma* – “when (or for) you hear (meaning obey).” It presupposes that this will happen someday, and it is what will bring the state of the Lord’s rejoicing over them.

But it is obvious that if this occurs after the New Covenant that was promised in Jeremiah, as we have already seen that such is the case, then it must mean that the obedience to the commandments and statutes is vicariously applied.

Moses has already said that the Lord will circumcise their heart. This is in response to accepting the work of Messiah, not adherence to the law. That will be shown true, once again, in our closing verse for today...

**\*<sup>10</sup> (fin) and if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.**

Again, the word “if” is incorrect. It is not conditional. It says, “when (or for) you turn to Yehovah your God.” The ESV is the closest to what the Hebrew says –

“when you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes that are written in this Book of the Law, when you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

How does one keep all the words of the Book of the Law? Israel, even in the future, could only failingly do so. The reason why is because the words are written to Israel, the nation. If one person fails to keep the words of the law, then the nation has failed. And it is quite clear that even in the millennium, this will be the case –

“No more shall an infant from there *live but a few days*,  
Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days;  
For the child shall die one hundred years old,  
But the sinner *being* one hundred years old shall be accursed.” Isaiah 65:20

If there is a sinner in the millennium among Israel, then Israel would fail to keep all of the commandments. Even if the people executed the punishment of the law upon the offender, the words of Moses are in the singular, not the plural. It is an all-or-nothing scenario. Hence, the goal is not the law, but Jesus, who embodies the law.

When, not if, Israel turns to the Lord with all of the heart and all of the soul, Israel will find its rest and will find its peace. This is the lesson of the carefully chosen words of Moses. And it is the same lesson for each individual today – Jew or Gentile.

We cannot find peace without the Lord, and there is no rest for the wicked. Only in coming to Christ is the sin debt cancelled. But when that happens, the peace of God, and the rest which is found in Christ, is made available to that soul.

There is a lot of theology tied up in today's verses, but the main message is surprisingly easy to understand. God has done the work through Christ, He offers forgiveness by faith in that, and in His forgiveness, reconciliation with Him is realized.

It is all summed up in the gospel. Christ died for your sins, He was buried, and He rose again. If you believe that message and call on the name of the Lord, you will be saved. Be sure to do that today.

**Closing Verse:** *“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.’<sup>11</sup> But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for ‘the just shall live by faith.’<sup>12</sup> Yet the law is not of faith, but ‘the man who does them shall live by them.’*

*<sup>13</sup> Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’),<sup>14</sup> that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Galatians 3:10-14*

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 30:11-20 *In Him ends the enmity and the strife...* (For He Is Your Life) (88<sup>th</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **The Lord Your God Will Circumcise Your Heart**

“Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you  
The blessing and the curse which I have set before you  
-----as I now do

And you call them to mind among all the nations  
Where the LORD your God drives you

And you return to the LORD your God  
And obey His voice, to Him your obedience you roll  
According to all that I command you today  
You and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul

That the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity  
And have compassion on you, so He will do  
And gather you again from all the nations  
Where the LORD your God has scattered you

If any of you are driven out  
To the farthest parts under heaven, as He said He would do  
From there the LORD your God will gather you  
And from there He will bring you

Then the LORD your God will bring you  
To the land which your fathers possessed, as He promised to do  
And you shall possess it  
He will more than your fathers prosper you and multiply you

And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart  
And the heart of your descendants that to you He does give  
To love the LORD your God  
With all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live

“Also the LORD your God will put all these curses, so He shall do  
On your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you

And you will again obey  
The voice of the LORD, so I say  
And do all His commandments  
Which I command you today

The LORD your God will make you abound in all the work  
-----of your hand  
In the fruit of your body, let this be understood

In the increase of your livestock  
And in the produce of your land for good

For the LORD will again rejoice over you for good  
As He rejoiced over your fathers, so He will do  
If you obey the voice of the LORD your God  
To keep His commandments and His statutes too

Which are written  
In this Book of the Law, not in part but in whole  
And if you turn to the LORD your God  
With all your heart and with all your soul

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## **Deuteronomy 30:11-20 (For He Is Your Life)**

The passage set before us today will complete chapter 30 of Deuteronomy, but to understand it completely takes knowing what is written later in Israel's history, and even knowing what is said in the New Testament concerning both Israel and the work of Jesus.

The Bible starts with something and builds upon it. Nothing is lost in the process, and nothing is discarded. Everything has a place and, together, everything forms one united purpose. Yes, it is hard at times to see how some things written in Scripture have any relevance to anything else. But it all does tie together.

In our passage today, Moses says that the words of law he is presenting to the people equate to life and good or death and evil. He also ties the performance of the words to a love of the Lord and that the Lord is the life of Israel and Israel's "length of days."

The two thoughts – that of performance of the law and that of the very being of the Lord Himself are thus inextricably tied together. The performance equates to life and the Lord is Israel's life. For Israel, the two cannot be separated.

Paul takes the words of Deuteronomy 30, and he then explains what the intent is behind the words in Romans 10 –

**Text Verse:** *"For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, 'The man who does those things shall live by them.' <sup>6</sup> But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, 'Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?"' (that is, to bring Christ down from above) <sup>7</sup> or, "Who will descend into the abyss?"' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). <sup>8</sup> But what does it say? 'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart' (that is, the word of faith which we preach): <sup>9</sup> that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:5-9*

Moses speaks of the righteousness of the law. Paul speaks of the righteousness of faith. And yet, both cite the same basic words, although Paul does amend them somewhat.

The question for us is then, "Where do the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of faith meet?" Obviously, Paul tells us that the answer is in the Person of Jesus. How is that so? Does this mean we are not bound to the Law of Moses? Let's

hope so. Because if we were, we would have a whole lot of work to do... and we would fail.

The theology behind the message is complicated, but the message itself is simple. Paul's summing it up for us is a really nice touch – believe and be saved. It is one of those wonderful truths that frees the weary soul from its heavy burden. Thank God for Jesus Christ.

Yes, great things, such as the righteousness of faith are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. The Word Is Very Near You (verses 11-20)**

The chapter so far has dealt with adherence to the law, punishment (including exile) for not doing so, restoration when the law is recalled to mind, and so on. It takes the fact that these things will actually occur as an axiom. The final verses of the previous passage show this is so –

“Also the LORD your God will put all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you. <sup>8</sup> And you will again obey the voice of the LORD and do all His commandments which I command you today. <sup>9</sup> The LORD your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good. For the LORD will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers, <sup>10</sup> if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, *and* if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

-Deuteronomy 30:7-10

As such, Israel will only have themselves to blame for any ills that come upon them, and that true restoration will only be realized when they again turn to Lord through the words of Moses. This is absolutely certain, and it is absolutely pre-confirmed by his words.

As this is so, Moses will show that the ideal he sets forth is perfectly attainable. Thus, the coming words will reconfirm that Israel's ills are solely a self-inflicted wound. That his words are clear and understandable is now stated.

And yet, what he states bears in it a hint of Messiah. First, the law has already set forth such hints, both implicitly and explicitly. Secondly, the human heart, if it is honest, clearly shows this. For who can meet the demands of the law, even if it is clear and understandable? With that in mind, Moses says...

**<sup>11</sup> “For this commandment which I command you today**

As has been the case repeatedly, the words speak of the entire body of law given forth by Moses. Whether spoken out in one day or in twenty, the word “today” signifies the whole period of instruction.

This is more clearly understood because of his use of the word *ha'mitsvah*, or “the commandment.” All of the statutes, ordinances, judgments, and commandments combine into one body – “the commandment.” Of this commandment which Moses commands Israel (it is singular – “you Israel”), he says...

**<sup>11 (con't)</sup> *is not too mysterious for you,***

*lo niphlet hi mimekha* – “no wonderful for you.” The word is the verb *pala*. It is derived from the noun *pele* (not the soccer player), meaning “a wonder” (and, admittedly, Pelé was somewhat of a wonder). Thus, the word signifies “to be surpassing, or extraordinary.”

As such, the context will determine the exact idea being conveyed – too hard, too difficult, beyond comprehension, mysterious, and so on. The obvious meaning Moses is conveying is that the people will not look at the law once it is fully compiled and say, “this is too hard for us to either understand or to follow.”

As noted, it is truly the case that no one can “do” all the things of this law, and anyone who lives under it for a single day would easily be able to see this, but the law also has provisions for those who fail “to do” if they are willing to admit they have failed. The sacrificial system provided for the failures. The heart would be weighed by the Lord and the heart that was circumcised (verse 30:6) would live. Albert Barnes rightly states this, saying –

“The seeming ease of the commandment, and yet its real impossibility to the natural man, form part of the qualifications of the Law to be our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.” Albert Barnes



The law is open, clearly stated, not impossible to do (in the sense that nothing in it cannot be done at any given time), and it tells – in advance – of the blessings for performance and the curses for failing to pay heed.

Again, there is a difference in the idea of possibility/impossibility to “do” the things of the law. To more fully understand this, and as an example, Moses never says something like, “On the 27<sup>th</sup> day of each month every person must run the entire circuit of the borders of the land, finishing before sundown.

That would be impossible, and thus it would be unfair. Likewise, if Moses said, no person of Israel is ever to drink any liquids, it would be impossible. Rather, everything in the law is possible, in the sense that anyone and everyone can do each and every listed thing within the law.

The impossibility is that of perfect performance at all times. But that is not what Moses is referring to, obviously, because the sacrificial system presupposes failure. It is given for exactly that purpose. Thus, even that makes the law attainable in a sense, but only because the heart is willing to admit the fault that necessitated the sacrifice. Understanding this, Moses next says...

<sup>11</sup> (con't) **nor is it far off.**

*v'lo rekhoqah hi* – “and no far off it.” The idea here is that which is unattainable because of distance. The law is given to Israel. It is right there among them, regardless as to where it came from. This is evidenced, for example, in 2 Chronicles –

“Now when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiyah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD given by Moses. <sup>15</sup> Then Hilkiyah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, ‘I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD.’ And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan. <sup>16</sup> So Shaphan carried the book to the king, bringing the king word, saying, ‘All that was committed to your servants they are doing. <sup>17</sup> And they have gathered the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers and the workmen.’ <sup>18</sup> Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, ‘Hilkiyah the priest has given me a book.’ And Shaphan read it before the king.

<sup>19</sup> Thus it happened, when the king heard the words of the Law, that he tore his clothes. <sup>20</sup> Then the king commanded Hilkiyah, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Abdon the son of Micah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king,

saying, <sup>21</sup> ‘Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for those who are left in Israel and Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found; for great *is* the wrath of the LORD that is poured out on us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do according to all that is written in this book.’” 2 Chronicles 34:14-21

There it was... the Law of Moses was right there among the people. And yet, they failed to adhere to it. This was so much the case that it was forgotten to even exist. But it did. The guilt was Israel’s.

As for the words, they anticipate the coming of Christ. Knowing that He is the embodiment of what the law states, pictures, and anticipates, the imagery is perfectly clear. The gospel was brought by Jesus to Israel. It wasn’t a long distance away.

Rather, He was born among them in Bethlehem, He was raised in Nazareth. He proclaimed the good news throughout the land, and the New Covenant in His blood was given in Jerusalem. As far as the nearness of the law. it is next more fully expressed by Moses...

**<sup>12</sup> It *is* not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’**

The Hebrew reads, “not in the heavens,” and “ascend into the heavens.” It is plural. The great expanse above their heads is what is being expressed to the people now. One can think of the giving of the law that Moses reminded them of in Chapter 4 –

“Then you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire to the midst of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness. <sup>12</sup> And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; *you only heard* a voice. <sup>13</sup> So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone. <sup>14</sup> And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that you might observe them in the land which you cross over to possess.” Deuteronomy 4:11-14

In the same chapter, he again said –

“Out of heaven He let you hear His voice, that He might instruct you; on earth He

showed you His great fire, and you heard His words out of the midst of the fire.”  
-Deuteronomy 4:36

“Therefore know this day, and consider *it* in your heart, that the LORD Himself is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; *there is* no other.”  
-Deuteronomy 4:39

In each of these verses in Chapter 4, it says, “the heavens” rather than simply “heaven.” Moses is reminding them of where the law came from, but also to whom it was given. The word is not in an unattainable location, as if it was hidden from them. It was not still with God alone and requiring a mediator to go and obtain it.

Though its Source may be in heaven, the law is found among them. There is no need to ascend to attain what has been delivered and mediated from above.

It is these words now, and those in the next verses, that Paul used in our text verse to clearly and precisely show that the law was intended to reveal Christ.

Remembering that Christ is the embodiment of the law and it both pictures and anticipates Him, the words clearly reflect what happened at the incarnation of Christ. He was in heaven, but nobody had to ascend there to retrieve Him. Rather, He came from the heavens, just as the voice of the law came –

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:14

The patterns are given, and they are unmistakable. Seeing this, Moses continues with...

<sup>13</sup> **Nor is it beyond the sea,**

As great as the heavens above, so was the sea also perceived to be by Israel. They could look up and see only unending sky. And should they look out at the water, they would see no end to it as well.

At this point, Moses is anticipating life in Canaan where the great sea to the west was located. Israel was not a seagoing people and so to journey out for them to an unknown location to find the law would be no different than trying to ascend to the heavens to find it. It is because of such an impassible void...

<sup>13</sup> (con't) **that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?'**

Israel did not need to find a ship and sailors to go out and find the law. There was no great journey from one country to the next, or from one continent to another. Rather, the law came to them, it was maintained among them, and the prophets arose from among them. Everything was available directly to Israel.

Likewise, the message of salvation, the gospel of Christ, was not from some other nation. Rather, as Jesus said, "Salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22).

When citing these words, Paul makes a change in them, confounding many scholars. He says, "Who will descend into the abyss? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." Moses' words speak of distance, not depth. Even in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the words of Paul are not supported.

Be that as it may, Paul is making a point about the coming of Christ, just as Moses is making a point about the availability of the law. The law came to Israel from God. They had it presented to them, and they willingly rejected it and Him. Likewise, John says –

"He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. <sup>12</sup> But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1:11-13

Israel did not need to pass over the sea to find the law. It was there with them. And Israel did not need to look elsewhere to find their Messiah, He came to them. These verses speak of ascending to the heavens and of going beyond the sea, but there is also a contrasting allusion to the workings of God in Christ.

The heavens are where things are concealed until they are revealed by God. The other side of the sea is where there is no law. As the law is intended to bring life (Leviticus 18:5), then the other side is where there is death. The contrast then, the hiding and revealing, and the life from the death, is seen in the work of Christ –

"and to make all see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;" Ephesians 3:9

*“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.”*

-Romans 8:1, 2

Israel did not need to ascend or cross over to have the law. It came from God. Likewise, Christ was hidden in God but came to Israel, and the life found in Christ came through His death in fulfillment of the law (that was intended to bring life). It did, in fact do so. What Israel needed, for each step of the process, was provided by God. As Moses says...

**<sup>14</sup> But the word *is* very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.**

Moses is not speaking of salvation. Israel is the redeemed of the Lord. He is speaking of performance. The word was not concealed from Israel, and it was not unattainable by Israel. Everything has been in the singular here – you, Israel.

The law was in the mouth of Israel as will be shown to be true when the blessings and curses are proclaimed on Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim as directed in Chapter 27. And they are in the heart of Israel, meaning right there in the sanctuary.

When they failed in performance, they were to then perform – meaning through sacrifice for atonement. Everything comes back to performance for Israel. But the law, clearly and unambiguously, anticipates Christ.

Thus, the idea is of performance in Christ. That is why Paul can then bring forth his words concerning what Moses now speaks of and directly equate them to salvation. Again, from our text verse –

*“But what does it say? ‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith which we preach): <sup>9</sup> that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Romans 10:8-10*

Someone must perform. Israel did not, and so Christ stepped in to do so. In performance, there is life...

**<sup>15</sup> “See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil,**

Moses is more precise. Each noun is prefixed by an article – “the life and the good, and the death and the evil.” Therefore, it isn’t just an abstract concept that Moses speaks of, but things that are concrete, fixed, and firm.

As such, these must be based on performance. The law can bring either, and it is totally up to Israel to decide which path they will follow. Immediately, this then speaks of the law, but ultimately, it must speak of Christ.

Israel twice was exiled (the curse, meaning the death and the evil). They still are not following Moses. But more than that, Christ came and fulfilled Moses. Therefore, Israel must now choose Christ to have the life and the good. It is no longer an issue of law. This will become perfectly evident in the verses ahead. For now...

**<sup>16</sup> in that I command you today to love the LORD your God,**

As has been the case, the words continue in the singular – you, Israel. Loving the Lord is the first of the stated commands. Thus, this is a volitional love – an act of the will – intended to set the rest of Israel’s will in alignment with what is expected.

Israel as a nation is to demonstrate love to the Lord. If someone does wrong by committing murder, he is to be punished according to the law. This is obedience and thus a demonstration of love. Israel was not to make up new laws that were not in accord with the Mosaic law. This would demonstrate a disdain for the Lord.

Rather, everything Israel does was to be in accord with that set forth by Moses, which is...

**<sup>16 (con’t)</sup> to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments,**

To love the Lord is to do these things. The Lord is merciful, Israel is to show mercy. The Lord is holy, Israel is to be holy. And so on. This is to walk in His ways. Further, obedience demonstrates loving the Lord. This is seen in the keeping of His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments.

The life of Israel was to be a demonstration of loving the Lord in these ways. The command to love the Lord is the command to do as Moses now instructs. It is this total national commitment, in which Moses says...

**16 (con't) that you may live and multiply;**

You, Israel. The life of Israel is completely tied up in performance. There is no way around this. The law is near them, it is available to them, it is understandable, and it is doable. The conditions are given. To fail is to receive the death and the evil. To perform is to receive the life and the good. Moses is clear. Performance leads to the promise...

**16 (con't) and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess.**

The words should recall to mind the first verses of Chapter 28. The blessings would come upon Israel, and they would be blessed. Life would be found, and Israel would be secure...

**17 But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them,**

This is a national turning of the heart. In other words, someone in Dan might serve other gods. When he is found out, Israel takes him out and stones him to death. Then Israel has done what is good and right.

However, if the person was a millionaire and the people said to themselves, "This god has made him prosper, we need to worship it too," that would be the beginning of turning away.

If the other tribes saw it and came against them to punish them, then Israel would have done what is good. But if they too saw the prosperity that supposedly came from worshipping this false god and started to do so too, it would be that the national heart of Israel had turned as Moses now states. If this is the case...

**18 I announce to you today that you shall surely perish;**

Moses now carefully selects his words to ensure that the will of the Lord for Israel is clearly and unambiguously stated. He does this by going from the second person singular to the second person plural: *higadti lakem ha'yom ki abod tobedun* – "I declare to you [all] this day for perishing you [all] shall (surely) perish."

Moses does not say that Israel will perish, but the people of Israel will perish. This is explained in the words of Leviticus 26:38, saying –

“You shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up.”

This does not mean, however, all of the people will utterly perish. That is explicitly stated later in Leviticus 26 –

“Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, nor shall I abhor them, to utterly destroy them and break My covenant with them; for I *am* the LORD their God.” Leviticus 26:44

The care taken by Moses to make his pronouncements assures us that the covenant promises of the Lord will never be broken.

<sup>18 (con't)</sup> **you shall not prolong *your* days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess.**

The words are precise, “no you [all] shall [certainly] prolong days upon the ground which you [singular] cross over the Jordan to go there to inherit.”

How careful Moses is to not present a thought that could even possibly be considered by someone to violate that which has already been stated by the Lord! Israel is made up of people, and the people of Israel will suffer the consequences of their failings.

Having said this, Israel faithfully acknowledged that they were exiled for their unfaithfulness after their first exile. What happened to them was justly deserved. That is recorded several times in Scripture. But Israel has not acknowledged in the slightest their failings for the second exile.

A rare voice may have arisen over the millennia, but no voice of Israel – the nation – has so come forth. Further, they have not even bothered to find out why these things have come about. They have hidden the truth so deeply that it will take the hand of God Himself to awaken them from their slumber. But the fact is, to this day, Israel remains because God has spoken, and He will perform.

<sup>19</sup> **I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you,**

It says, “the heavens and the earth.” They are to hear and witness. This can be taken in one of two ways. It could be figuratively speaking of those in heaven and those on the



earth to witness. However, it is more likely literal. The heavens and the earth will testify to the people's (it is plural, you all) disobedience –

“And your heavens which *are* over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you *shall be* iron. <sup>24</sup>The LORD will change the rain of your land to powder and dust; from the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed.”

-Deuteronomy 28:23, 24

<sup>19</sup> (con't) **that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing;**

Now it changes to the singular (you Israel). The changes from the singular to plural and back again are precise and they tell their own story to the people.

As before, it is “the life and the death” and “the blessing and the curse.” These are not abstract concepts, but they are those things explicitly stated by Moses that would come upon Israel. The choice is a national choice. As a nation is directed by its leaders the fate of the people rests in their hands...

<sup>19</sup> (con't) **therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;**

“Therefore choose **the** life.” It is an admonition and it is a warning. And the choice is up to the nation because it says “to end purpose you (singular) and your (singular) seed may live.”

Being on this side of the cross, and understanding the significance of what is presented by Moses as it anticipates the coming of Christ, the words of Jesus cannot be missed –

“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” John 14:6

Without Christ, Israel finds, by default, the death, the curse, and the evil. Until they come to the One who Moses speaks of and anticipates, they will continue to only find disaster.

The current prosperity and abundance in Israel will perish along with that of all other nations in the days ahead. But someday they will choose the Life...

<sup>20</sup> **that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him,**

Every pronoun referring to Israel in this final verse is singular – you, Israel. It speaks of the national state of the people. Further, the words of this clause are set not in a conditional way, but in an explanatory manner – “to love, to obey, and to cling.”

In essence, “This is how you may live – to love Him, to obey Him, and to cling to Him.” That is then explained by the words...

<sup>20</sup> (con’t) **for He is your life**

Nothing could point more directly to the coming of Christ than these words. They sum up everything else stated by Moses. How can the Lord be Israel’s life if the people of Israel just keep dying? What kind of an existence is it for a nation to endure, but not its people? The two must come together and meet at some point. Jesus told them as much–

“And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. <sup>38</sup> But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. <sup>39</sup> You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. <sup>40</sup> But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.”

-John 5:37-40

It is Jesus who gives life to Israel. As such...

<sup>20</sup> (con’t) **and the length of your days;**

The continuance of Israel is tied up in the life of Israel. Israel will continue when Israel has life. Though these words are to Israel in the singular, speaking to them nationally, a nation is made up of individuals. Hence, the words are parallel to what Jesus said to Martha in John 11 –

“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. <sup>26</sup> And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” John 11:25, 26

For those who believe, they will have life and length of days. For those of Israel who believe, it will mean that Israel has life and length of days...

**\*20 (fin) and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”**

For Israel, Canaan is the land of promise. To dwell there is the anticipation and expectation. But it will only occur when the law meets in obedience. The implication then, as stated before, is that Israel was not obedient to the law.

But nothing is recorded in Scripture – meaning the Old Testament – to explain their second exile. This means that either Israel was left without explanation – in their own writings – as to why they were exiled, or it means that Sacred Scripture *does* record the reason, but they have failed to accept that body of Scripture as divinely inspired.

In other words, the Old Testament is an incomplete account of Israel’s history. Only with the New Testament do Moses’ words now have any meaning for the modern nation. Indeed, the Old Testament tells of Israel’s restoration, but it does not tell them why they needed to be restored.

Only with their rejection of Christ do the past two thousand years of their history make any sense. As this is so, and as Canaan is only a type of what God promises in the restoration of all things, the final words of the passage today clearly anticipate the true promise –

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. <sup>14</sup> For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. <sup>15</sup> And truly if they had called to mind that *country* from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup> But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly *country*. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.” Hebrews 11:13-16

That heavenly city, of which Canaan is only a type and a shadow, is only accessible through the One who made entry possible. Only in Christ, the true Israel, can Israel the nation find its ultimate promise.

*There is no need to build a tower to heaven  
To bring down the commandment for us to do  
And it wouldn’t work anyway, in us there’s too much leaven  
The command would only condemn me and you*

*And there is no need to cross the sea  
To bring the commandment back home to us  
And even if we did, what a tragedy that would be  
What we need is the perfection of Jesus*

*And yet, the commandment **is** near to us in its own way  
It is very near – in our mouth and in our heart  
When it is fulfilled by Another, we can boldly say  
“I receive Jesus,” and right then does our life truly start*

## **II. An Explanation of Paul’s Change to Moses’ Words**

We saw in verse 13 that Moses said, “Nor *is* it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’”

However, when Paul cites this same verse in Romans 10:7, he says, “or, ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).” Why did Paul do that, and how can that be a faithful explanation of what Moses is saying?

It is questions like this that need to be addressed in order to understand what is going on both in the mind of the author, and in the context of what Christ has done.

Otherwise, it would seem that what is presented is not a faithful representation of what Moses was saying. And so, to understand why Paul made the change, we will evaluate this one verse.

First, the word Paul begins with, “Or,” is tying his question to his previous words. He said–

“But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, ‘Do not say in your heart, “Who will ascend into heaven?”’ (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*)<sup>7</sup> or, “Who will descend into the abyss?”’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).”

-Romans 10:6, 7

“Who will ascend into heaven?” That corresponds closely with Deuteronomy 30:12. However, Deuteronomy 30:13 and Romans 10:7 do not follow suit –

“Nor is it beyond the sea.” Deuteronomy 30:13

“Who will descend into the abyss?” Romans 10:7

Paul wasn't changing Scripture by changing the thought from going over the sea to descending into the abyss. The intent is the same, but the point of reference is different.

The Hebrew people were in the dry wilderness, and they also did not have the knowledge of the risen Lord. Moses was using an example that they could clearly understand in order to speak the language of faith.

On the other hand, Paul is using the resurrection in the same way. The sea to the Hebrews was a great, impassable body. And, as we noted, the death of man is spoken of in this same manner.

As a connecting point between the two, the Greek word *abysson* is used for "abyss" by Paul. The same word is used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament where the word for "deep," *abysson*, is used when speaking about the great sea creature Leviathan in Job where it says –

“He makes the **deep** boil like a pot;  
He makes the sea like a pot of ointment.” Job 41:31

The sea was perceived as the great deep in this way even at Moses' time. At the giving of the law, the third commandment says, “You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.” Exodus 20:4

There, the “water under the earth” refers to the sea. Passing over the sea then is comparable to descending into the abyss for all intents and purposes.

And so, Paul grasps this Old Testament similarity and uses the imagery to connect it with the work of Christ in the New when speaking of the seemingly impassible void of death. Searching for the commandment by a descent “into the abyss” is then explained “to bring Christ up from the dead.”

We don't need to conduct such a search to find the knowledge that God provides. Rather, it is obtainable in the work of Christ. He has descended into the abyss.

To search for our faith-righteousness there, after His prevailing over it, would then be a denial of what has been fulfilled in Him. He has triumphed over it for us. As a resounding note of victory in this matter, Paul states this in 1 Corinthians 15:54-56 -

“O Death, where *is* your sting?  
O Hades, where *is* your victory?’

<sup>56</sup> The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks *be* to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Moses has spoken of performance of the law in order to have life. The record of the Old Testament, both in Israel as a nation and in Israel the people, shows that life cannot be obtained through performance of the law.

And yet, the law clearly says that if a man does the things of the law, he shall live by them (Leviticus 18:5). Paul cites that same verse in Romans 10:5 in our text verse, calling it the righteousness which is of the law. Only then does he speak of the righteousness of faith.

One must decide where he will hang his hat. Will it be on his own effort under the law, or in Christ’s performance of the law? Moses, almost fifteen hundred years before the coming of Christ, anticipated and spoke of the Christ.

He is the Source of righteousness, and it is in finding Him that one finds life. As big and confusing as the Bible is, and as seemingly irrelevant as the words of Moses might seem, they convey to us a portion of the most important truth of all – the knowledge of the Person and work of Jesus Christ. In Him is our life, and in Him is our length of days – even eternity in the presence of God.

**Closing Verse:** *“For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. <sup>11</sup> For the Scripture says, ‘Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.’ <sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. <sup>13</sup> For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.” Romans 10:10-13*

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 31:1-8 *It will not be a call to do the shooby-dooby-doowah* (Then Moses Called Joshua) (89<sup>th</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

## He Is Your Life

“For this commandment which I command you today  
Is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off, you must admit  
It is not in heaven, that you should say  
‘Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us  
-----that we may hear it and do it?

Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say  
“Who will go over the sea for us, who will so commit  
And bring it to us  
That we may hear it and do it?

But the word is very near you, this holy writ  
In your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it

“See, I have set before you today life and good  
Death and evil, but the life and good always pays  
In that I command you today  
To love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways

And to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments  
That you may live and multiply, so to you I address  
And the LORD your God will bless you  
In the land which you go to possess

But if your heart turns away  
So that you do not hear, not giving a haw or hem  
And are drawn away  
And worship other gods and serve them

I announce to you today that you shall surely perish  
You shall not prolong your days in the land  
Which you cross over the Jordan  
To go in and possess; this you must understand

I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you  
That I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing  
-----either of these I give

Therefore choose life  
That both you and your descendants may live

That you may love the LORD your God  
That you may obey His voice in all ways  
And that you may cling to Him  
For He is your life and the length of your days

And that you may dwell in the land  
Which the LORD to your fathers swore  
To Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob  
To give them, abundant blessings and more

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...



## **Deuteronomy 31:1-8 (Then Moses Called Joshua)**

This sermon was typed on 22 November, the Monday prior to Thanksgiving. What are we thankful for? I must admit, I don't express my thankfulness enough. He gives us rain, He gives us cool breezy days, He gives us marvelous moons that radiate out a soft glow for our evening walks, and He gives us so much more.

Every good and kind blessing we could imagine comes our way, but we often fail to acknowledge them when they do because we get caught up in the trials, miseries, pains, woes, and sadnesses of life. That isn't unexpected, but wouldn't it help us if we were able to be grateful at the same time as being miserable?

To varying degrees, some of us are. But life's troubles have a way of robbing our joy and our ability to be grateful. Paul gives us constant admonitions about how to overcome these things and to remain strong in the Lord and fixed on Him and His hand of grace that provides us with so much.

I don't know how people can remain positive and not be in the word of God! Without the constant reminders from it, I would probably be the most miserable person on the planet – along with about 8 billion others in the same boat.

But we have this word. Let us take advantage of it, think on it, and apply its precepts to our lives. Jesus overcame this world. In Him, we have overcome it. Let us never lose sight of the bigger picture in Him!

**Text Verse:** *“For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; <sup>10</sup> that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; <sup>11</sup> strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; <sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. <sup>13</sup> He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” Colossians 1:9-14*

The word of Colossians so closely matches so much of what is presented in our passage today, that when I went looking for a text verse after typing the sermon I had to think, Paul must have just read this passage in Deuteronomy over breakfast.

He really sums up much of what is conveyed to us here. But he does that elsewhere as well. The book of Ephesians must have been written while he was reading Deuteronomy. It is also just filled with hints of our passage today.

There is Israel, and there is faith in Christ. Sometimes one is given to show us things to avoid, and sometimes one is given to show us what to do. But all of it is to reveal to us Jesus, or our life in Him. It all is centered on Him. What a treasure we have in the pages of Scripture.

I hope you will enjoy what is presented today. As is so often the case, I thoroughly enjoyed researching it and typing it up. This word is a never-ending source of delight. That's for sure. Great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. He Will Be with You (verses 1-8)**

**<sup>1</sup> Then Moses went and spoke these words to all Israel.**

The words are unusual and a bit perplexing. Literally: *va'yelek Moshe v'daber eth ha'devarim ha'elleh el kal Yisrael* – “And walked Moses and spoke the words the these unto all Israel.” The curiosity hinges on the word *halak*, or “to walk.”

It is not a common way of referring to Moses' discourses. Normally, it just says, “And Moses said...” or something like that. The last time Moses was mentioned, meaning the starting of a new discourse, was in Chapter 29 –

“These *are* the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb.

<sup>2</sup> Now Moses called all Israel and said to them: ‘You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land— <sup>3</sup> the great trials which your eyes have seen, the signs, and those great wonders.’” Deuteronomy 29:1-3

Both times, then and now, it refers to “all Israel.” The Greek translation says, “And Moses completed speaking all these words.” In this, it would signify that two of the letters of the Hebrew were transposed. Instead of *va'yelek*, it would have said *v'kal* – as in Deuteronomy 32:45. That is a possibility because a new direction will now be taken.

Another possibility is that the word “walk” here is simply a way of introducing a new thought. Moses has spoken to all Israel, and he continues on his walk, speaking to all of Israel.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown takes this as a way of summing everything up, saying –

“It is probable that this rehearsal of the law extended over several successive days; and it might be the last and most important day on which the return of Moses to the place of assembly is specially noticed.”

Whatever the actual meaning of the unusual phrase, the discourse from Moses does continue, it continues in a new direction, and his words continue to be spoken to “all Israel.” As such...

## **<sup>2</sup> And he said to them:**

Being third person plural, it is an address to all of the people collectively (all Israel) and individually (you all)...

<sup>2</sup> (con't) **“I *am* one hundred and twenty years old today.**

The Hebrew bears a common idiom, “Son of hundred and twenty years I *am* today.” The reason for stating this is debated, and whether it is to be taken as a literal statement is as well. Some find him saying this to be an indication that it is his birthday.

Some connect it to the span of his life literally being one hundred and twenty, some figuratively, as if it is a round number. It seems unlikely it is a rounded number, but rather that a point about his age is being made.

In Acts 7:23, it says of Moses, “Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel.” In Exodus 16:35, it says, “And the children of Israel ate manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan.”

This would then divide his life into three segments of forty years. The first would be until he was grown and fled to Midian. The second would be forty years in Midian. The third would be forty years leading Israel. However, these cannot be exactly forty years to the day, because the manna actually ends after Moses’ death (Joshua 5:12).

But the division of his life is remarkable in that it was based upon three periods of forty years. It is also the same timeframe noted in the unusual words of Genesis 6 –

“And the LORD said, ‘My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he *is* indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.’” Genesis 6:3

The meaning of the words of Genesis 6 is debated. Some see them as the length of time that man would live from that point on. But nothing in Scripture goes on to support this. What seems most likely is that the words are defining the period until the flood. That is how Young’s translates it –

“And Jehovah saith, 'My Spirit doth not strive in man -- to the age; in their erring they are flesh:' and his days have been an hundred and twenty years.”

This seems likely. The Lord sees the wickedness of the world and sets a time for its coming destruction of one hundred and twenty years. As Noah is the focus of the surrounding narrative, it is then accepted that this was the time that he was given to preach to the world (2 Peter 2:5) before its end was accomplished.

If this is so, then there is a reasonable pattern between the two. Noah’s time of preaching and the life of Moses, who represents the law, are both a witness to the world of God’s impending judgment. That would follow well with the signification of the numbers forty and three.

Bullinger defines one hundred and twenty saying it “is made up of three forties (3x40=120). Applied to time therefore it signifies a divinely appointed period of probation.” Hence, the years of Moses are given to define the time of the law itself.

From a human aspect, however, they also bear on the state of the man himself...

<sup>2</sup> (con’t) **I can no longer go out and come in.**

*lo ukal od laset v'lavo* – “No able again to go forth and to come in.” This takes the reader back to Numbers 27 where the Lord spoke to Moses about his demise. The section was an anticipatory look at the event, and it uses the same terminology there. Whereas Moses could no longer execute his duties, another (Joshua) was to be selected to replace him. –

“Now the LORD said to Moses: ‘Go up into this Mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the children of Israel. <sup>13</sup> And when you have seen it, you also shall be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was gathered. <sup>14</sup> For in the Wilderness of Zin, during the strife of the congregation, you rebelled against My command to hallow Me at the waters before their eyes.’

(These *are* the waters of Meribah, at Kadesh in the Wilderness of Zin.)

<sup>15</sup> Then Moses spoke to the LORD, saying: <sup>16</sup> ‘Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, <sup>17</sup> who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be like sheep which have no shepherd.’” Numbers 27:12-17

Later in his life, Joshua will repeat this sentiment –

“As yet I *am as* strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength *was* then, so now *is* my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in.” Joshua 14:11

The meaning is that in one’s coming in, there is strength and vitality within the walls of one’s home, and in one’s going out, there will be health and vigor, and there will be strength for the day’s labors. Moses sees that the years are catching up to him, but this doesn’t mean he wasn’t fit, and exactly that is said of him upon his death –

“Moses *was* one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished.” Deuteronomy 34:7

The word translated as “natural vigor” signifies “moisture” or “freshness.” Some attribute that to his virility and that is a reasonable interpretation of the rare word that is used there. Despite this, his ability to satisfactorily execute his duties had come to its end. And more...

<sup>2</sup> (con’t) **Also the LORD has said to me, ‘You shall not cross over this Jordan.’**

The basis for this statement should be returned to. In Numbers 20:7-9, it said –

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>8</sup> ‘Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals.’ <sup>9</sup> So Moses took the rod from before the LORD as He commanded him.”

The command was given to demonstrate a point concerning the coming of Christ. Water had been brought from the rock once already, in Exodus. At that time, Moses was told to strike the rock, and he did. In that, water issued forth. That was given as a picture of life issuing from the punishment Christ received.

The second time, in Numbers, both Moses and Aaron were to simply speak (the verb was plural) to the rock and water would issue forth. Thus, the water was to come forth not through any work, but through the word of faith.

It was to be a picture of salvation based upon faith in Him alone. Wherever the word of faith in Christ is spoken, the Spirit will issue forth, but not by deeds of the law. Rather by faith alone. Everything about the account anticipated Christ.

By merely the spoken word of the lawgiver and the high priest, in the presence of the rod, the rock was expected to yield its water. Everything at that time was seen to be a type of Christ: The Lawgiver = Christ; the High Priest = Christ; the Rock = Christ; the Rod = Christ; the Water = Spirit of Christ. Everything looked to prefigure Christ and the grace that issues from Him.

And this is how it is. The giving of the New Covenant, based on the fulfillment of the law, along with the sacrificial work of the High Priest, yields forth the Spirit. The typology was set. However, this is not what happened –

“And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, ‘Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?’ <sup>11</sup>Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.”

-Numbers 20:10, 11

Because of his disobedience, thus destroying the typology of Christ and His work, the sentence was pronounced –

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, ‘Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.’” Numbers 20:12

But the actions of Moses and Aaron would have been known to the Lord prior to them doing this. And more, the Lord could have pardoned Moses. But another set typology had to be fulfilled as well: the inheritance cannot come through the law.

That is seen in the words, “You shall not cross over this Jordan.” *Ha’yarden*, or “the Descender” is a type of Christ. It flows from the snow-capped peaks of Mt. Hermon (Sacred), travels along the border of Canaan, and terminates at the Salt Sea. It is a picture of Christ, descending from heaven – the Sacred place – living out His incarnation, and dying.

However, being the Salt Sea, it is a continued picture of His incorruption. From the Salt Sea, the waters evaporate – picturing Christ’s resurrection and ascension (His return to heaven). In this, the Jordan is the dividing line between the world and the land of promise.

One must cross over (through) the Jordan (Christ) in order to enter the promised inheritance. But the law has no part in the inheritance, as Paul says –

“And this I say, *that* the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. <sup>18</sup> For if the inheritance *is* of the law, *it is* no longer of promise; but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.” Galatians 3:17, 18

As Moses is the giver of the law, and thus emblematic of the law, he needed to die outside the inheritance in order to maintain that set typology.

John Gill clearly got this several hundred years ago when he said, “this work was reserved for Joshua, a type of Christ; not Moses and his law, or obedience to it, is what introduces any into the heavenly Canaan only Jesus and his righteousness.”

The Lord is working in typology in order to reveal Himself and His work to the world. As the law cannot obtain the inheritance, then someone else must bring the people in. Everything must fit in order to maintain the typology of Christ. That continues to be seen in the next words...

**<sup>3</sup>The LORD your God Himself crosses over before you;**

The words are emphatic: *Yehovah elohekha hu over l’phanekha* – “Yehovah your God HE crosses over before your face.” And more, the words are now in the singular – “you, Israel.”

The emphasis is given as a complete contrast to Moses. “Moses, you shall not cross over the Jordan. Instead, the Lord – HE – shall cross over.” The words clearly speak of the

Lord being the One to bring Israel into the inheritance. The Lord, the true Lawgiver, is the primary cause of what will occur. As such...

<sup>3</sup> (con't) **He will destroy these nations from before you,**

Again, the words are emphatic: *hu yashmid eth ha'goyim ha'elleh milephanekha* – “He will destroy the nations the these from before your face.” “The Lord has said to me, ‘Moses, you will not cross over. But the Lord HE will. And it is HE who will destroy those who possess the inheritance. Israel, trust in the Lord.’” The words are set, they are fixed, and they are given as a guarantee...

<sup>3</sup> (con't) **and you shall dispossess them.**

It is a single word: *vi'rishtam* – “And you (Israel) shall dispossess them.” The Lord will go over before Israel, He will destroy the enemy, and Israel shall take what they possessed. Everything is a work of the Lord. And yet...

<sup>3</sup> (con't) **Joshua himself crosses over before you, just as the LORD has said.**

There is no conjunction to separate the thoughts and it is again emphatic: *Yehoshua hu over l'phanekha ka'asher diber Yehovah* – “Joshua HE crosses over before your face, just as spoke Yehovah.” Charles Ellicott rightly questions the text –

**“The Lord thy God, he will go over before thee . . . Joshua, he shall go over before thee.**—Can it be accidental that Jehovah and Joshua are spoken of in exactly the same language, and that there is no distinguishing conjunction between them, the ‘and’ of the English Version being supplied? ‘Jehovah, He is going over; Joshua, he is going over.’ Verbally, the two are as much identified as ‘The God who fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel that redeemed me from all evil’ (Genesis 48:15-16). The prophetic truth of this identification is too remarkable to be missed.”

Said plainly, the same words are used, the same emphasis is provided, and the same thought is conveyed in the two clauses. And yet, one speaks of the Lord God while the other speaks of Joshua. As there is no connecting conjunction, both thoughts are united as one. As this is so, it is making an absolutely clear picture to consider. For now, Moses continues with...

<sup>4</sup> **And the LORD will do to them as He did to Sihon and Og,**



The battles were described in Numbers 21. They occurred east of the Jordan, outside of the promised inheritance. And yet, they allowed Israel experience in battle. But more, they led Israel into a state of conviction in the Lord's abilities.

As the battles were victorious, it would bolster Israel's confidence, trust, and even provide full assurance that the Lord was with them, was guiding them, and would work with them to ensure the battles ahead would also end in victory. These two defeated foes were...

<sup>4</sup> (con't) **the kings of the Amorites and their land,**

It is singular, "kings of the Amorite." Thus, it speaks of the nation of people that were defeated. As there are more Amorites, there will be more battles against the people of this nation. However, because of the victory over these, there is the surety that any others that are met will also be defeated. Sihon and Og were great foes, but they stood no chance against the Lord...

<sup>4</sup> (con't) **when He destroyed them.**

Again, the victory is said to be of the Lord. Even though Israel was in the battle, the ultimate credit belongs to the Lord. Without His hand, they could not have prevailed. With Him, they could not be defeated. The same is true with those they would face in Canaan...

<sup>5</sup> **The LORD will give them over to you,**

Moses' words now go to the plural, "And will give them over Yehovah before your (all) face." All of those who went into battle would share in the triumph over the foes. The change to the plural would bolster the confidence of even the hesitant. "Yes, Israel will prevail, but I shall be a part of the victory!" And it is in the victory...

<sup>5</sup> (con't) **that you may do to them according to every commandment which I have commanded you.**

The Hebrew is not a "Because of this, therefore that." Rather than "that you may do to them," it reads: *va'asitem lahem* – "And you shall do to them." The Lord will give them over. Based on that, Israel is to then obediently follow through according to the law.

The words, and the change from the singular to the plural, become understandable when placed by the corresponding clauses from verse 3 –

3. “He will destroy these nations from before your (singular) face.”

5. “And the Lord will give them over to you (plural).”

3. “And you (singular) shall dispossess them.”

5. “And you (plural) shall do to them.”

The words are meticulously and brilliantly chosen to have the most positive affect on the minds of the people, even if the subtlety of them passed right over their heads. It is like a subliminal message that is mentally apprehended even when it may not be consciously understood. It is with this strategically placed and pronounced message that Moses next says...

**<sup>6</sup> Be strong and of good courage,**

Both words carry the meaning of strength, hardening, and so on: *khizqu v'imtsu* – “be strong and be strengthened,” or any such general rendering will do. The idea is that of soldiers (the verbs are plural) fortifying themselves for what lay ahead. The same is true with the next words...

**<sup>6 (con't)</sup> do not fear nor be afraid of them;**

*al tireu v'al taarsu mi'penehem* – “not fear and not be affrighted from their face.” It doesn't matter how many there are, how big they are, how battle-worn they appear, and so on. The soldiers of Israel were to not allow such things to affect them in the slightest...

**<sup>6 (con't)</sup> for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you.**

Right in the middle of the verse, the words now revert to the second person singular. Moses is referring to Israel, the collective.

Further, the words are emphatic, and a verb preceded by an article is used to describe the Lord – “for Yehovah your God HE the Goer with you.” The people don't need Moses. Rather, they have the One who called Moses, who directed him, and who sustained him.

As such, to rely on Moses' presence would be to rely on that which is less than the Lord. It is a lesson way too many in the church need to learn. In knowing this is to find surety...

**6 (con't) He will not leave you nor forsake you."**

The words continue in the singular – "you, Israel." The Lord will never leave them, nor will He ever abandon them. They have the absolute assurance of this. The problem of defeat will not be because the Lord has left Israel, but only if Israel leaves the Lord.

**7 Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel,**

Moses is ensuring that Joshua will be fully recognized as his replacement. There could be no conspiracy theories or attempts at usurping his rightful authority because Moses brings him *l'ene kal Yisrael*, or "to eyes all Israel." In his bringing him forth, he says...

**7 (con't) "Be strong and of good courage,**

It is the same words just spoken to the people. In order for a congregation to be encouraged, their leader must first demonstrate his own courage – "be strong and be strengthened..."

**7 (con't) for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them,**

The words bear an emphasis – "for YOU must go with." The words "go with" are changed to "bring in" in verse 31:23. Joshua both goes with, and he brings in the people. In other words, he is both one of the people, and he is also to be the leader of the people. There is no bringing in without first going with. But in his going with, Moses says...

**7 (con't) and you shall cause them to inherit it.**

Again, it bears an emphasis – "and YOU shall cause to inherit it them." Moses emphatically states that Joshua personally will go in and Joshua personally will cause them to inherit the land. He, then, is the Lord's instrument in causing these things to be. With this understood, Moses continues...

**8 And the LORD, He is the One who goes before you.**

Like in verse 6, there is an emphasis, and the verb is prefixed by an article, “And Yehovah, HE, the Goer before you.” Moses just said that Joshua would cause the people to inherit the land. And yet, the Lord is with Joshua.

In this, we can see the various causes being relayed. Joshua is the *material* cause. He is the one who makes the thing (like wood in a table) to be. The *formal* cause, the design, is the destruction of the enemies. The *efficient* cause, what brings it about, is the Lord’s presence working on behalf of Joshua. And the *final* cause, the *purpose*, is the obtaining of the inheritance.

Everything is working towards the goal. Nothing will thwart the goal, and Moses provides the assurance of it...

**8 (con’t) He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you;**

Again, it is emphatic – “HE will be with you.” There will be no separation between Joshua and the Lord. He will remain with him, and He will not slacken his grip from him. The same words were used in verse 6 and here. The first is *rapha*. It means to relax or slacken. As such, the Lord will firmly have His hand upon Joshua.

The second is *azav*. It comes from a root with essentially the same meaning, to loosen. Thus, he will firmly commit Himself to what will come to pass. Therefore, Moses now says...

**\*8 (fin) do not fear nor be dismayed.”**

One of the words is the same as verse 6, while the other bears a close meaning to the other word in verse 6. Like the people, Moses tells Joshua to not fear or be affrighted. He will prevail because the Lord is with him. Nothing can affect the sure outcome that the Lord intends because of it.

*Be strong and courageous and trust in Me  
You shall not fail because I go with you  
Lean not on your own understanding, but trust completely  
Having faith in Me is what you are to do*

*I also had to trust in My God as you are now to do  
And so, I was strengthened in order to go in  
In My going, it was actually for you*

*So, fear not. With faith in Me, you are ready to begin*

*Who is the Goer who goes with you?*

*He is the same Goer who was there with Me*

*The Lord our God who is faithful and true*

*Is the One we can trust forever and wholeheartedly*

## **II. Pictures of Christ**

Moses is a picture of the law. We saw that already in verse 2. It is the law that speaks “to all Israel” as was noted in verse 1. The law witnesses to what will happen, how it will happen, and it typologically tells us of the greater fulfillment of these things, if we will accept the typology.

For example, on the Passover, a lamb was killed, and its blood was applied to the doorposts so that the Lord would pass over the people. Paul says that Christ is our Passover Lamb. Do we accept the Antitype in fulfillment of the typology? If so, then we acknowledge what Scripture says. Israel does not yet accept that.

Verse 2 gave us the details of Moses’ age. In that, he said he could no longer go out or come in, implying his strength would no longer allow him to be an effective leader. Rather, it was time for his replacement to take over. The law is unable to enter the promise.

The reason for this is that is not the purpose of the law. Rather, the law is given to highlight sin and to lead us to Christ. As it says in 1 Corinthians 15, “The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the law.” Moses’ coming death is the result of sin. The law, of which he is given as a type of it, finds its strength in sin.

As such, the Lord said to Moses, “You shall not cross over the Jordan.” The law, and thus those under the law, have no part in the inheritance. That was clearly seen in the words of Galatians that we looked at earlier while in verse 2. It is why we so carefully reviewed what led to Moses’ punishment.

With that explained, Moses said emphatically that it would be the Lord who crossed over before Israel. And then, using the same words in the same verse, and without any distinguishing conjunction between them, it emphatically said the same of Joshua.

Here, and elsewhere, Joshua, or “The Lord (Yah) is Salvation,” is clearly presented as a type of Christ. As we saw, the same words were used, the same emphasis was provided, and the same thought was conveyed in the two clauses.

One referred to the Lord God while the other spoke of Joshua. The lack of any conjunction united the two in thought as being one. The picture is clear. Jesus, who is the Antitype, is obviously presented as the incarnate Lord God. The type anticipates its fulfillment in Him.

Verse 4 recalled the two foes of Israel, Sihon and Og, to mind. Just as the Lord (through Israel under Moses) defeated the foes outside of the inheritance, so the Lord (through Israel, under Joshua) will defeat the foes inside of it.

The picture is that the Lord, through the law, will destroy those outside of the inheritance. But that the Lord, through Jesus, will destroy those inside of it. In other words, this presupposes that there are still battles ahead for those who enter the inheritance.

As such, the words clearly reveal that salvation and the promise of heaven are one thing, even if they don't come at the same time. When one crosses over the Jordan (comes through Christ), the inheritance is obtained. They have entered the promise.

Canaan, the promise, is typical of entry into the state of salvation. Israel is a template for individual salvation; hence it is referred to in the singular.

Stated another way, Israel's entrance into the promise, having crossed over the Jordan, is a picture of believers going through Christ to receive the inheritance. But there are still foes in Canaan to be destroyed. The picture is clearly seen in Ephesians –

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” Ephesians 1:7

The Lord descended (like the Jordan). The Lord died (as the Jordan ends). It is in crossing through this that one enters. The words “through His blood” don't just imply death, they explicitly mean it. Therefore, to go through Christ IS to be redeemed. The sins are forgiven, and it is sin (which is strengthened by the law) that has been dealt with.

Joshua, or Yehoshua, comes from two words. The first is the divine name of God YHVH, or Jehovah. The second is *yasha*, meaning to deliver or save. Hence, the name means, “Yehovah is Salvation.”

Joshua was commissioned under the law. Jesus was born (and commissioned by God) under the law. Joshua will enter the inheritance through the Jordan. Christ enters the inheritance through His own death (pictured by the Jordan) in fulfillment of the law. We enter through Jesus’ death as well. That is also stated in Ephesians –

“In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, <sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” Ephesians 1:13, 14

The inheritance is obtained. Believers are positionally granted the full inheritance, even if they are still living in this world –

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup> and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

-Ephesians 2:4-7

So, there is the positional until the actual is reached. However, there are still battles ahead in this positional attainment of the inheritance. If anyone doesn’t believe that he is either braindead or just plain dead.

These battles are described quite well, and how to win them is nicely detailed in Ephesians 6. This is what Moses was saying to Israel in verses 5 & 6 and which anticipates our battles today. The changes from the plural to the singular were notable.

There are individual battles, and there are collective battles. Verse 6 told the people in the plural to be strong and of good courage. It is reflective of Paul’s words in Ephesians 6 –

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”

-Ephesians 6:10

These, and other such words in the New Testament simply confirm that we are in a battle and that we are to be strong not in ourselves, but in the Lord who goes with us. Again, from Paul –

“Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.” 1 Corinthians 16:13

But all of this is first dependent on the Lord, who goes with us. As it noted to Joshua by Moses, “you must go with this people.” The Lord didn’t just enter into glory and wait for us there. He first went through the Jordan. He went with us in death in order to bring us into the inheritance –

“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.”

-1 Peter 3:18

He went before us. Imagine that. But Moses says something to Joshua that also finds its fulfillment in Christ. He said, “Be strong and of good courage,” or “be strong and be strengthened.” The words to Joshua apply to Christ –

“Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.” Luke 22:43

The word “angel” simply means “messenger.” That is how Young’s translates this. What was the message brought to strengthen the Lord? My guess, it was the word of the Lord – “Be strong and be strengthened.” In our humanity, we all need the word of the Lord at times.

The wonder of the words of Moses calls out for us to look to Christ who has gone before us. It is the Lord who is with us, it is the Lord who died for us. It is the Lord who we must go through to obtain the inheritance. And it is the Lord we must rely on, even once the inheritance is obtained.

Until we depart and enter the final part of our inheritance, it is a life of promise we live, and yet it is a life of battles we must face. The admonition for Israel was to remember that the Lord is the Goer with us, and He is the Goer before us.

If we can just hold fast to that, how much better will we be as we continue on in this difficult world in which we live. When we take our eyes off of Jesus, and when we allow our thoughts to get diverted from Him, how very ineffective we are! But when we remember that He is with us, we will always be in the sweet spot.



Israel is a group of people. As a group of people, some died in battle, some never obtained the inheritance, some wandered away forgetting the Lord who was among them. We are brought into the commonwealth of Israel by faith in Christ, but nothing promises we won't suffer or die in the battle.

However, the inheritance will never be denied us. It is obtained. The typology tells us what the New Testament confirms. Thank God for Jesus Christ who has guaranteed our inheritance because He has gone with us into it. Yes, thank God for Jesus Christ.

**Closing Verse:** *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* Philippians 4:13

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 31:9-13 *He penned out all the things he heard and saw...* (So Moses Wrote This Law) (90<sup>th</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **Then Moses Called Joshua**

Then Moses went and spoke these words to all Israel  
And he said to them, yes, he did begin...

"I am one hundred and twenty years old today  
I can no longer go out and come in

Also the LORD has said to me, words of my loss  
'You shall not over this Jordan cross

The LORD your God Himself crosses over before you  
He will destroy these nations from before you until they  
-----are all dead  
And you shall dispossess them  
Joshua himself crosses over before you, just as the LORD has said

And the LORD will do to them  
As He did to Sihon and Og, without any haw or hem  
The kings of the Amorites and their land  
When He destroyed them

The LORD will give them over to you  
That you may do to them, so you shall do  
According to every commandment  
Which I have commanded you

Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them  
For the LORD your God is faithful and true  
He is the One who goes with you  
He will not leave you nor forsake you

Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel  
“Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people  
-----so to you I submit  
To the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers  
-----to give them  
And you shall cause them to inherit it

And the LORD, He is the One who goes before you  
He will be with you, this promise He has made  
He will not leave you nor forsake you  
Do not fear nor be dismayed

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## **Deuteronomy 31:9-13** **(So Moses Wrote This Law)**

I don't want to put up a mental wall around you even before we start today, but I want you to know that some of the things that are in this sermon are on a level of 8 or 9 out of 10 in regard to being complicated. So, if you feel like you had no idea what I was talking about during the sermon when you go home, don't feel bad. It is just plain complicated.

There is some speculation about the order of things in the passage today as well as the meaning of what is said. In verse 9, it will speak of Moses writing out the law and then giving it to the priests and the elders. And yet, it will say in verses 24-26 that Moses will write the words of the law in a book, and it will be presented to the priests.

As you will see, there are a wide variety of opinions as to what each of these things means. The fact is, that the intent is often difficult, and one view seems as right as another. It would be easy to just go with "whichever" and type up a sermon for you. But it would also mean that I took the expedient path without thinking through what might actually be one thing rather than the other.

But I couldn't live with that. And so, like in many other sermons, I found myself talking out loud to the Lord, "What are you telling us here, Lord? I don't want to be wrong in this. What if what I type up is wrong?" It worries me.

**Text Verse:** *"My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. <sup>2</sup>For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body." James 3:1, 2*

The reason these things worry me is not merely because I may be wrong. I have read Deuteronomy 31 many times in my life. When reading it, my mind – like yours when you read a passage – makes an evaluation of what is presented, and then a conclusion is made.

This is how we do things. If you watch Perry Mason, you will begin to guess who the guilty party is in the case being presented. Your mind forms a conclusion and you wait to see if you are right or not. At the end, the true perpetrator of the crime is revealed, and you say, "Aha! I was right," or you might say, "I never thought of that," or "Ohhhhh, I should have known!"

Nothing was lost in your incorrect guess, and you simply file away what you now know is right. During my times of reading Deuteronomy 31, or any other passage of Scripture, I have made my conclusions and gone on from there without giving it much more thought.

If I was wrong, it really won't make that much difference. Someday, the correct analysis will be made known, and I might say, "Oooh, I never thought of that!" But there was no wrongdoing to be held accountable for. However, something different comes about when a person evaluates a passage and then presents it to others, doesn't it?

All of a sudden, he becomes a teacher of the law, and we know what James says about that. I am truly concerned that an evaluation of something as basic and seemingly unimportant as the various interpretations of what the meaning of "the law" is or what the meaning of "he delivered" is.

It suddenly takes on a great deal of importance because I am now instructing you. If I am wrong, I bear the guilt of my mis-instruction of this precious word.

Two things bother me, and they happen quite often. The first is when someone emails and tells me I'm wrong in something I presented when he has no idea what he is talking about. I find it distasteful because he hasn't even taken the time to try to figure out what he is claiming. He is just spouting off what he heard without checking out what he is saying. He is a time-waster who hasn't taken the time to figure out what he is wasting my time over.

The second thing, that really bothers me, is when someone emails with something I have said, and he is right – I was wrong. That doesn't bother me because I was wrong and, "Oh, now I look stupid." It bothers me because I was wrong concerning God's word. It eats me up and it terrifies me.

Thank God for His grace towards my incompetence in presenting His word. Otherwise, there would truly be left no hope at all. Let us remember to handle this word carefully. There is a point where we have to simply decide and go on, but we should do so by telling people what options may also be correct when we do, or at least admitting we might not be right.

The word is too precious to do otherwise. Marvelous and beautiful things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and...

May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. At the End of Every Seven Years (verses 9-11)**

#### **<sup>9</sup>So Moses wrote this law**

*v'yiktov mosheh eth ha'torah ha'zoth* – “And wrote Moses the torah, the this.” The debate over the meaning of this goes on and on. Is it speaking of Deuteronomy only? Is it referring to the commandments, blessings, and curses only? Is it referring to the civil law of Leviticus and Deuteronomy only? And so on.

What seems clear is that what it is referring to is the same thing that was spoken of in the law of the king in Deuteronomy 17 –

“Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from *the one* before the priests, the Levites.”  
Deuteronomy 17:18

That this is speaking of the same thing is obvious for several reasons. It is a copy of the same law now being again described. It is the law that will be given to the priests, the Levites, who are responsible for bearing the ark. And it is the law that is also given to the elders of Israel.

The instruction for these various people is scattered throughout Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The king himself was to make a copy of the law. As such, it certainly does not mean only the book of Deuteronomy, but rather the entire Torah – meaning the five books of Moses.

The king was to be trained in the creation, the history of sin, the anticipation of the Messiah, the call of the patriarchs, the bondage of his people, their redemption from Egypt, the giving of the law, the turning of their hearts away from the Lord, of the Lord's faithfulness to them in punishment, the anticipated establishment of them in the land, and even of the prophecy of the Song of Moses that calls attention to both heaven and earth of the future apostasy of Israel.

With the end of Moses' instruction now being anticipated, this note is given to show that the law is complete, and it is being presented to the proper authorities who will continue to lead the people in their various capacities. As such, it next says...

<sup>9</sup> (con't) **and delivered it to the priests, the sons of Levi,**

*v'yitenah el ha'kohanim bene levi* – “and gave unto the priests, sons Levi.” The meaning here does not have to be, “and he handed the scroll to them.” Rather than the physical book itself, this is more probably a way of saying, “Moses wrote the words of this law and then read it to the priests, the sons of Levi.”

The “giving” is then a formal reading forth of it to them as instruction. This is then in contrast to what will be done in verses 24-26 where the written law is then given into the custody of the priests. It is these priests...

<sup>9</sup> (con't) **who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD,**

A verb stands here as a noun: *ha'noseim eth aron berit Yehovah* – “the bearers ark covenant Yehovah.” The reason for including these words is that the ark is where the tablets of the law, the basis for the Law of Moses, were placed.

The ark, in every detail, points to the work of Christ Jesus. He is the embodiment of the law contained within. The priests, signifying the mediatorial role of the law, bear the law in this regard. Their duties anticipate the coming Christ as well.

Thus, the instruction of the law, being given to them, is so that they will faithfully execute their duties until the time when their duties were to end with the coming of Messiah. But others had duties as well...

<sup>9</sup> (con't) **and to all the elders of Israel.**

Again and again, in Deuteronomy, the elders were singled out to make judgments for the people in the gates of the city. And, as with the priests, their duties and judgments under the law were anticipatory of the coming of Christ.

They were instructed by Moses until the time when their duties too would end with the coming of Messiah. They are now being given this instruction, and it was probably accompanied by their questions asking for clarification and Moses then explaining those things so that no misunderstandings of the law would arise. This seems not just likely, but probable. The reason for this is seen in the next words...

<sup>10</sup> **And Moses commanded them, saying:**

These words really seem to indicate that what is given to the priests and elders in the previous verse is an oral instruction in the law, rather than him handing the writings to them. The command is to “them” in the plural. He is speaking to a group. In his oral instruction, he continues his dialog with these words...

<sup>10</sup> (con’t) **“At the end of every seven years,**

*mi’qets sheva shanim* – “From extremity seven years.” The meaning of “end,” or “extremity,” is not “after seven years,” but “the end of the seven-year cycle,” meaning the seventh year is what is being discussed.

This was seen in Leviticus. It is not “seven and then,” but “six and then.” Each six-year period is followed by a special one-year time of remission. This is the same idea as the year of tithe which was not “three and then,” but “two and then.” In the seventh year...

<sup>10</sup> (con’t) **at the appointed time in the year of release,**

This particular event was carefully explained in Deuteronomy 15 –

“At the end of every seven years you shall grant a release of debts. <sup>2</sup> And this is the form of the release: Every creditor who has lent anything to his neighbor shall release it; he shall not require it of his neighbor or his brother, because it is called the LORD’s release.” Deuteronomy 15:1, 2

This was the set time known as the *sh’mita*, or “release.” It would correspond also to the sabbath year of rest for the land as detailed in Leviticus 24. To get a full understanding of what the year of release details, and how it anticipated Christ, you can go back and watch that sermon.

As noted, then, it has nothing to do with the false teaching of certain people concerning events in today’s world. It was solely given in anticipation of Christ, and the precept of the law is fulfilled and ended in Christ. For now, Moses further defines the set timeframe that he will provide instruction on, saying...

<sup>10</sup> (con’t) **at the Feast of Tabernacles,**

*b’khag ha’sukoth* – “in feast the tabernacles.” Tabernacles was one of the three pilgrim feasts. It occurred in the fall time of the year, and it was the last event of the original festal year set forth by the Lord in Leviticus 23.

The pilgrim feasts specifically anticipate life in Christ. This is explained in the Leviticus 23 series. There is the work of the Lord revealed in the feasts, and there is life in the Lord detailed in the *khag*, or pilgrim feasts. Thus, what Moses is to describe is set forth to close out the festal year, the year of the sabbath of the land, and the year of release in regard to redemptive events.

All of the men of Israel, inclusive of all in their families, their servants, the Levites, and the strangers within their gates, were to attend the feast and rejoice in the presence of the Lord. None were to be excluded. That continues to be seen in the next words...

**11 when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God**

The Hebrew is more expressive: *b'bo kal Yisrael l'raoth eth pene Yehovah elohekha* – “in coming all Israel to see face Yehovah your (singular) God.” Moses changes in the middle of the thought to the singular – from speaking to “them” to “your (singular) God.” The curious change will be looked at in a minute.

For now, all of Israel was to come before the Lord at the pilgrim feasts. There, they were to rejoice and be thankful for all the Lord provided for them. None was to be in mourning, but rather all were to be filled with gladness as they sought out the face of the Lord...

**11 (con't) in the place which He chooses,**

This is wherever the tabernacle, or later the temple, was located. Where the Lord rested, and where the altar of sacrifice was, that is considered the place that the Lord had chosen.

**11 (con't) you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing.**

*tiqra eth ha'torah ha'zot neged kal Yisrael b'azenehem* – “you (singular) shall read the Torah, the this, before all Israel – in their ears.” The singular continues, and so this could be taken in various ways.

Maybe the simplest solution (?) is that Moses spoke to all of them, but he is now speaking directly to Joshua. As the leader, he represents the whole. This is possible because it is Joshua, as the leader, who first read the law to the people –



“Then all Israel, with their elders and officers and judges, stood on either side of the ark before the priests, the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, the stranger as well as he who was born among them. Half of them *were* in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. <sup>34</sup> And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. <sup>35</sup> There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them.” Joshua 8:33-35

If this is so, and if this account in Joshua is in fulfillment of the command of Moses now, it then brings in more to consider. The account in Joshua does not tell when the event occurred. On a cursory reading, one would think it happened right after the destruction of Ai, not long after the people entered the land.

But the timing is not given. It could be that it actually occurred after the land is subdued years later. If so, then the account in Joshua is not chronologically placed. If that is the case, it was placed there to show obedience to the command concerning having done it at the time of earliest convenience.

Regardless of that, the fact that Joshua read the law to the people may explain the change from the plural to the singular. The leader of the people, in this case, Joshua, is given the charge to read the words of law to all Israel.

An obvious question arises, and which is highly debated, is “Does this refer only to Deuteronomy, or does it refer to the entire Torah, meaning the five books of Moses?” The fulfillment of this is not only seen in Joshua, where the answer cannot be fully known, but this same reading is also noted in Nehemiah 8.

Before reading that, I have to tell you that the study for this question, meaning just to figure out for you whether all of the Torah is read or just the book of Deuteronomy, took on such a point of difficulty that several hours were spent on it.

The study became one of the most complicated that I have faced in the book of Deuteronomy, and I cannot give you a full and complete answer to the question.

Rather, I can only tell you that trying to figure it out opened up a can of worms that is problematic. It may even be tedious to you, unless you really want to know the intricacies of what is involved in what I will explain.

I emailed Sergio to get help, and he gave me his thoughts, but what is said in Nehemiah becomes so complicated that I hope you can follow along without getting lost. But it is important. This is what it says there, starting at the beginning of the chapter –

“Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that *was* in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded Israel. <sup>2</sup>So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who *could* hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month.” Nehemiah 8:1, 2

The first thing to note in these words of Nehemiah is that the first day of the seventh month, is not the feast of Tabernacles. Tabernacles doesn't begin until the fifteenth day of the month. But what is being described here is clearly a pilgrim feast.

The people were not required to gather before the Lord on the first of the month, even the first of the seventh month which is the special day known as Yom Teruah described in Leviticus 23.

Therefore, the words of Nehemiah 8:2 may not be referring at all to the first day of the month, as one would initially think – and as all translations make clear – but rather to “day one” of the Feast of Tabernacles.

The Hebrew reads plainly: *b'yom ekhad la'khodesh ha'shevi* – “in day one to month the seventh.” Any reasonable translation of this would be, “on the first day of the seventh month.” Even the Greek agrees with this. And that very well may be what is meant.

However, a reasonable translation does not mean a scholarly one. The work of translators should rely on scholars, but it does not necessarily need to do so. If this is actually referring to the Feast of Tabernacles, as I think it does, then an inference must be made and inserted for clarity, as happens in many Bible translations –

“...in day one [of the feast of] the seventh month.” Only this would bring the actions of Ezra and the people to align with the words of Moses now. If so, then this first day of the *khag*, or feast, that is celebrated in the seventh month, is what is being referred to. This seems confirmed later in the chapter –

“Now on the second day the heads of the fathers’ *houses* of all the people, with the priests and Levites, were gathered to Ezra the scribe, in order to understand the words of the Law. <sup>14</sup> And they found written in the Law, which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month, <sup>15</sup> and that they should announce and proclaim in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, ‘Go out to the mountain, and bring olive branches, branches of oil trees, myrtle branches, palm branches, and branches of leafy trees, to make booths, as *it is* written.’” Nehemiah 8:13-15

This seems to be clearly speaking of the second day of the same event introduced in Nehemiah 8:1, 2. And more, it is clearly speaking of the Feast of Tabernacles. As such, and with that in mind, the chapter then closes out with these words, still speaking of the same Feast of Tabernacles, which Moses refers to now –

“Also day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day *there was* a sacred assembly, according to the *prescribed* manner.” Nehemiah 8:18

This, though complicated, is important because it changes the dynamics of many things evaluated by many people over the years, including me. But more, it demonstrates that though being a priest and a scribe of the law, Ezra didn’t know the law as well as he should have.

If he only realized that they were to build booths during the second day of reading, then they were already in violation of the law –

“You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, <sup>43</sup> that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.” Leviticus 23:42, 43

To “find” something in the law means he did not know it was there to be found. Either way, the first day of the seventh month, or day one of the feast in the seventh month, Ezra was unaware of the requirements of the law that had been entrusted to him as a priest.

Despite these things, which seem like a complete misdirection from the passage we are dealing with in Deuteronomy, the words that are cited concerning the building of booths are found only in Leviticus 23, not in Deuteronomy.

Moses does instruct the people to observe Tabernacles in Deuteronomy 16, and again now in Chapter 31, but the instructions referring to what they were to do are found in Leviticus 23. And so, what this means, must – again – be speculated on.

Was only Deuteronomy read, as many assume? If so, then referring to Leviticus by Ezra does not indicate that the whole law was read, but that they didn't know how to observe the feast, and thus they went to Leviticus and only found out then.

Or it may mean that all of the books of Moses were read in part or in whole. If in whole, at least from reading them in English, it takes about 3 ½ hours to read Genesis, 3 hours to read Exodus, 2 hours to read Leviticus, 2 ½ hours to read Numbers, and 2 ½ hours to read Deuteronomy. In total, it comes to plus or minus 13 ½ hours. That could easily be read in the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles.

No matter what, Ezra – the priest and scribe – was not versed in what to do in matters of his own law. Having seen this same type of a lack of knowledge recorded in Nehemiah before in our Deuteronomy sermons, it shows that the people who returned from exile had largely forgotten what was required of them, or they were entirely unaware of a proper reading of the law.

Nehemiah is a historical account of what occurred. It is given to show the state of the people before the Lord, not that they were right before the Lord (as many in the book were not right before the Lord), nor that the men who are highlighted in the books were infallible in their theology.

On the contrary, we see – quite clearly – that they were not. The errors in thinking and in theology concerning them are carefully recorded in the narrative.

But this lack of knowledge concerning the law continues on with the rabbis of the law to this day. Despite making convincing arguments concerning the law, they really have no idea – for the most part – what they are talking about. Without seeing Christ as the fulfillment of Scripture, they are blinded to the importance of this word that sits before them as they read. With this complicated evaluation now behind us, Moses continues on...

*We are here in Your presence, dwelling in temporary tabernacles  
And we are rejoicing in all that You have done for us  
A fire is inside to warm us as each ember burns and crackles  
We are safely secure as we await the Lord Jesus*

*Oh! To dwell in our eternal home; for this we long  
May that day be soon, but we will rejoice until then  
Hear our praises; hear our joyous song  
Coming forth from the lips of Your redeemed among men*

*Thank You for our great hope, and the peace it does provide  
Thank You for the surety we have in Christ Jesus  
In His hope, we now patiently abide  
Anticipating all that He has prepared for each of us*

## **II. As Long as You Live in the Land (verses 12 & 13)**

**<sup>12</sup> Gather the people together,**

The verb is singular and imperative – “(You) gather the people!” All of the people of the land (all Israel of verse 11) were to be assembled in the presence of the Lord during this pilgrim feast in the seventh month, but more especially in the seventh year of the sabbatical cycle in the time of the release. This was to include...

**<sup>12</sup> (con’t) men and women and little ones, and the stranger who is within your gates,**

Important articles have been left out of the translation, and another was incorrectly added in. It reads, “the men, and the women, and the little ones, and your (singular) stranger who is within your (singular) gates.” The wording is very specific to ensure that no person was to be excluded. Every single person was to be assembled and in attendance. This special assembly was not without a set purpose as well. It is so...

**<sup>12</sup> (con’t) that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God**

*yishmeru u-l’maan yilmedu v’yareu eth Yehovah elohekem* – “they may hear and to end purpose they may learn and to fear Yehovah your (plural) God.” This is the end purpose of the reading of the law every seven years. It was for the people to clearly hear it read, which then had a dual purpose. They would 1) learn what they were to do, and 2) they were also to fear the Lord.

The switch to the plural, “the Lord your God,” seems to indicate that Moses has been speaking directly to Joshua, but then one can imagine him opening his arms wide to the priests and the elders there before him and saying these words. With that stated, he adds on a third purpose...

12 (con't) **and carefully observe all the words of this law,**

*v'shameru laasoth eth kal divre ha'torah ha'zot* – “and they keep to do all words the Torah the this.” The people cannot keep and do what they do not know. But that is what the agreement to the covenant is conditioned upon.

It isn't just a document that they are to know, which even Ezra was unaware of points within it, but it is a law that was to be known and to be observed. Hence, when Ezra and those with him “found” out what to do while reading the law, they set about to keep and to do what they had discovered.

It should be noted now that this was a perfect time for the reading of the law. They were in the sabbatical year where the land was to lie fallow. They were in the year of release where all debts were forgiven. As such, this would have been the most carefree period of their lives.

And so, to hear the law read would not be accompanied by the thought of owing people money, harvesting the crops that had been sown, and so on. It would be somewhat like what was lost in Eden.

There were no debts of sin because the Day of Atonement had just been observed, there was no labor and toil of the land because that only came after the fall, and so on. There was really nothing to bog down their minds, and they could focus on being pleasing to the Lord.

But the Feast of Tabernacles was only anticipatory of believers' lives in Christ. We are dwelling in our tents, saved by the Lord, and guaranteed a place in heaven at the restoration of all things.

We should, for all intents and purposes, have our minds focused on what the Lord has done for us in fulfilling the law. It is He who kept and did all the words of the Torah. We are the benefactors of His time tabernacling among us.

From that understanding, we should be without the cares of this world when we contemplate and understand the glory of the next. We should be in a constant state of rejoicing before the Lord – at least, that is what we *should* be doing. He has paved the road that lies before us. That should be our source of joy and rejoicing. That then leads to what is next stated by Moses...

<sup>13</sup> **and *that* their children, who have not known it,**

It should say, “and their children who have not known.” The word “it” should be italicized or, better, left out. It speaks of their lack of knowledge concerning what is in the law in general.

The words themselves are speaking of those born within the past seven years. When the next time for the full reading of the law (I would argue for the entire five books of Moses) arrived, those who had never heard it, or who had heard it when still infants, would begin to grasp and understand the magnificence of what the Lord had done for them.

They would hear of creation, the fall, and the exile. They would hear of the flood and the ark of Noah. They would hear of the mercy of God upon Noah and his family, the cursing of Canaan, the call of Abraham, the stories of Ishmael and Isaac, of the deceit of Jacob, and on and on. It is hard to imagine that these things would be left out of the reading of these seven days.

Instead, they would be a central part of captivating the young minds, of explaining to them why sin is in the world, in helping them to understand the glories hidden behind the walls of the tabernacle or temple, and so on.

Without hearing these things read to them, they would have a complete void in what their calling as a people was. But in hearing them, they would begin to understand the importance of what it meant to be an Israelite. Everything about their lives, their culture, the restrictions, and their allowances would make proper sense to them. As such, these young minds would have the words read to them so that they...

<sup>13 (con't)</sup> **may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God**

The words continue to refer to the children. They cannot fear the Lord if they remain unaware of the words of the law.

This is the purpose of knowing the law. The children are to be brought up hearing the words which will then bring them to a fear of who the Lord is, what He is capable of, and to then trust that He is worthy of their attention at all times. And this is to be...

<sup>13 (con't)</sup> **as long as you live in the land**

*kal ha'yamim asher atem khayim al ha'adamah* – “all the days which you (plural) live upon the ground.” Moses continues to address all of the elders, but because the words are recorded in the Torah, his words are inclusive of all who hear them.

The change between the singular and the plural is purposeful as Moses thinks out his words carefully. The people occupied the ground beneath their feet, and they are admonished to continue with this practice, inclusive of even the youngest children, all their days upon that ground...

\*13 (fin) **which you cross the Jordan to possess.”**

*asher atem oberim eth ha'yarden shamah l'rishtah* – “Which you (all) crossing over the Jordan there to possess.” The priests and the elders of verse 9 are being addressed, but they represent the congregation. Therefore, what Moses says to them applies to all of the people.

The people are to attend to the words of the Lord, to do them, to fear the Lord, and to be observant of everything the law proclaims. This is the charge set before them. Inclusive in those words of law are further instructions concerning the law –

“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. <sup>7</sup> You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.” Deuteronomy 6:6, 7

In other words, in the charge of Moses here in Deuteronomy 31, there is the continued charge of Deuteronomy 6. The law was not just to be a thing to hear and to do, but to hear and to live out continuously and to share continuously. To not do so is to not live out the law as instructed by Moses now.

As such, the law was to be a part of every aspect of the person's life at every moment of his existence. It shows the utter impossibility that it could ever be perfectly lived out by a fallen man.

The words of this verse pretty much close out the actual instructions of the Law of Moses, by Moses, to the people. Everything after this point deals with addendums to the instruction to the people and other matters that are for all to know, even if they are not things the people are to actually do. This includes the Song of Moses and the blessing of Moses upon the people.



As such, the instruction concerning the reading of the law at the Feast of Tabernacles holds a particular point of importance, and it is thus a point that we should carefully reflect on. As it is a pilgrim feast, and as it anticipates the life of the believer in Christ, we should look at it in this light.

We are to remember what Christ did. It is He who fulfilled the law, and it is He who made our access into the land of promise possible. If Israel's fulfillment of the law was necessary for the world to be reconciled to God, we all would be chucked into the Lake of Fire on judgment day.

But God knew this, and He gave us the lesson of the law to help us appreciate the enormity of what He did in Christ when He reconciled the world to Himself.

We, because of what He did, are living out our pilgrim feast and we are awaiting the realization of the promise that was obtained when we crossed over the Jordan and into God's rest through a simple act of faith in what He has done. This is what Paul refers to in 2 Corinthians 5 –

“For we know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. <sup>2</sup> For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, <sup>3</sup> if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. <sup>4</sup> For we who are in *this* tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. <sup>5</sup> Now He who has prepared us for this very thing *is* God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.” 2 Corinthians 5:1-5

We are dwelling in tents and waiting on what lies ahead. And as a surety that it will be received, Paul says God has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. The Spirit is given by an act of faith.

Nothing else will obtain it, no work can procure it, and once it is received, it can never be taken away. Have faith in Christ, believe the gospel, and begin your true pilgrim feast – your Feast of Tabernacles – today.

And once you enter in, be sure to thank God for the giving of His Son who did what Israel could not do. Yes, thank God that Christ Jesus has fulfilled the law and set it aside for all who come to Him by faith. What a marvelous thing God has done for us.

**Closing Verse:** *“So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. <sup>7</sup> For we walk by faith, not by sight. <sup>8</sup> We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 5:6-8*

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 31:14-21 *It will stand forever, as the Lord to Moses does tell...*  
(A Witness for Me Against the Children of Israel) (91<sup>st</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **So Moses Wrote This Law**

So Moses wrote this law  
And delivered it to the priests, the sons of Levi  
Who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD  
And to all the elders of Israel, each and every guy

And Moses commanded them, saying  
“At the end of every seven years, this you shall do  
At the appointed time in the year of release  
At the Feast of Tabernacles, as I am instructing you

When all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God  
In the place which He chooses, it shall be  
You shall read this law before all Israel  
In their hearing, just as is now instructed by me

Gather the people together, men and women and little ones  
And the stranger who is within your gates, whether young man  
-----or grandpa  
That they may hear and that they may learn to fear  
-----the LORD your God  
And carefully observe all the words of this law

And that their children, who have not known it  
May hear and learn to fear as to you I now address

The LORD your God as long as you live  
In the land which you cross the Jordan to possess

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## **Deuteronomy 31:14-21** **(A Witness for Me Against the Children of Israel)**

The passage today is so poorly translated by almost every version of the Bible that it is almost impossible to properly tell what is going on. Even Young's, the most literal translation of all, and who got most of the subtleties right, failed to get verse 20 right.

As I was typing the sermon, I almost felt I owed you an apology for the amount of time I will have to explain to you all of the inaccuracies that are found in the version I use for sermons, meaning the NKJV. But they simply follow along with the innumerable mistranslations of the KJV.

And pretty much all the others make the same mistakes. However, I shall not apologize for two reasons. First what you will go through is only about 40 or so minutes. I had to go through it for almost 10 hours, just to ensure it was right for you.

As such, how can I feel like you shouldn't have to go through also! But secondly, once you see why these changes are so important to understanding what is being said, I honestly think you will agree that all of the minutiae we have to go through is actually worth it.

**Text Verse:** *"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it." 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24*

I think this is the first time I have ever done a sermon where I used the same verse for the Text Verse as for Closing Verse. I think it's right to do so because without understanding all of the corrections to the errors in translations in the sermon verses, you might come up with a completely different view of what Paul is saying.

I mean, how many denominations, churches, pastors, preachers, and teachers adamantly state that a person can lose his salvation? We're reading the same Bible and coming to completely different conclusions concerning a matter of real doctrinal importance.

In the end, only one view is correct. That means that the other is... incorrect. And that means that an enormous number of people believe 100% incorrectly on this issue. That is problematic.

Paul says that God who calls you is faithful. He also says that He will perform (do) what he said in the previous verse, meaning preserving us blameless. Either what he says is true, or it is not. But where do we find out about the faithfulness of God? How can we tell if He is reliable or not?

Well, you can do so right from the history – and continued existence – of Israel. But when you either don't know that history or when you have a faulty view of it because of faulty translations, as well as faulty teachers of the word concerning it, then you will naturally come to the conclusion that God's faithfulness is not always something to be relied on.

How tragic. Let us be in the word, let us evaluate it as precisely as we can, and let us never apologize for doing so. I went through it for you, now you just sit still and listen to it from me. Ok? Let's do it! Great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. I Will Surely Hide My face in That Day (verses 14-18)**

**<sup>14</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses,**

*va'yomer Yehovah el mosheh* – “And said Yehovah unto Moses.” The words are rare for Deuteronomy. Moses has been the speaker throughout the vast majority of the book. But now, after Moses has given these many words and chapters of instruction, it is the Lord who speaks, and it is directly to Moses.

The Lord's words are words of ending and finality. And yet, they are also words of continuance and a new direction. Moses is “He Who Draws Out.” He has drawn out the will of the Lord for the people of Israel. The time for that is now coming to a close. As such, the Lord says...

**<sup>14</sup> (con't) “Behold, the days approach when you must die;**

*hen qarevu yamekha la'muth* – “Behold approach your days to die.” The meaning is obvious. The days, until Moses dies, are coming to a close. Because of this, preparations must be made for things to continue on after his death. Therefore...

**<sup>14</sup> (con't) call Joshua,**

Joshua has been Moses' assistant and second in command for the past forty years. His name means, "The Lord (Yah) is Salvation." It is he who has already been noted as Moses' successor in Numbers 27. The ongoing narrative since then has now caught up to that account.

In other words, just as Ruth belongs within the book of Judges chronologically, what occurs now belongs within the timeframe of the book of Numbers. Deuteronomy is an account that details Moses' words within the ongoing narrative. Notice how what is now said in Deuteronomy fits into what is said then –

Now the LORD said to Moses: "Go up into this Mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the children of Israel. <sup>13</sup> And when you have seen it, you also shall be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was gathered. <sup>14</sup> For in the Wilderness of Zin, during the strife of the congregation, you rebelled against My command to hallow Me at the waters before their eyes."

(These *are* the waters of Meribah, at Kadesh in the Wilderness of Zin.)

<sup>15</sup> Then Moses spoke to the LORD, saying: <sup>16</sup> "Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, <sup>17</sup> who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be like sheep which have no shepherd."

<sup>18</sup> And the LORD said to Moses: "Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom *is* the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; <sup>19</sup> set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight. <sup>20</sup> And you shall give *some* of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. <sup>21</sup> He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire before the LORD for him by the judgment of the Urim. At his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, he and all the children of Israel with him—all the congregation."

<sup>22</sup> So Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation. <sup>23</sup> And he laid his hands on him and inaugurated him, just as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.

Numbers 27:12-23

Moses doesn't go up to view the land of promise until Deuteronomy 34, and yet the Lord told him to go up and view it in Numbers 27. The same is true with the commissioning of Joshua now. The narrative is lining up with the unfolding events. It is now, at this specific time before the death of Moses, that he is to call Joshua...

<sup>14</sup> (con't) **and present yourselves in the tabernacle of meeting,**

The translation is incorrect, or at least faulty: *v'hityashevu b'ohel moed* – “and present yourselves in tent meeting.” The words here may not be referring to the tabernacle where the ark was at all. This is because it clearly says they would present themselves “in” the tent.

The tabernacle, after its ordination, was only to be accessed by the Levitical priests in the performance of their duties. Therefore, this could be a completely different tent noted in Exodus 33, where Moses would meet with the Lord and where Joshua was also allowed access –

“Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, a good distance from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the LORD would go out to the tent of meeting which was outside the camp. <sup>8</sup> And it came about, whenever Moses went out to the tent, that all the people would arise and stand, each at the entrance of his tent, and gaze after Moses until he entered the tent. <sup>9</sup> Whenever Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent; and the LORD would speak with Moses. <sup>10</sup> When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would arise and worship, each at the entrance of his tent. <sup>11</sup> Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.” Exodus 33:7-11 (NASB1995)

However, in Exodus 39, the tabernacle is described by the same words, *ohel moed* –

“Thus all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was finished. And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses; so they did.” Exodus 39:32

So, this is either the tent noted in Exodus 33, or Joshua – who is not of Levi – is given a special allowance to enter the tabernacle. Either way, it is in the “tent of meeting” that Moses and Aaron were to meet before the Lord, as He says...

<sup>14</sup> (con't) **that I may inaugurate him.”**

The word is *tsavah*. It is most often translated as “command.” Here the same meaning can be applied as long as the intent is understood. One might say, “that I may command him,” but it is with the intent of laying a charge upon him. As such...

<sup>14</sup> (con't) **So, Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tabernacle of meeting.**

Again, it says “in tent of meeting.” Thus, it is either the tent where Moses and Joshua met with the Lord as noted in Exodus 33, or it is a special allowance for Joshua to actually go into the tabernacle, which is the tent of meeting. Either way, it next says...

<sup>15</sup> **Now the LORD appeared at the tabernacle**

The words are wrong again: *v'yera Yehovah ba'ohel* – “And appeared Yehovah in the tent.” The Lord is visibly manifesting Himself in this manner in order to complete the commissioning of Joshua. The manifestation is...

<sup>15</sup> (con't) **in a pillar of cloud,**

The pillar of cloud was said to be above the tabernacle (*ha'mishkan*) throughout all of the journeys of Israel –

“For the cloud of the LORD *was* above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.”

-Numbers 40:38

But of this pillar of cloud, it next says...

<sup>15</sup> (con't) **and the pillar of cloud stood above the door of the tabernacle.**

Again, it reads *ohel*, tent, not *mishkan*, tabernacle. This is the same terminology used of the tent of meeting noted in Exodus 33:9 (already cited) that was originally outside the camp –

“Whenever Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent; and the LORD would speak with Moses.”

Therefore, either the tent and the tabernacle are being spoken of synonymously here and elsewhere (which occurs elsewhere), or it is referring to two separate edifices. If it is the same edifice, then the tabernacle, which is also the tent of meeting, would have replaced the original tent of meeting referred to in Exodus 33.



It wouldn't be good to be dogmatic about either view as the back-and-forth nature of the words in the books of Moses makes either possible. But wherever the Lord is, that is the "tent of meeting."

However, why would the pillar need to stand above the door of the tabernacle (if synonymous) when it has already been said that it was always above it during their journeys. But if the pillar moved from the tabernacle to the tent (a separate edifice), then the wording might more logically follow.

I would assume that the "tent of meeting" is also "the tabernacle," but I just don't want to present something incorrect, and then find out I was wrong someday. Thus, I am giving a more detailed analysis than may be necessary. The main sticking point is whether Joshua was given a special dispensation to enter the tabernacle or not.

No matter what, the issue at hand is the ordination of Joshua. That will come to pass, but before it does, Moses is told about the future history of his people...

**<sup>16</sup> And the LORD said to Moses: "Behold, you will rest with your fathers;**

The word "rest" is an explanation or a paraphrase. The Hebrew uses the word *shakav*. It means "to lie down" as in rest. "Behold, you will lie down with your fathers." It is a metaphorical way of speaking of death.

Some argue that this is not a valid concept to refer to a future resurrection, but I would disagree. The hope of the resurrection already existed, very clearly, at this time. Job, who was contemporary with Abraham, spoke of both –

Why then do You not pardon my transgression,  
And take away my iniquity?  
For now I will lie down in the dust, (*shakav*)  
And You will seek me diligently,  
But I *will* no longer *be*." Job 7:21

"For I know *that* my Redeemer lives,  
And He shall stand at last on the earth;  
<sup>26</sup> And after my skin is destroyed, this *I know*,  
That in my flesh I shall see God,  
<sup>27</sup> Whom I shall see for myself,  
And my eyes shall behold, and not another." Job 19:25-27

Sleep, despite being used metaphorically for death, implies that one will awaken. Paul carefully uses the word “sleep” again and again concerning the state of believers. In 1 Thessalonians, he uses both words synonymously to confirm this –

“For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.” 1 Thessalonians 4:15, 16

The words to Moses now are words of comfort and hope of what God had promised from the very fall of man. As for Israel, there is less hope for them, at least in some respects...

<sup>16 (con't)</sup> **and this people will rise and play the harlot with the gods of the foreigners of the land,**

The translation completely misses the intent of what the Lord is conveying: *v'qam ha'am hazeh v'zanah akhare elohe nekar ha'aretz* – “and will rise the people, the this, and play harlot after gods foreigner the land.”

The word *ha'am*, or “the people,” is singular, as is the word *nekar*, or foreigner. The two are being placed in union with one another. Just as an adulterous woman would unite herself with another man. The “gods” are the play toys of the illicit lover with whom Israel commits her adultery.

Israel, as a united whole, will apostatize from the way of the Lord. In turning from Him, who is their Husband by covenant, they will “play the harlot.”

The implication, even before He says it in a coming clause, is that their harlotry is to be considered adultery – a wife cheating on her Husband. The idea of Israel being a spouse to the Lord in relation to this covenant is explicitly stated by Him in Jeremiah 31 –

“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— <sup>32</sup> not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD.” Jeremiah 31:31, 32

Rather than fidelity to the Lord, their Husband, the people will prostitute themselves by worshipping and serving other gods...

<sup>16 (con't)</sup> **where they go to be among them,**

The words are still in the singular: *asher hu ba shamah b'qirbo* – “which he goes there in his midst.” The entire beauty of the picture being presented is obliterated in the translation. The Lord is very clearly presenting Himself as an offended spouse whose wife is nothing but a cheap harlot.

It calls to mind the book of Hosea many hundreds of years later where the prophet is used to clearly present this truth. But the Lord knows the inclination of the people and thus continues...

<sup>16 (con't)</sup> **and they will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them.**

It is all in the singular: *v'azavani v'hepher eth beriti asher karati ito* – “and he will forsake Me and he will break My covenant which I have made with him.”

Israel the people, despite the masculine, is the spouse of the Lord by covenant. He will break his part of the bargain. One can see the personal nature of the offense as he says, “forsake Me” and “My covenant.” The Lord is the offended party; Israel is the unfaithful spouse.

The next verse is, again, very poorly translated. As such, the precision of the words of the Lord to Moses is lost. It switches from the singular to the plural, and then it goes back to the singular. This is as the NKJV renders it (following the KJV) –

“Then My anger shall be aroused against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them, and they shall be devoured. And many evils and troubles shall befall them, so that they will say in that day, ‘Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?’”

However, the verse more closely reads: “And My anger shall be aroused against him in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and he shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall him, and he will say in that day, ‘Is it not because that my God is not in my midst – these evils have found me?’”

With this understanding, we can now evaluate the verse...

**17 Then My anger shall be aroused against them in that day,**

The Lord, in advance of what is absolutely sure to come, says: *v'kharah api bo ba'yom ha'hu* – “And shall burn my nostril in him (singular) in the day the that.” It is as flames shoot out of His nostril at his wayward spouse. “I caught you with another!” The enraged husband has borne the grief of the offense. As such...

**17 (con't) and I will forsake them,**

In the last verse, it said, *v'azavani* – “and he will forsake Me.” Now, it says, *v'azavtim* – “and I will forsake them.” Notice how carefully the words are chosen. The Lord has promised to never forsake Israel. But He can and will forsake the people who comprise Israel, even while not forsaking the nation itself.

The care and precision of the words are given to show us the Lord's complete and wholehearted faithfulness to the covenant. He forsakes the individual people who forsake Him, but not the group of people who are His.

**17 (con't) and I will hide My face from them,**

*v'histarti panay me'hem* – “and I will hide My face from them.” One can get the sense of a king not allowing his disobedient subjects to come into His presence. Again, it is unthinkable that the Lord would hide His face from those who were faithful to Him, thus it is unthinkable that He would hide his face from the entire nation itself.

In other words, when Jesus came, there are those who accepted Him and there are those who rejected Him. The nation rejected Him, but even to this day, there has always been a remnant who have come to Him through Christ (Romans 11:5).

If He were to hide His face from the nation as a whole, it would mean that there would be none saved from the nation. But if He hides His face (meaning His favor) from the individuals of the nation, it still leaves room for His favor to extend to any who will turn to Him.

The same is true with the tribulation period. God could say, “I will hide Myself from mankind.” That would mean that none could be saved. Instead, He will hide His face from men, but not all of mankind. Those who turn to Him will receive His salvation.

Wonderful truths can be discerned right from verses such as this in Deuteronomy 31. For now, the Lord continues...

17 (con't) **and they shall be devoured.**

*v'hayah l'ekol* – “and he shall be for eating.” The cutting of a covenant carries with it the idea of a meal. Sometimes, this is made explicit. For example, when Jacob made a covenant with Laban, they had a meal between them.

Likewise, at the cutting of the covenant at Sinai, the leaders of Israel came up the mountain and ate and drank in the presence of the Lord. In the previous verse, it said that Israel would break the covenant.

The meal between the two was disgraced because of Israel's serving other gods, implying having meals in their presence through fellowship offerings. Because of its ways, Israel would instead become a nation suited for consumption by others for their unfaithfulness to the Lord. This thought is expressed concerning an adulterous wife in the Proverbs –

“This *is* the way of an adulterous woman:  
She eats and wipes her mouth,  
And says, “I have done no wickedness.” Proverbs 30:20

In this state, the Lord says...

17 (con't) **And many evils and troubles shall befall them,**

*u-metsauhu raoth raboth v'tsaroth* – “and shall find him evils many, and distresses.” These have already been carefully explained in Chapter 28. The curses that will come upon Israel will be great, severe, consuming, and prolonged. All this will come upon them...

17 (con't) **so that they will say in that day,**

*v'amar ba'yom ha'hu* – “and he will say in the day the that.” The nation – its people – in its synagogues, in its dispersion, in its continued state of being hated by all around them – in that day the nation will say...

17 (con't) **'Have not these evils come upon us because our God *is* not among us?'**

Whatever the context for the nation at any given time and in any given place is, it – as a united cry – will acknowledge its rejection, saying, “Is it not because that my God is not in my midst – these evils have found me?””

It doesn’t matter who among the people says it, how many times it is said, where it is said, and so on. It is a cry which unites the entire nation as a whole – “I am Israel, and God is not with me. Instead, these evils are now my lot.”

Charles Ellicott, who lived in the 1800s noted of these words, that they are “A confession made freely by them at this present day.” Israel forsook its God, and God forsook them, even if He has not forsaken it. And the Lord continues...

### **<sup>18</sup> And I will surely hide My face in that day**

The words bear a strong emphasis: *v’anokhi haster astir panay ba’yom ha’hu* – “and I, hiding, will hide My face in the day the that.” The favorable countenance of the Lord will not rest upon Israel.

They will continue down their evil path, knowing that the Lord is not among them, and yet they will not demonstrate the intelligence of seeking out why. But the answer is perfectly discernible. It is...

**<sup>18</sup> (con’t) because of all the evil which they have done, in that they have turned to other gods.**

There is a pun in the words, and they are in the singular: *al kal ha’raah asher asah ki panah el elohim akherim* – “above all the evil which he has done for he has turned unto gods other.” The word “face” used in the previous clause is derived from the word “turned” in this clause.

In other words, the hiding of the face of the Lord is a direct consequence of Israel having turned its face away from the Lord and toward other gods. “I will not reveal Myself to them while they are looking to other gods for revelation.”

At this time, there are innumerable gods in Israel. But as a nation, they generally would claim they are the people of the Lord. However, the Lord revealed Himself to them in the face of Christ. Because they rejected Him, one could ask, “Is there then a difference in the Lord (Yehovah) and the Lord (Jesus) for them to still claim to be the people of the Lord?”

The answer is, “No.” They are one and the same. But one might then ask, “In rejecting Christ, what does it mean to them when they say they are the people of the Lord? If they are following the Lord (Yehovah) and Jesus is Yehovah, then they are following the same Lord!”

It is a false comparison. Following the Lord doesn’t simply mean following a name. It means being obedient to that name in the manner in which He expects.

They are not following the Lord. They have rejected Christ who is the Lord, and they have attempted to pursue God through their own righteousness, not His. Therefore, they are not following the Lord at all. And, thus, they are not now the Lord’s people (Romans 9:26).

This is the error in thinking of dual covenant theology, such as that proposed by the Roman Catholic Church and John Hagee. They say that the Jews are following the Lord, and therefore they can be saved by adherence to the law which the Lord gave. This is incorrect.

It is also the error of the Hebrew Roots moment, the Seventh Day Adventists, and others who claim they are following the Lord without trusting in the Lord alone. No person can be saved by adherence to the law. It can only come by trusting in His fulfillment of it, because He embodies the law.

Israel is trusting in the god of self before the Lord. Not in the Lord. As such, the face of the Lord is hidden from them. It is a passive hiding; a self-inflicted wound –

“But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the *veil* is taken away in Christ. <sup>15</sup> But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. <sup>16</sup> Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.”

-2 Corinthians 3:14-16

With this understood, the Lord will next give explicit and specific instructions for Moses...

*A song to bring to remembrance My word  
So that when it comes to pass, you know I knew  
You will be able to consider all that you have heard  
And if you are wise, you will also know what to do*

*But you are a nation without understanding  
And I know the inclination of your heart  
You are like a spoiled child, ever demanding  
That I bless you, while you tear us apart*

*This song will testify against you  
It will stand as a witness when your ears have heard  
You will know that despite your wickedness, I have remained true  
And that I have always been faithful to My word*

## **II. This Song Will Testify (verses 19-21)**

**<sup>19</sup> “Now therefore, write down this song for yourselves,**

The verb is plural in this clause. The instructions are for both Moses and Joshua to write down the song “to yourselves” (plural). The song itself is introduced in the last verse of this chapter, and it comprises the majority of the next chapter.

The meaning is that it is for Moses to convey, but it is also for Joshua, who is there with Moses, to write. As it is contained within Deuteronomy, then it was something that was to be conveyed to the people by the leader at any appropriate time in their history...

**<sup>19 (con’t)</sup> and teach it to the children of Israel;**

The word so frequently used in Deuteronomy, *lamad*, is used by the Lord here. It signifies to goad as if prodding an animal along, and thus it means “to teach.” Being in the form of a song, it would be a memory tool for the people.

The verb is singular here. Moses is to teach it to the people, and that is what will be seen when it is presented. Nothing is said of music to accompany it, and when it is presented, it says that Moses will speak the words of the song. Along with teaching it to them, the Lord next says to...

**<sup>19 (con’t)</sup> put it in their mouths,**

Moses (the verb is again singular) is not only to read it to them, but to have them repeat it back to them until they have it “in their mouths,” meaning that it is committed to memory and that it can be called back from their mouths at any time.



This is also what Paul later teaches those at Colossae, and thus to us who also have received his words –

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” Colossians 3:16

This song that Moses instructs is to have a set and enduring purpose...

**19 (con't) that this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel.**

*l'maan tihyeh li ha'sirah hazot l'ed bivne Yisrael* – “to end purpose may be to Me the song, the this, to witness in sons Israel.” There is a set reason that the Lord is giving Israel the words of this song. It is to stand as a permanently recorded witness, in advance of their entry into the promise, concerning what is conveyed in it.

Israel can never say that what happened to them was arbitrary, unjustified, without warning, and without a full description of what they would face. There is no excuse for them as a people or as people.

Even if they are unaware of the words, that is a fault of the people as well. They were told to know it and have it in their mouths. It will now be compiled and delivered to them for the time...

**20 When I have brought them to the land flowing with milk and honey, of which I swore to their fathers,**

The word translated as “land” here signifies the ground. It is a different word than will be seen in the next verse. Also, the words are in the singular – “When I have brought him unto the ground of which I swore to his fathers, flowing with milk and honey.”

Israel the nation, is being brought into the spot of ground that was sworn to the fathers to be given to the people, a land flowing with milk and honey.

This is the sixth and last time that this phrase is mentioned in Deuteronomy. It is more than any other book in the Bible. Every time it is mentioned, a note concerning the fathers is found in the immediate context. It is a good land and one that comes by promise.

As this is the last time the term “milk and honey” is used in this book, and because it is such a commonly used term in Scripture, it would be good to review its meaning once again.

A land flowing with milk and honey implies richness and fertility. Milk comes from cows and so it means abundant pasture lands. Honey comes from bees which pollinate flowers and so it implies all sorts of fruit trees, herbs, and flowers.

And more, for Israel, the term “a land flowing with milk and honey” will also possess a spiritual connotation. For them, it doesn’t just speak of the physical abundance but also of spiritual abundance because of the Lord, and because they are the Lord’s people, through whom the word of God comes.

The word of God is said to be sweeter than honey. It is also equated with milk which nourishes. Thus, this is a reference to that as well. The land would literally flow with milk and honey for sustaining Israel’s physical lives. It would also flow with milk and honey for sustaining their spiritual lives.

All of this was being given to them. They have done nothing to deserve it, but it is simply an act of grace based upon a promise to their fathers. The Lord promised, He has fulfilled, and He will deliver. At some point in the future after it has been obtained...

**<sup>20 (con’t)</sup> and they have eaten and filled themselves and grown fat,**

Again, the words are in the singular, “and he has eaten, and filled himself, and he has grown fat.” Israel is being depicted as a single entity, like a big plump cow, benefitting from his plot of ground. He eats and grows into one who is entirely sated. But in this state of obesity and even overindulgence (think of our own nation today...)

**<sup>20 (con’t)</sup> then they will turn to other gods and serve them; and they will provoke Me and break My covenant.**

The pronouns change in the middle of the clause – “and he will turn to other gods, and they will serve them, and they will spurn Me and he will break My covenant.” The changes, as before, are precise and exceptionally clear. *Israel* will turn to other gods. As such, *the people* will serve those gods and *the people* will spurn the Lord, and *Israel* will break the covenant.

The covenant is with the nation of Israel. If someone serves other gods and spurns the Lord, the nation could judge and execute him. The covenant is not broken, except by that person. However, if the nation turns from the Lord and the people serve other gods, the only one left to punish the people – and thus the nation – is the Lord.

Every single word is masterfully issued forth so that we can clearly see what is going on. This same general type of thought is found in the seven letters to the seven churches. The churches are addressed as a whole, but at times individuals are clearly singled out.

Without a proper consideration of these things (which must come from a proper translation of them) it isn't possible to tell exactly what is going on. But how wonderful it is to see the precision of what is conveyed here to Moses and Joshua by the Lord.

For now, the Lord notes that the covenant is broken by the nation. As such...

**<sup>21</sup> Then it shall be, when many evils and troubles have come upon them, that this song will testify against them as a witness;**

Everything here has spoken of Israel as an individual – “And it shall be when have come upon him evils many and troubles, that will testify this song to him to witness.”

It is Israel upon whom the evils and troubles will alight. But when the nation does, it cannot say that they were unaware of why. The purpose of the song was to be as a witness held in the national memory.

The idea being conveyed is the supernatural preservation of the word. If it were up to man, it may be lost, but the Lord ensured that there would always be a suitable and reliable copy of it available. This is clearly seen in the next words...

**<sup>21 (con't)</sup> for it will not be forgotten in the mouths of their descendants,**

Again, the pronouns are tragically wrong – “for no it will be forgotten from his mouth, his seed.” Individuals may have no idea that the words even existed. But they would never be missing from the mouth of Israel, meaning the availability to have them issue forth, even throughout all of its generations (his seed).

Because it is in the singular, it is a way of implicitly saying that the word will ALWAYS be available to Israel.

And this has borne out to be true through their entire history. At one point, it was locked away in the temple which had been completely shut up.

So far were the people away from the Lord that they didn't even know the word existed. But it did. It was preserved for the nation. When it was found, it was a witness to it of its guilt, exactly as the Lord promises now in Deuteronomy.

Then Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. <sup>9</sup> So Shaphan the scribe went to the king, bringing the king word, saying, "Your servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of those who do the work, who oversee the house of the LORD." <sup>10</sup> Then Shaphan the scribe showed the king, saying, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king.

<sup>11</sup> Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, that he tore his clothes. <sup>12</sup> Then the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Achbor the son of Michaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king, saying, <sup>13</sup> "Go, inquire of the LORD for me, for the people and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found; for great *is* the wrath of the LORD that is aroused against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us." 2 Kings 22:8-13

The witness stood, and the words of this song – along with the other words of the Book – testified against Israel. It had to be this way. The Lord already understood the nation's proclivities...

**\*21 (fin) for I know the inclination of their behavior today, even before I have brought them to the land of which I swore *to give them.*"**

And again, the pronouns must be clarified – "for I know the inclination which he does today in advance I have brought him unto the land which I swore."

Israel had been a disobedient son from the moment he was called out of Egypt. The people had moaned all the way to Sinai, they rebelled there at the sacred mountain. They moaned and complained on the way to the land of promise. They rebelled against the Lord at its borders, they had been disobedient and moaning throughout all the years of exile in the wilderness.

This was his inclination all along. How much more could this be expected when the people were interspersed throughout the land, filling themselves with food, easily able to hide away their wicked deeds, disobedience, adulteries, and the like.

The Lord knew, and He set forth this song to be a summary of the nation's existence and a witness to testify to His faithfulness in their continuance before Him despite their faithlessness toward Him.

This is the marvel of God's covenant keeping. When He speaks, it is an eternal decree. He will never fail to keep His part of a covenant that He enters into. The tragedy for us is that we fail to accept that this is true.

There are those who fail to acknowledge it towards Israel, saying the Lord is through with them or the Lord has replaced them. And there are those who fail to acknowledge it towards saved believers, saying that the Lord may just renege on His part of the deal when He saves us and seals us with a guarantee concerning that salvation.

The more we see this in the Old Testament, the more astonishing it is to consider. It shows the immense failure of scholars, pastors, preachers, and teachers of the church to simply pick up their Bibles, read them, and accept what is stated at face value.

However, if the translation is incorrect, then incorrect ideas will be held in the mind of those who read them. Thus, it is a failure on the part of translators as well.

It is a tragedy, and it is one that is then taught into the minds of congregants, destroying their doctrine, and then weakening their faith in the Lord and their confidence in His word. Let us look to the history, and continued existence, of this disobedient nation. And then, let us exalt the faithfulness of God toward them.

At the same time, let this lesson of Israel give us confidence that when we stumble before the Lord, He is there with us, keeping us from falling altogether. We can have every confidence that His salvation is full, final, and forever. Thank God for His faithfulness to us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Closing Verse:** *"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it." 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24*

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 31:22-30 *It will testify against Israel. Yes, it is true...* (A Witness Against You) (92<sup>nd</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **A Witness for Me Against the Children of Israel**

Then the LORD said to Moses

“Behold, the days approach when you must die  
Call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of meeting  
That I may inaugurate him. To this, you must now comply

So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves  
In the tabernacle of meeting, this duty they did tackle  
Now the LORD appeared at the tabernacle in a pillar of cloud  
And the pillar of cloud stood above the door of the tabernacle

And the LORD said to Moses: “Behold, you will rest  
-----with your fathers  
And this people will rise and play the harlot with the gods  
-----of the foreigners of the land  
Where they go to be among them, and they will forsake Me  
And break My covenant which I have made with them  
-----rebellng against My hand

Then My anger shall be aroused against them in that day  
And I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them  
-----yes, hide it away  
And they shall be devoured  
And many evils and troubles shall befall them  
-----so that they will say in that day...

‘Have not these evils come upon us because our God  
-----is not among us?  
And I will surely hide My face in that day  
Because of all the evil which they have done

In that they have turned to other gods; the harlot they will play

“Now therefore, write down this song for yourselves  
And teach it to the children of Israel, so to you I tell  
Put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me  
Against the children of Israel

When I have brought them to the land flowing  
-----with milk and honey  
Of which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten  
-----and filled themselves and grown fat  
Then they will turn to other gods and serve them  
And they will provoke Me and break My covenant, just like that

Then it shall be, when many evils and troubles  
-----have come upon them  
That this song will testify against them as a witness, so I convey  
For it will not be forgotten in the mouths of their descendants  
For I know the inclination of their behavior today

Even before I have brought them to the land  
Of which I swore to give them, their ways I fully understand

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## **Deuteronomy 31:22-30 (A Witness Against You)**

In the passage today, as with last week, it is noted that the song to be presented will be a witness for the Lord against the people. The reason this is so, is because the words testify to what will come upon the people if they don't pay heed.

As long as the words are available, and as long as the people exist, the words will be a witness. Well, Israel still exists, and the words of Deuteronomy also still exist. And so, the witness continues.

This is not unlike the witness given to our own nation in the writings of our founding fathers. The number of quotes of warning from those who foresaw the need to be vigilant goes on and on. As long as the words continue to exist (unless they are utterly eradicated by the commies on the left – which is a chief goal of theirs), and as long as the nation exists, they stand as a witness to us –

“I predict future happiness for Americans, if they can prevent the government from wasting the labors of the people under the pretense of taking care of them.” Jefferson

Jefferson gave his warning. It stands as a witness to his wisdom and our increasing folly.

“And of what kind are the men that will strive for this profitable preeminence, through all the bustle of cabal, the heat of contention, the infinite mutual abuse of parties, tearing to pieces the best of characters? It will not be the wise and moderate, the lovers of peace and good order, the men fittest for the trust. It will be the bold and the violent, the men of strong passions and indefatigable activity in their selfish pursuits. These will thrust themselves into your government and be your rulers.” Franklin

Benjamin Franklin saw the inevitable outcome of the tyrannical desires of those who hate freedom for the masses. The recent medical manipulation of the masses has moved these forces into hyperdrive. It is doubtful that even Franklin would have been able to imagine this avenue having been employed as it has.

We have established witnesses that testify to the people of what was anticipated when vigilance is replaced with apathy. Israel does too. Oddly enough, many of Israel, meaning the people, live in this nation today.



And of them, many are in the halls of government striving for ever greater promotion of wickedness. The very attitude of the people that both Moses and our founding fathers warned against is clearly seen in them.

It is as if they rejected the Lord through their rejection of Moses, and now they are openly embracing the devil through their movement of this nation towards an alignment with the coming antichrist. The same spirit moves within them now that moved them away from their Savior when He presented Himself to them.

**Text Verse:** *“I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. <sup>44</sup> How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God? <sup>45</sup> Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. <sup>46</sup> For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. <sup>47</sup> But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”*

*-John 5:43-47*

“If Congress can employ money indefinitely, for the general welfare, and are the sole and supreme judges of the general welfare, they may take the care of religion into their own hands; they may appoint teachers in every state, county, and parish, and pay them out of the public treasury; they may take into their own hands the education of children, the establishing in like manner schools throughout the union; they may assume the provision of the poor.... Were the power of Congress to be established in the latitude contended for, it would subvert the very foundations, and transmute the very nature of the limited government established by the people of America.” Madison

Madison’s words stand as a witness as well. Exactly what he spoke of concerning the welfare state, the religion of the state, the taking over of the school, and the subversion of the government are all being cunningly worked out by the left in our nation. We can no longer say, “the radical left,” because the left has completely converted to what that once meant.

They are taking the foundational underpinnings of our nation, and they are tearing them apart, one statue, one religious attack, one police department at a time. The work of their own hands, and not the providence of God who rules, has become the standard. And their works speak only of wickedness and control.

Israel failed to heed Moses, so that when Christ came, they nailed Him to a tree. Our nation is failing to heed its Christian founders, and we are crucifying our religious rights – and thus all of our other rights - openly and publicly.

Man apart from Christ cannot properly rule with freedom. And a nation which has departed from the way of the Lord is doomed to destruction. In the end, we know Israel will finally learn its lesson. As for this nation, that is not as certain. Only time will tell. But for the short term, we can see where things are going. And it isn't pretty.

But enough about this nation. We have a better hope in Christ. We must do what we can while we are here, but no matter what the outcome for this land will be, for those who are the called of the Lord, a far fairer land lies ahead. For now, we have a sermon to hear. It is one based on God's Superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. And I Will Be with You (verses 22 & 23)**

In the previous passage from last week, the Lord told Moses that he was to rest with his fathers. After that, He detailed to Moses how the people would rise up and play the harlot, forsaking the Lord and breaking His covenant. In this, the Lord told him that many evils would fall upon the people and that He would hide his face from them because of their actions.

With that noted, he then said these words to Moses to close us out –

“Now therefore, write down this song for yourselves, and teach it to the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel. <sup>20</sup> When I have brought them to the land flowing with milk and honey, of which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten and filled themselves and grown fat, then they will turn to other gods and serve them; and they will provoke Me and break My covenant. <sup>21</sup> Then it shall be, when many evils and troubles have come upon them, that this song will testify against them as a witness; for it will not be forgotten in the mouths of their descendants, for I know the inclination of their behavior today, even before I have brought them to the land of which I swore *to give them.*” Deuteronomy 31:19-21

With that context remembered, the narrative now continues, saying...

**<sup>22</sup> Therefore Moses wrote this song the same day,**

This is exactly in accord with what the Lord had just said, “Now therefore, write down this song for yourselves.” The words now bear an emphasis: *v’yiktoṿ Moshe eth ha’shirah ha’zot ba’yom ha’hu* – “And wrote Moses the song the this in the day the it.”

The command was given, and the record of Moses’ immediate obedience is recorded. In verse 19, the command was in the plural, but here it is Moses who actually pens the words that are recorded.

It can be inferred from the Lord’s words that the song to be recorded comes directly from Him through divine inspiration, or even through audible oral pronouncement, probably the latter. That this is likely was seen in Numbers 7 –

“Now when Moses went into the tabernacle of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice of One speaking to him from above the mercy seat that *was* on the ark of the Testimony, from between the two cherubim; thus He spoke to him.” Numbers 7:89

As such, the song – like all of Scripture – contains the very word of God, uttered forth by Him. Of the song that Moses records, Jamieson-Fausset-Brown gives a rather awkward analysis –

“National songs take deep hold of the memories and have a powerful influence in stirring the deepest feelings of a people. In accordance with this principle in human nature, a song was ordered to be composed by Moses, doubtless under divine inspiration, which was to be learnt by the Israelites themselves and to be taught to their children in every age, embodying the substance of the preceding addresses, and of a strain well suited to inspire the popular mind with a strong sense of God's favor to their nation.” Jamieson-Fausset-Brown

This may ultimately be true, because the Lord had covenanted with Israel to never abandon them, but it hardly reflects the words that the Lord has just said to Moses –

“...then they will turn to other gods and serve them; and they will provoke Me and break My covenant. <sup>21</sup> Then it shall be, when many evils and troubles have come upon them, that this song will testify against them as a witness.”

-Deuteronomy 31:20, 21

The song, rather than being something to “inspire the popular mind with a strong sense of God’s favor,” is rather a song:

- \* To witness to the Lord’s unchanging character
- \* Of His faithfulness to the nation in providing everything He said He would
- \* Of their apostasy against Him
- \* Of the consequences of that apostasy
- \* Of His clear calling of others outside of Israel to Himself as a means of rebuking them for their actions because of their ridiculous stupidity in not perceiving exactly what He was doing – because He had told them in advance of exactly what He was doing
- \* Of His returning His favor to them, not because they deserved it, but because of His unchanging character that set forth His plans and purposes in the first place.

These are some of the main themes that can be deduced by a cursory reading of the song recorded in Chapter 32. The only “strong sense of God’s favor” to be found is the overarching promise to not utterly destroy them.

If that was the only thing Israel was looking forward to concerning God’s favor, it would demonstrate an even duller sense in the collective mind than the song actually portrays of them, which is a hugely dull sense, as the Lord Himself says –

“For they *are* a nation void of counsel,  
Nor *is there any* understanding in them.” Deuteronomy 32:28

Despite these things, the song was recorded, it has been carefully maintained, and it clearly and accurately details the incredible future history of the nation. As such, it isn’t just a national song to inspire, like the words of their national song, *Ha’tikvah*, sung by Israel today.

Rather, it is a prophetic look into the future of the nation, which is at best bleak for much of its history, the calling of others by the Lord as a means of provoking them, and of the ultimate return to a state of blessing upon them while continuing to bless those He has called apart from them.

Paul will rely on portions of this song in His writings to convey what is going on in God’s redemptive workings between Israel and the Gentiles. With these things in mind concerning the song, Moses obediently wrote it down...

22 (con't) **and taught it to the children of Israel.**

*v'lamedah eth bene Israel* – “and he taught sons Israel.” Again, this is exactly in accord with verse 19, “and teach it to the children of Israel; put it in their mouths.” Just as instructed, so Moses followed through with what was said. This is now the seventeenth and last time that the word *lamad*, is used in Deuteronomy.

It was introduced into Scripture in Deuteronomy 4:1, and it will continue to be seen, but it has been a common note concerning the contents of the law in this book. It properly signifies “to goad,” and thus – by implication – “to teach.” The rod is given as an incentive to learn at times. This is the idea now.

Moses is prodding them to learn this song so that it would be thoroughly instilled in them, and that they would then pass its words on to others after them. With this task complete, the Lord now personally ensures that the continuance of leadership in the nation will not be in question...

**23 Then He inaugurated Joshua the son of Nun,**

*v'tsav eth Yehoshua bin nun* – “And commanded Joshua son Nun.” This may or may not be the same as the inauguration of Joshua recorded at the time Moses laid his hands upon him before Eleazar the priest and all the congregation. That was recorded in Numbers 27 –

“So Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation. <sup>23</sup> And he laid his hands on him and inaugurated him, just as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.”

-Numbers 27:22, 23

The same word, *tsav*, is used both there and here. It means to command, commission, give charge, and so on. As for the command, the text makes it unclear who is actually speaking. One would initially think it was Moses based on the connection to the previous verse. And yet, in the next clause, it will be in the first person and appear to be the Lord –

“And Moses wrote this song in that *same* day, and he taught *it to the* children of Israel. <sup>23</sup> And he (or He) commanded Joshua, son of Nun, and said, ‘Be strong and be strengthened; for you shall bring *the* children of Israel into the land which I swore to them, and I will be with you’” (CG).

This leaves several possibilities:

It is Moses speaking on behalf of the Lord (something seen elsewhere).

It is Moses speaking in the first clause, and then the Lord picks up the second.

The subject has changed from the previous verse from Moses to the Lord.

No matter which, the Lord is the understood subject of at least the final clause. For now, whether Moses or the Lord...

<sup>23</sup> (con't) **and said, “Be strong and of good courage;**

It is the exact same words spoken by Moses to Joshua in verse 31:7 – *v’yomer khazaq v’emats* – “and said, ‘be strong and be strengthened.’” It is also what Moses said to the people in verse 31:6. However, for Joshua now, there is a difference in the next words...

<sup>23</sup> (con't) **for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land of which I swore to them,**

In 31:7, Moses said that Joshua must go with the people. Now, the Lord (either directly or through Moses) says, that Joshua would bring the people in. Joshua is both one of the people and he is the leader of them as well. Such is true with Christ. He was both of Israel, and He is the Leader who will bring them into the inheritance.

The Lord swore to Israel that He would bring them in, and He will do exactly as He swore, using Joshua as His instrument to make it come about. Likewise, the promised rest for Israel will come to them, and Jesus is the instrument by which that will come to pass. The Lord has spoken, and He will perform, as He next notes...

<sup>23</sup> (con't) **and I will be with you.”**

The “you” is singular. He is speaking to Joshua, through whom the action will be performed. Notice the three times this thought is presented in the chapter.

Taken together with the highly unusual structure of verse 31:3 that was carefully evaluated then, one cannot help but get a sense of the 1) absolute inspiration of Scripture, represented by Moses, and 2) the deity of Christ which is being hinted at with the words of Moses and the Lord concerning the Lord and Joshua –

v3 – Moses to the people: “The LORD your God Himself crosses over before you; Joshua himself crosses over before you.”

v6 - Moses to the people: “Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.”

v7, 8 - Moses to Joshua: “Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it. <sup>8</sup> And the LORD, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed.”

v23 - Moses/the Lord to Joshua: “Then He inaugurated Joshua the son of Nun, and said, ‘Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land of which I swore to them, and I will be with you.’”

The law (Moses – the word of God) instructs the people concerning who Jesus is in relation to the Lord. The law (Moses) instructs Christ Jesus concerning His charge and of the Lord’s presence with Him. The law (Moses)/the Lord instructs Christ Jesus that the Lord is with Him.

Whether one accepts this interpretation or not, it is exactly what is revealed in Scripture concerning the nature of what actually occurs concerning the word of God, the Lord, and Christ Jesus when evaluated from a Christian perspective.

The word of God reflects who the Lord is. Christ is the embodiment of the Word given forth by the Lord, and the word testifies to who Christ is and what He would do because He is the Lord – He is the Word. The commissioning of Joshua is both by Moses and the Lord, and the commission of Christ is both by the Word and the Lord.

The Law of Moses, the word of the Lord presented to Israel for their instruction, is carefully presenting what lies ahead in typology concerning the coming of Messiah. With that incredible thought, the words of revelation received in the tent of meeting come to a close.

But more, the words that Moses recorded have now come to an end as well. Though the Song of Moses, the blessing of the tribes, and the record of Moses’ final time overlooking the land – along with his death and burial – is yet ahead, it has been compiled by this point in the chronology by him, or some of it was recorded by someone else. This is to be understood from the next words of the narrative...

*Be strong and also be of good courage  
For you shall bring the people in*

*Let not what lies ahead discourage  
For You shall prevail; in You shall be found no sin*

*They shall enter the land of promise that to them I swore  
And I will be with You; it shall come about  
Those with faith will enter and receive so much more  
Because they believed My word; in them there was no doubt*

*Trust in Me, My people, and trust in My Son  
We will go with you, and we shall bring you in  
By faith in what we will do, the battle is won  
At the moment you believe, your new life will begin*

*And it comes with a guarantee concerning what was done  
The seal of the Spirit, purchased for You by My Son*

## **II. Call Heaven and Earth to Witness (verses 24-30)**

**<sup>24</sup> So it was, when Moses had completed writing the words of this law in a book, when they were finished,**

It is possible this was written by Moses, but it is not so much instruction as a historical account of what next takes place. Or, it could have been written later. Being dogmatic about who wrote the words here and in Chapter 34 is unnecessary.

It is true that Moses could have been inspired to write the account of his death and burial, which is what I think is correct, but most scholars would dispute that thought. No matter what, the verse now – rather than “in a book” – says, *al sepher ad tumam* – “upon document until completed.”

This means the words of the entire Pentateuch, from Genesis to Deuteronomy, had been written upon a single scroll. This is how it is maintained to this day by Jews. It is the single, united, and complete Law of Moses. As such, again, it is possible that even the words now and the words of Chapter 34 were written by him as inspired by the Lord. Once written out, it next says...

**<sup>25</sup> that Moses commanded the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying:**



“The Levites,” here is a shortened form of “the priests, the sons of Levi.” It is the priests alone who could bear the ark of the covenant. In verse 31:9, it said –

“So Moses wrote this law and delivered it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel.”

That was probably referring to a reading forth of the law to these people. This is now the actual presentation of the scroll of the law to the priests for its safeguarding henceforth, as next noted...

**<sup>26</sup> “Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there as a witness against you;**

The words now and in the coming verse are carefully chosen to convey very precise meaning. The verb “put” is plural – “you (priests) put it.” It then says, “the Lord your (plural) God.” But it then ends with “against you (singular).” As such, it reads –

“Take this Book of the Law and (you, priests) put it beside *the ark of the covenant of Yehovah your (all) God*, and it shall be there in you (singular) to witness.”

He is addressing the priests, but he then lumps them in as a part of the nation to whom they belong. Yehovah is their God, and the law which has come from Him through Moses will be given as a witness against the nation.

Thus, the priests have a solemn charge laid upon them to be stewards of this law, ensuring that the people understand their responsibility toward the Lord, and their culpability when they fail to measure up according to His standard. Because they are putting the law up, and because the final chapters are a part of the law, I personally feel that even those chapters were received by Moses.

**<sup>27</sup> for I know your rebellion and your stiff neck.**

There is a stress here: *ki anokhi yadati* – “For I, I know.” Further, the words are singular – “your (Israel) rebelliousness and your (Israel) neck, the stiff.” Moses personally is aware of the propensity of the nation. He had to endure it, and he was absolutely certain that it was congenital. As such, he asks, or more likely proclaims...

**<sup>27 (con’t)</sup> If today, while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD, then how much more after my death?**

There is an adamant nature to his words, “Behold! In my continuance alive with you (all) this day, rebellious you (all) have been with Yehovah, and also for after my death!”

He not only notes that the nation is rebellious and stiff-necked, but everyone has been and will continue to be rebellious against the Lord after he is gone. The proclivities of Israel are carefully noted by him, and they will be magnified in the people after he has left them to their own devices.

It is not unlike Adam in the garden. Once the Lord was out of sight, he became unfaithful to the command he had been given. Likewise, once Israel’s lawgiver was out of sight, the people would become faithfully unfaithful, just like their first father.

Moses was sure to let them know this in advance. Thus, his words continue as a witness – in the recorded witness – which is the law that bears his name. As such, he now makes a special call...

**28 Gather to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers,**

The verb is plural and an imperative – “You (all) gather to me...!” He is calling forth for the priests to assemble the elders and the officers, meaning the scribes of the people, to be brought before him. This was so...

**28 (con’t) that I may speak these words in their hearing**

The Hebrew literally reads “in their ears.” Moses was to personally convey to these leaders the words of the song directed by the Lord. Like verse 22, this follows directly after the command of the Lord in verse 19. Again, there He said –

“Now therefore, write down this song for yourselves, and teach it to the children of Israel; put it in their mouths.”

The song cannot be put in their mouths unless it is first spoken into their ears. Thus, Moses will convey the words to them, and from there, they will be conveyed to all the people. And as in verse 19, the words continue to run parallel in the next clause...

**28 (con’t) and call heaven and earth to witness against them.**

*v’aidah bam eth ha’sh’mayim v’eth ha’arets* – “and call to witness in them the heavens and the earth.” In the continuation of verse 19, it said, “that this song may be a witness

for Me against the children of Israel.” The song will be a witness, but the song itself calls forth witnesses, beginning with these words –

“Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak;  
And hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.” Deuteronomy 32:1

In calling for the heavens and the earth to witness, Moses is not calling for judgment, but for witnesses that will testify to the just nature of any coming judgment and punishment. In this is a reference back to the first sentence of the Bible, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

The heavens and the earth themselves are being likened to the surety of the covenant, of which the song is a prophetic anticipation of how Israel will conduct itself before the Lord in relation to the covenant.

In other words, when Moses calls the heavens and the earth to witness against Israel, it is not speaking of calling those who dwell in the heavens and those who dwell on the earth to be witnesses. Rather, it is saying that even the heavens and earth *are* the witnesses.

As evident as these are to remind us of the existence of God, so shall it be the same when judgment comes. Thus, Israel should then rightfully say, “As sure as I am standing on the ground, and as surely as the heavens are above my head – both created by God – so is this punishment deserved.”

The inanimate heavens and earth metaphorically speak out the obvious reality of what has occurred when Israel fails and is punished. Just as the Lord is the Creator and Sustainer of the heavens and the earth, He is the Initiator and Monitor of the covenant.

As such, He is also the offended party if (meaning when) Israel does not measure up to their side of the agreement. One thing is for sure, if the Lord did not uphold His side of the covenant, the whining of the people against Him would never end. But He did and He continues to do so.

On the other hand, Israel never measured up to it, and Moses has told them that he is certain they never will. Thus, the song is a witness against them, and the heavens and the earth that have been called forth to hear are sure witnesses against them as well.

All of creation will behold the steadfastness of the Lord and the unceasing failure of the nation and its people. And this is not without a greater purpose.

In the never-ceasing failure of the people – through their rebellion, harlotries, and rejection of the Lord – and through the unswerving faithfulness of the Lord in His keeping them as a people despite their failings, His very nature as the covenant-keeping God is revealed.

For the most part, this is either ignored (think of replacement theology), overlooked (think of replacement theology), or misunderstood (think of replacement theology), by the people of the world.

But if someone truly wants an example of the unlimited grace and mercy of the Lord, and of His covenant-keeping nature despite all else, all he needs to do is consider in its proper light the nation of Israel that has been, Israel that is, and Israel as it is promised to be.

When one believes that God has replaced Israel with the church, he has an unbalanced, even a skewed, sense of God's faithfulness. Eventually, there will always be a fault in how such a person perceives the word "grace."

He may say that good works are a necessary part of saving faith. He may say that salvation can be lost. He may point his fingers at the unsaved and decide they are not worth saving. And so on. But he will never truly understand what it means that a person is saved, continues to be saved, or that he is even worth saving at times, by demonstrating faith – and nothing else – when presented with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul says that the law is a tutor to lead people to Christ. If that is so, then it is those under the law who are the example of what that means. As Daniel 9 tells us that there are seven more years of law left for this group of people, that example continues on to this day.

Until that time of law comes, the punishments for disobeying the law from the past continue on in them. Nobody in his right mind would disagree that the last two thousand years have been a fulfillment of what is stated in Deuteronomy 28.

If this is so, then it means that the words of Deuteronomy 28 still apply to Israel. And if they do, then it means that Israel is still bound to them, and if that is so, then Israel has

not been replaced by the church. They are simply waiting to be brought into what the church has already received.

Be sound in your theology in this regard, and you will understand the magnitude of what Moses is saying to the people, there on the eastern shores of the Jordan River.

**<sup>29</sup> For I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt,**

There is a very heavy emphasis in the words: *ki yadati akhare moti ki haskhet tashkhitun* – “for I know after my death, for corrupting, you will (certainly) corrupt yourselves.”

Moses isn't just saying that the people will become gross. Rather, they will be septic. Their putridity would cause a match to ignite the surrounding air and level everything around them. This is the general sense of the force of his words. And there is a result of such corruption...

**<sup>29 (con't)</sup> and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you.**

The way of the Lord is right. The way of the Lord is just. The way of the Lord is holy and pure. If one has corrupted, it is not possible for him to follow the way of the Lord. The natural consequence of such corruption is to turn away from it...

**<sup>29 (con't)</sup> And evil will befall you in the latter days,**

*v'qarat etkem ha'raah b'akharit ha'yamim* – “and will befall you (all) the evil in later the days.” It is as if evil is personified. They will turn from the way of the Lord, and they will walk directly into the path of Mr. Evil.

Moses has not even yet read the words of the song to the people, but he already knows the words himself. It is as if the frustration of the knowledge he possesses impels him to chide them now, even before he has presented them with it.

And in his chastising, he tells them they will reap what they have sowed. They will meet a foe because they have rejected their closest Friend.

As far as the term “the latter days” it is used much like Paul uses it in the New Testament to refer to an indeterminate time. It is simply a time in the future when the things being described come to pass because they will surely come to pass...

<sup>29</sup> (con't) **because you will do evil in the sight of the LORD,**

Here it says that they will do *ha'ra*, the evil, in the eyes of the Lord. In doing such, they will meet the same consequences for what they have done. They will do the evil and they will thus encounter the evil. The Lord's eyes will see, and the Lord will repay in kind – evil for evil – because of what they have done...

<sup>29</sup> (con't) **to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands.”**

The word *kaas* or “anger,” has been used twice so far in Deuteronomy. Both times, it was in relation to provoking the Lord's anger through false gods fashioned by hand. And it will again be used in the song that will next be presented to the people –

“They provoked Him to jealousy with foreign *gods*;  
With abominations they provoked Him to anger.” Deuteronomy 32:16

Moses remembered what they had done in fashioning the golden calf. He had warned them about doing such things again, and yet he knows that they will – in fact – do them as the song clearly says. Because of this, he is furious at them for what they will do in the coming days.

One can see, even before the law is finalized that it is a point by which Israel will not, and indeed cannot, abide. In Moses' words, there is actually not a call out for, “This law will save you.” He has already told them that it is their life, but he has also told them that it will be their death.

His words are clearly a call out for something else; something better. He has hinted at it, and the fact that he will die on the east side of the Jordan confirms it. The song of Moses will, in fact, testify to it as well. We need something else!

It cannot be otherwise, because the song says, “I will provoke them to jealousy by those who are not a nation.” However, only Israel was given the Mosaic Covenant which is the Law of Moses.

As such, it cannot be that the Lord will use this law to provoke Israel, unless it is a provoking of them by it as it is fulfilled by Another. But if it is fulfilled by Another, it must be One who is of Israel, because only Israel was given it. If only they could see this. As for now...

**\*30 (fin) Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song until they were ended:**

The meaning here is that either Moses spoke to all of the people with the elders close enough to hear, or that he simply spoke to the leaders who represent all of the assembly. As the elders and the officers were just called to assemble in verse 28, the latter is likely. From there, they would have conveyed the words to the people.

Either way, the words are recorded, they would be copied and rebroadcast, and they were intended to be remembered by the people for all time.

They are words that witness to the state of the people, and they explain the state of them from the times of Moses, even until the day when they are again redeemed to be considered the people of the Lord through their acceptance of the New Covenant in Christ's blood.

With the coming of this song next week, and with its being so close to the time of Israel's entrance into the land of promise, one can see that the two songs of Moses, one in Exodus 15, and one in Deuteronomy 32, actually bracket the period of the Exodus. From exit to entry.

However, the Song of Moses, the servant of God, is also referred to in Revelation 15. As such, it will be right to consider that when the song is presented to Israel by Moses. For now, it is certain that as Deuteronomy winds down, we are seeing an amazing step in the plan of redemption for mankind taking place.

Everything about this book, and the four books that precede it, have given us clues into what God is doing in Christ to reconcile the world to Himself. Israel has been used as a key part of this, but Israel is not the focus of the story. They are intended to highlight that which is key.

Through their disobedience, the obedience and faithfulness of Jesus Christ is especially highlighted. And the faithfulness of Jesus, in turn, highlights the glory of the Lord. It is in His coming and uniting with human flesh that we see the highest magnificence of what God was willing to do to ensure His creatures could be brought back to Himself.

Let us not forget this as we consider our own failings before Him. And then let us be ever thankful that they have been dealt with through the sufferings and death of Jesus. Yes, let us thank God for Jesus Christ our Lord today and through all the days of our lives.

And, of one thing we can be certain. When we are translated to glory, we will continue to be thankful to God forever and ever. Hallelujah to our God. Great things He has done.

**Closing Verse:** *“Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. <sup>22</sup> But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. <sup>23</sup> But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. <sup>24</sup> Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. <sup>25</sup> But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”*

*-Galatians 3:21-25*

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 32:1-6 *It will take several sermons before the chapter is done...* (The Song of Moses, Part I) (93<sup>rd</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **A Witness Against You**

Therefore Moses wrote this song the same day  
And taught it to the children of Israel; the words He did convey

Then He inaugurated Joshua the son of Nun, and said  
“Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring  
-----the children of Israel  
Into the land of which I swore to them  
And I will be with you, so all shall go well

So it was, when Moses had completed writing  
The words of this law in a book, when they were finished  
-----all the words he was conveying  
That Moses commanded the Levites  
Who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying...

“Take this Book of the Law  
And put it beside the ark of the covenant, so you shall do



Of the LORD your God  
That it may be there as a witness against you

For I know your rebellion and your stiff neck  
If today, while I am yet alive with you – while I still have breath  
You have been rebellious against the LORD  
Then how much more after my death?

Gather to me all the elders of your tribes  
And your officers, so to you I address  
That I may speak these words in their hearing  
And call heaven and earth against them to witness

For I know that after my death  
You will become utterly corrupt, I know that it is true  
And turn aside from the way  
Which I have commanded you

And evil will befall you in the latter days  
Because you will do evil in the LORD's sight  
To provoke Him to anger  
Through the work of your hands, things that just aren't right

Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel  
The words of this song until they were ended, every word  
-----he did tell

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## **Deuteronomy 32:1-6 (The Song of Moses, Part I)**

Of our passage today, the John Lange commentary correctly states, “Gen. 49 is ‘the prophetic life-picture of the future of Israel’ ... Israel’s position in the world is the prophetic element in this song.”

Moses will describe the future of Israel as they stand before the Lord and among the nations of the world in exacting detail. It is such an accurate description of what lies ahead that it provides a roadmap for pretty much all of their future – much of it sadly, but ultimately, happily.

The words Moses uses, the phraseology he employs, and the concepts that he puts forth are so magnificent in the original that it is more delightful than reading the finest novel or the most beautiful poetry. This is noted by Jamieson-Faucet-Brown –

“The magnificence of the exordium, the grandeur of the theme, the frequent and sudden transitions, the elevated strain of the sentiments and language, entitle this song to be ranked amongst the noblest specimens of poetry to be found in the Scriptures.”  
Jamieson-Faucet-Brown

The next few weeks will be quite an adventure if you really love the details. In this, we will be looking at a written form and structure that can be difficult and even puzzling at times. Like many poems, the words can be hard to grasp at first, but with careful thought, none of what is said is beyond the ability to discern Moses’ actual intent.

What is exciting though is that, like much of Scripture, there is a prophetic element to what is penned here. If we know the Bible, and we also understand the world around us concerning the nation of Israel, much of what Moses says is, at least in content, like reading a current newspaper.

**Text Verse:** *“Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.*

*<sup>2</sup> Before the mountains were brought forth,*

*Or ever You had formed the earth and the world,*

*Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.” Psalm 90:1, 2*

As with the song of Moses, the 90<sup>th</sup> Psalm was also penned by Moses, so you can see the similarities in thought that he pens in both. And yet, both were inspired by the Lord. As

such, one can see this connecting hand of the Lord just as throughout the rest of Scripture.

He is the One who was there at the beginning. His years are without end, and all things come from Him and are sustained by Him. Thus, as we contemplate the word of God with each passage we read, we are considering His mind, His intents, and His purposes for us.

As for the song of Moses, it carries those same designs, but it is in a special form that is tragically lost with many older translations. The NKJV, regardless of the accuracy of the translation, at least put it in a more proper format. Of this, Adam Clarke notes the following –

“On the inimitable excellence of this ode much has been written by commentators, critics, and poets - and it is allowed by the best judges to contain a specimen of almost every species of excellence in composition. It is so thoroughly poetic that even the dull Jews themselves found they could not write it in the prose form; and hence it is distinguished as poetry in every Hebrew Bible by being written in its own hemistichs or short half lines, which is the general form of the Hebrew poetry; and were it translated in the same way it would be more easily understood.” Clarke

Some things just need to be set forth as they were originally designed. This is true with the Song of Moses. It is good that most newer translations properly form the song so that we can more fully appreciate the beauty of it.

We’ll give a short breakdown of the chapter, and then we will use that as we begin to look it over today as well as in the sermons to come. As he progresses, Moses will spare no expense in using rare or completely unique words. This makes it a real treasure to read.

Also, as Clarke noted, it is broken up into a poetic form that, in turn, carries in it several other literary forms such a metaphor, parallelism, and so on. Great stuff is to be seen in this Song. As far as a basic outline, I would submit the following –

Verses 1 & 2 are an introduction concerning the words to be conveyed.

Verses 3 & 4 proclaim the perfections of Yehovah.

Verses 5 & 6 provide a contrast by noting the imperfections of Israel.

Verses 7-14 speak of the calling, establishment, and exalting of the nation.

Verses 15-18 tell of Israel's abandonment of Yehovah because of prosperity and ease, leading to apostasy from Him and to false gods.

Verses 19-25 bring out Yehovah's rejection of Israel, His turning from them, and His judgment upon them. But, in this time of rejecting them, verse 21 alludes to His plan to lure Israel back to Himself through His active turning to another group of people.

Verses 26 & 27 detail the reason for Yehovah's sparing, and not utterly destroying, the disobedient nation – the safeguarding of His own honor and glory.

Verses 28-33 detail the evident nature of Israel's unworthiness to be spared. As such, it highlights the very fact that they are spared.

Verses 34-38 reveal the wisdom of allowing Israel to be brought to a state of utter calamity, when all of the other gods fail to deliver, it is to...

Verse 39 reveals that Yehovah has, through His interaction with Israel, demonstrated that He alone is God.

Verses 40-42 call out the judgment of the nations for failing to recognize what God has done, which is manifestly evident through His treatment (establishment, care for, spurning of, punishment upon, sparing, and defense) of Israel.

Verse 43 is a final climactic call to the world who knows Yehovah that He has kept His covenant promises to this nation of disobedience by providing them the atonement they do not, in fact, deserve.

I do hope you will enjoy the coming sermons based on this passage. It is a marvelous part of God's superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. Give Ear and Hear (verses 1 & 2)**

**<sup>1</sup>“Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak;**

*haazinu ha'shemayim va'adeberah* – “Give ear you, the heavens, and I will speak.” This is a literal translation, but the way the Hebrew is structured it gives the sense of: “Give ear you, the heavens, so then I will speak.” When the first occurs, the next will then take place.

Moses uses what is known as a prosopopoeia. It is a literary device where an abstract thing is personified. In calling for these bodies to give ear, it is as if they were to listen carefully to the words he will speak. In them, we have an immediate fulfillment of the words from last week –

“Gather to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing and call heaven and earth to witness against them.”

-Deuteronomy 31:28

Moses is the speaker, and yet as the song proceeds, the words will be Moses quoting the very thoughts of the Lord, such as in verses 20-35 and again in verses 37-42.

Moses' words are words of the covenant, and they will provide insights into the very mind of God as He reveals His glory in and through the nation there before Moses. The heavens are called forth to witness what will be said. Further...

<sup>1</sup> (con't) **And hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.**

*v'tishma ha'arets imre pi* – “And hear, the earth, words my mouth.” This was also mentioned by Moses when he said, “and call heaven and earth to witness.” Together, they form the sum of the witness, meaning all of creation. As this is exactly what Moses said he would do, the commentary from last week necessarily needs to be restated.

In calling for the heavens and the earth to witness, he is not calling for judgment, but for witnesses that will testify to the just nature of the coming judgment and punishment. It takes us back to the first sentence of the Bible, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

The heavens and the earth themselves are being likened to the surety of the covenant, of which the song is a prophetic anticipation of how Israel will conduct itself before the Lord in relation to the covenant.

When Moses calls the heavens and the earth to witness against Israel, it is not speaking of calling those who dwell in the heavens or those who dwell on the earth to be witnesses. Rather, it is saying that even the heavens and earth *are* the witnesses.

As evident as these are to remind us of the existence of God, so shall it be the same when the actions against – and for – Israel come. Thus, Israel (and indeed all humanity) should then rightfully say, “As surely as I am standing on the ground, and as surely as the heavens are above my head – both created by God – so is this punishment deserved.”

The inanimate heavens and earth metaphorically speak out the obvious reality of what has occurred when Israel fails and is punished. Just as the Lord is the Creator and

Sustainer of the heavens and the earth, He is the Initiator and Monitor of the covenant with Israel.

The sentiment is not unlike that which is stated in Job 20 –

“The heavens will reveal his iniquity,  
And the earth will rise up against him.” Job 20:27

It is also what David means when he says that –

“The heavens declare the glory of God;  
And the firmament shows His handiwork.” Psalm 19:1

And again, this is unmistakably seen in the words of Paul –

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, <sup>19</sup> because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. <sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.” Romans 1:18-20

The very fact that the heavens and the earth exist, and that they show order, harmony, and structure demonstrate that God is righteous.

They testify to Him, to His power, to His faithfulness, to His right to judge, and also to His eternal nature in what He proclaims. This is both a knowledge that should be terrifying to the nation now being addressed, as well as reassuring to them. Again, this is exactly what the psalmist refers to –

“Forever, O LORD,  
Your word is settled in heaven.  
<sup>90</sup> Your faithfulness *endures* to all generations;  
You established the earth, and it abides.  
<sup>91</sup> They continue this day according to Your ordinances,  
For all *are* Your servants.” Psalm 119:89-91

One can see the parallel nature of this first verse of the song –

(a) \*Give ear you, +the heavens, \*and I will speak.  
(a) \*And hear, -the earth, \*words my mouth.”

As it is so that the heavens and the earth are witnesses, Moses continues his introduction to the song, calling for Israel – and indeed all to whom the word is presented – to pay heed...

## <sup>2</sup> **Let my teaching drop as the rain,**

*ya’aroph ka’matar liqkhi* – “Let drop as the rain my teaching.” Two new words are immediately given. The first is *araph*, coming from a primitive root signifying to droop. Hence, it means to drip or drop. It will be seen only here and in Deuteronomy 33:28.

The next is *leqakh*. It signifies a learning or a teaching, whether on the part of the teacher or the hearer. Six of its nine uses will be in the proverbs.

Here, the words of this verse can be tied into the heavens and the earth of verse 1. The heavens are the source of the rain as it descends from above. The earth is what receives what then flows downward from above.

The actual intent of Moses’ words is hard to know. It can be translated passively as “Let my words...” If so, Moses is calling for the hearer to listen and to let what he says alight upon him and begin to fill him.

It can be as a petition, “May my words...” If so, Moses is indicating that the wise person will listen, hear, and begin to understand what is being conveyed.

Or, it could be as a statement of fact, “My words shall...” The words will drop slowly at first, word by word. They will then increase as he speaks until they overflow with the wisdom they contain and until they have revealed all that is to descend from the heavenly realm into the minds of those who hear.

Whichever way, the idea is that Moses’ teaching will come down, dropping from above to nourish the soul, just as raindrops upon the earth to nourish it. Next...

## <sup>2</sup> (con’t) **My speech distill as the dew,**

*tizal ka’tal imarti* – “Stream as the dew, my speech.” The word *tal*, or dew, is used. It comes from *talal*, meaning to cover over, like a roof. In the first clause, the teaching was

to drop as the rain. It is a sign of abundance coming down. Now, the speech which carries the teaching is to spread out as dew, permeating every part of the hearer. Moses next provides parallelism to the first two clauses...

<sup>2</sup> (con't) **As raindrops on the tender herb,**

*kisirim ale deshe* – “As showers upon the tender grass.” Here is a word found only this once in Scripture, *sair*. It signifies rain (drop). The word is formed in the same way as the word *sa'iyar*, or hairy. Being in the plural, it gives the sense of abundance of rain, like hair flowing on a hairy goat.

Due to it being the same form as “hairy,” we are given an additional insight into what is being said. Hair in the Bible signifies an awareness, especially an awareness of sin as represented in the hairy goat sin offering.

Moses' idea is that his words will show the greatness of God contrasted to the corrupted, sinful state of Israel. Moses is imploring his people to see the connection and perceive its meaning. It is as if showers of rain come down upon the newly sprouted grass. The grass will benefit from the rain, and the wise will benefit from the instruction of the speech.

<sup>2</sup> (con't) **And as showers on the grass.**

*v'kirvivim ale esev* – “And as abundant drops upon the tender herbs.” The word *revivim*, or abundant drops, is introduced. It comes from *ravav*, meaning “many.” Thus, it is an accumulation of drops, a shower.

When the showers alight upon the tender herbs, they will feed from the water and gain nutrients from the soil. The heavens and the earth work together to produce a crop that is beneficial to man and to beast.

In this case, Moses is imploring (or affirming) that the divine wisdom will be conveyed, and that it will be considered so that a mature understanding of it will result. One can see the parallelism between the clauses when they are properly translated –

- (a) +Let drop as the rain \*my teaching. (heavy)
- (a) -Stream as the dew, \*my speech. (light)
- (b) As +showers ^upon the tender grass (heavy)
- (b) And as -abundant drops ^upon the tender herbs. (light)



The main force of the words is that of the agency of them being sent in order to produce its intended effect. The resulting effects are a secondary, and hopefully anticipated, result. The instruction is rained down, and it then permeates everything that will receive it. With that in mind, Moses will next exalt the Lord...

*Seek the Lord and none other, always  
For He is the Rock, Faithful and True  
Seek out the Lord for all of your days  
Hide yourself in Him and He will establish you*

*His righteousness is near; it is close at hand  
And salvation has gone forth from Him  
Be without fear, for goodness He has planned  
Lovingkindness and mercy; full to the brim*

*Even overflowing are these things from Him  
For His righteousness is forever; it has no end  
Yes, goodness and mercy overfloweth the brim  
On the Lord our God, you can depend*

## **II. The Rock! (Verses 3 & 4)**

**<sup>3</sup> For I proclaim the name of the LORD:**

*ki shem Yehovah eqra* – “For Name Yehovah I invoke.” The word *qara* means to call (actively or passively), to proclaim, to read, and so on. Most translations here use the word “proclaim.” That would mean Moses is making an affirmative statement concerning Him. This is then followed by more affirmative statements. That may be the case.

However, I would think Moses is invoking, or making an appeal to, the name of the Lord. In Exodus 34, the Lord proclaimed His name –

“And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, <sup>7</sup> keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.’”

-Exodus 34:6, 7

The Lord's name *has been* proclaimed. As such, I believe Moses is now invoking that name as a witness against Israel for their corrupt ways that begin to be referenced in verse 5. After this appeal to the Name, then the affirmative statements that follow are given to bolster why the Lord is just in His judgments.

The introductory words have been stated, the Name Yehovah has been invoked, and now Moses will call for others to acknowledge this and then He will proclaim Yehovah's perfections...

<sup>3</sup> (con't) **Ascribe greatness to our God.**

*havu godel l'lohenu* – “Ascribe you (all) greatness to our God!” This is to be the natural response to invoking His name – “I appeal to the Name of Yehovah!” / “We ascribe greatness to His name.” The structure of the verse is a standard a/b contrasting parallel–

(a) For Name Yehovah I invoke. (singular)

(b) Ascribe you (all) greatness to our God! (plural)

It is an acknowledgment of what He is because of who He is. “He is great because He is Yehovah. He is our God!” And the reason He is great, in His being and in our eyes, is...

<sup>4</sup> **He is the Rock,**

The words are placed absolutely: *ha'tsur* – “The Rock!” It is an indication of permanence, stability, and immutability. It is the first time He is called this in Scripture, but it is not the first time He has been equated to it in typology.

The Lord as the Rock was typologically seen in Exodus 17 when the rock was struck and then water issued forth. Likewise, Moses was hidden in the rock in Exodus 33. Both times were clear typological anticipations of Christ. In fact, Paul explicitly says this concerning the Rock and the water in 1 Corinthians 10 –

“Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, <sup>2</sup>all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, <sup>3</sup>all ate the same spiritual food, <sup>4</sup>and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.” 1 Corinthians 10:1-4

Further, the term is specifically cited by both Paul in Romans 9:33, and by Peter in 1 Peter 2:6, as cited from Isaiah 8:14, where the Lord, Yehovah, is referred to –

“He will be as a sanctuary,  
But a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense  
To both the houses of Israel,  
As a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” Isaiah 8:14

With these New Testament references to Christ Jesus as the Rock being directly equated to Yehovah of the Old Testament, it is without excuse that anyone would deny that Scripture indicates that Jesus is Yehovah incarnate.

Someone may not believe the Bible, or in the Lord, but nobody can honestly deny that the *intent of Scripture* is that Jesus and Yehovah are one and the same.

As far as the term itself, four more times the Lord will specifically be called “the Rock” in this chapter. But more, he will twice be contrasted to other rocks, meaning false gods. Of the Rock, Moses next says...

<sup>4</sup> (con't) **His work is perfect;**

Rather than how the NKJV translates this, the perfection is stated first: *tamim paolo* – “Perfect His work.” It is a new word, *paol*, signifying deeds or work. Being described as *tamim* means without blemish. It is the word used to describe the sacrificial animals that were presented to the Lord.

All that the Lord does is complete, sound, and flawless. Thus, it is upright. This would include, but not be limited to, His work of creation, interactions, redemption, and salvation. When He purposes something, it will come to pass.

As such, it is a note of surety for Israel both in judgment and in preservation. The Lord will judge perfectly according to His word. The Lord will preserve perfectly according to that same word. In the same manner, because Jesus is the Lord, it is a note of the same for those who are His people.

What God in Christ does will be perfectly handled in the judgment of His people, but it will also be in accord with the promise of His salvation –

“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup> Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, <sup>13</sup> each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. <sup>14</sup> If anyone’s work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.” 1 Corinthians 3:11-15

<sup>4</sup> (con’t) **For all His ways are justice,**

*ki kal derakha mishpat* – “For all His ways just.” There is one way with the Lord, even if it is expressed in many ways. In other words, His way is just, and thus all His ways are just. He will never deviate from being just, so every avenue He takes is just. This is not unlike James’ words –

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.”

-James 1:17

The meaning of James’ words is that there is no parallax in the Lord. No matter what angle he is viewed from, He is perfectly unchanging. As such, there is no shadow that can move in relation to Him. This is essentially how Moses speaks of the Lord now. Further, He is...

<sup>4</sup> (con’t) **A God of truth and without injustice;**

*El emunah v’ein avel* – “God of stability and no unrighteousness.” The first word is *emunah*. It signifies firmness, steadfastness, fidelity, and so on. Thus, the sense is stability. The second word is *avel*, signifying injustice, unrighteousness, moral wrong, and the like.

He will not be moved, and He will never do wrong. There is no iniquity, bias, or prejudice in Him. Rather, He is firm, fixed, and steadfast in His being. And more...

<sup>4</sup> (con’t) **Righteous and upright is He.**

The words are emphatic: *tsadiq v’yashar hu* – “Righteous and upright HE.” Thus, it is an expression of His very being. The words *tsadiq* and *yashar* point to that which is

righteous and that which is right (straight or upright). The words of Peter in the New Testament tie Christ directly to the thought of Moses now –

“But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,” Acts 3:14 (WEB)

The very being of Christ is that of One who is Righteous. The sentiment of this verse is, at least partly, seen in Psalm 145 –

“The LORD *is* righteous in all His ways,” Psalm 145:17

Likewise, the words mirror the description of Christ as He returns in glory in Revelation 19 –

“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.”  
-Revelation 19:11

What Yehovah does is embodied in the Person and actions of Jesus Christ. With this noted, we can again, as in verse 2, see the parallelism of the words shining forth in an a/b/a/b structure –

- (a) \*The Rock! +Perfect His work. (stable/no fault)
- (b) ^For all His ways just. (expresses His being)
- (a) \*God of stability and +no unrighteousness. (rock/perfect)
- (b) ^Righteous and upright HE. (expresses His being)

With this stated, we can – at least from my perspective – next see why Moses invoked the name of the Lord in verse 1...

*I have stretched out My hands all day long  
To a people rebellious and without sense  
They sing to other gods, a distasteful song  
The guilt of their iniquity is more than immense*

*What would the end of them be?  
Were it not for the promise that I made?  
If not for that, they would have perished quickly  
They are not worth even the most useless trade*

*But for My sake they shall be made right  
Because I am Faithful and True to the words I speak  
For them, there will be an end to the fright  
When in the future, it is Me they finally seek*

### **III. A Perverse and Crooked Generation (Verses 5 & 6)**

Where verses 3 and 4 highlighted the perfections of the Lord, verses 5 & 6 provide a contrast, revealing the imperfections of Israel...

<sup>5</sup> **“They have corrupted themselves;**

Though almost everyone translates it this way, it is incorrect. The verb is singular as is the preposition: *shikhet lo* – “Corruption to him.” It can either be a statement concerning the nation, or a question concerning the Lord.

Therefore, it either says, “He (Israel) *has* corrupted himself” or “Is corruption His?” (JPS Tanakh). In other words, “Is corruption found in Him?” Or “Is He the source of corruption?”

If it is a statement of fact, then the words mirror the words of Isaiah 1 where the same word is used –

“Alas, sinful nation,  
A people laden with iniquity,  
A brood of evildoers,  
Children who are **corrupters!**  
They have forsaken the LORD,  
They have provoked to anger  
The Holy One of Israel,  
They have turned away backward.” Isaiah 1:4

If it is a rhetorical question, it is asking if the defect that will be presented is the Lord’s fault. If so, the answer is obvious, and it explains why Moses would invoke the name of the Lord in verse 2.

Due to the parallelism, I would go with the words of this clause as speaking of Israel, thus forming a parallel. However, it could just as easily be a contrasting parallel. Either way, a matter must be resolved because of His perfect nature...

<sup>5</sup> (con't) **They are not His children,**

*lo banav* – “Not His sons.” The inserted words are correct, “*They are* not His sons.” They can’t be because there is no corruption in Him. He is perfect in all His ways. As such, there can be no harmony; the bond is severed...

<sup>5</sup> (con't) **Because of their blemish:**

*muman* – “Their blemish.” The whole thought so far can now be more clearly understood –

“Is corruption His? (or “He has corrupted himself!)

*They are* not His children!

*It is* their blemish!”

The people called by the Lord have severed themselves from the family of the Lord. They bear a defect that is of their own doing and was not derived from Him.

It is the state of Israel of the future. A time is prophesied when the people would be entirely cut off from fellowship with the Lord because of their own doings. They are...

<sup>5</sup> (con't) **A perverse and crooked generation.**

*dor iqesh u-pethaltol* – “Generation twisted and warped.” Moses uses two new words. The first is *iqesh*, signifying distorted, false, crooked, or perverse. It comes from *aqash*, to twist, and it is mostly used in the book of Proverbs.

The next word is found only here in Scripture, *pethaltol*. It is derived from *pathal*, to twine, thus, to struggle, wrestle and so on. It signifies being crafty or crooked like one who is warped and always trying to wrestle off the authority over him.

This is the defect that Israel has, and it is not something derived from the Lord, but rather from their own warped senses. The words perfectly call to mind what Peter says in Acts 2 –

“And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, ‘Be saved from this perverse generation.’” Acts 2:40

With this stated, one can now see the parallelism in an a/b/a/b structure –

- (a) \*Corruption to him. (reference to defect)
- (b) ^Not His sons. (identifies the state of Israel)
- (a) \*Their blemish. (reference to defect)
- (a) ^Generation twisted and warped. (identifies the state of Israel)

The generation that rejected Christ, and which still exists to this day, is a perverse generation. They bear the defect of having severed themselves from Christ. Until that is corrected, they are not – and indeed cannot be – His children. Because of their unwieldy, twisted nature, Moses asks...

**<sup>6</sup> Do you thus deal with the LORD,**

The order of the words bears an emphatic nature: *ha l'Yehovah tigmelu zot* – “**Do to Yehovah** you (all) do this?” The words would be well paraphrased by saying, “Is this how you act toward the Lord?” It is a question of incredulity. Moses sees the future and he knows the outcome of their conduct. And he is appalled at what he knows is coming. As such, he calls out...

**<sup>6 (con't)</sup> O foolish and unwise people?**

*am naval v'lo khakam* – “People foolish and no wise.” It is a new adjective, *naval*. It signifies a person who is stupid or wicked. He is vile. It is the same as the name of Nabal in 2 Samuel 25. Thus, it explains the words his wife uses when describing him –

“Please, let not my lord regard this scoundrel Nabal. For as his name *is*, so *is* he: Nabal *is* his name, and folly *is* with him!” 2 Samuel 25:25

Israel is just like Nabal according to Moses. They are a foolish and unwise people. As such, the following words are set against the previous words that said, “*They are* not His sons.” Moses says...

**<sup>6 (con't)</sup> Is He not your Father, who bought you?**

*halo hu avikha qanekha* – “Not HE your Father your Purchaser?” The words take Israel back to the first Song of Moses, just after having been brought out from Egypt. There, the same word, *qanah*, is used –

“Fear and dread will fall on them;  
By the greatness of Your arm



They will be *as* still as a stone,  
Till Your people pass over, O LORD,  
Till the people pass over  
Whom You have **purchased.**” Exodus 15:16

Thus, Moses is saying that even though they are not His children, He is their Father. He purchased them and, therefore, they will be brought to Himself at some point. It is a truth spoken forth as both songs of Moses conclude –

You will bring them in and plant them  
In the mountain of Your inheritance,  
*In* the place, O LORD, *which* You have made  
For Your own dwelling,  
The sanctuary, O Lord, *which* Your hands have established.  
<sup>18</sup> “The LORD shall reign forever and ever.” Exodus 15:17, 18

“Rejoice, O Gentiles, *with* His people;  
For He will avenge the blood of His servants,  
And render vengeance to His adversaries;  
He will provide atonement for His land *and* His people.” Deuteronomy 32:43

With this understanding, Moses completes the words of the passage for today, saying...

**\*6 (fin) Has He not made you and established you?**

Again, there is an emphatic nature to the words: *hu asekha v'konenekha* – “HE made you and established you.” The Lord personally intervened in their history, time and again, in order to bring them into being and then to establish them.

There was nothing random about what He did. Rather, everything was, continues to be, and will continue to be purposeful in regard to them. But there is a point of contention that exists between them, and it is a personal defect in the nation.

For now, and to understand the parallelism, the following is seen. It is, again, an a/b/a/b structure –

- (a) Do to Yehovah you (pl) do this? (question to the people)
- (b) People foolish and no wise. (a truth concerning Israel)
- (a) Not HE your (sg) Father your (sg) Purchaser? (question to the nation)

(b) He made you and established you. (a truth concerning Israel)

Until the defect of Israel is resolved, they are not His children, and they are not His people. In the coming verses, Moses will show just what the Lord did to establish them, and he will show them – in advance – exactly what they will do to provoke Him, thus cutting themselves off from Him.

In cutting themselves off, the Lord will respond by cutting them off. Israel's position in the land, and as the people of the Lord, is solely determined by their actions and conduct before Him. The final state of Israel is set, and it is predetermined.

He will never cut them off completely, and Moses will explain exactly why as he continues. Thus, the severity and the honor of being Israel are tied together in one package. It demonstrates the unfailing nature of the Lord that this is so.

The same treatment can be expected by each of us. There can be severity in His hand against us, but there will never again be a separation from Him. We have the lesson of Israel, and we have the words of the epistles to direct us.

In the end, we who are the redeemed of the Lord must make our own choices. Will we be foolish and unwise, thus arousing the Lord's displeasure, or will we be people of integrity and live for Him as we live out our lives?

The song of Moses is written to Israel, but the precepts that are derived from it can be just as easily applied to us. Be wise, be discerning, and be circumspect in your life and conduct before this great God – the Rock! May it be so, to His glory.

**Closing Verse:** *"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>5</sup> deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."* 1 Corinthians 5:4, 5

The people of Israel were handed over to the Satan to suffer because of their conduct before the Lord. The sinner at Corinth was to be handed over as well. However, Israel the nation as well as that wayward sinner, will find that God is ultimately faithful, even when they were not.

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 32:7-14 *Slowly pecking away at it until it is through* (The Song of Moses, Part II) (94<sup>th</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **The Song of Moses, Part I**

“Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak out  
And hear, O earth, the words of my mouth; hear my shout

Let my teaching drop as the rain  
My speech distill as the dew  
As raindrops on the tender herb  
And as showers on the grass may they be to you

For I proclaim the name of the LORD:  
Ascribe greatness to our God; hear my word

He is the Rock, His work is perfect  
For all His ways are justice, as all the world can see  
A God of truth and without injustice  
Righteous and upright is He

“They have corrupted themselves  
They are not His children, this disobedient nation  
Because of their blemish  
A perverse and crooked generation

Do you thus deal with the LORD  
O foolish and unwise people? Is this what you do?  
Is He not your Father who bought you?  
Has He not made you and also established you?

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God, may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## **Deuteronomy 32:7-14** **(The Song of Moses, Part II)**

There are some magnificent literary devices used by Moses in the verses today. He uses parallelism, but he does so in various ways. He uses metaphor. He uses the imperative form of verbs to add vibrancy and life to what he is saying. He uses a form of a verb that gives the sense of a command a couple of times.

These and other such devices bring the passage to a state of animation that brings you directly into what he is saying, as if you are participating in what is happening. If you close your eyes as it is being read, you will be able to form mental images in this way, putting yourself directly into the life of Israel.

Moses will also say something in verse 8 that leaves many guessing as to the intent. Because of variations in the source texts of the verse, it is hard to know exactly what the true rendering is.

Unfortunately, because of this, biblical sensationalists will take what is said and incorrectly apply it to shoddy theology they have developed elsewhere. It sells well, but it really isn't responsible theology.

**Text Verse:** *“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>27</sup> For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. <sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup> And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Galatians 3:26-29*

Properly looking at terms that are used throughout Scripture, one can develop a right understanding of otherwise improperly developed themes, if one is willing to do so. But, typically, people hear something, stick with what they have been told, and would rather go down with the ship than adapt to what is evidently right as concerns that particular thought.

When we get to verse 8, I will give my best analysis of what I think the true rendering is, and why I think it is so. It doesn't mean I'm right, but there is a logical way to look at the various source texts and come to a reasonable conclusion concerning the variations.

The verse had to start with an original set of words. Attempting to figure out what they are will help us to consider other such changes in source texts as well. With this, we can begin to discern various agendas that are behind the manipulation of what is said.

Sometimes, a normal translational change is responsible, sometimes it is a misunderstanding of what is being conveyed, sometimes it may reveal a bias in thought, and sometimes such a change may be purposeful in order to hide something otherwise quite obvious.

Studying the word is a lifelong pursuit. We should do so with all of our attention and diligence, and we should be careful to refrain from sensationalism. The reason for this is that sensationalism will draw our attention away from what is most sensational of all... Jesus. Let us remember this as we evaluate the word.

Great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. The Calling of Israel (verses 7-9)**

In our evaluation of the song now before us concerning an outline, we first divided into verses 1 & 2 which were set forth as an introduction of the song. Verses 3 & 4 proclaimed the perfections of Yehovah. And verses 5 & 6 provided a contrast as seen in the imperfections of Israel.

Now, the next major division of the song goes from verses 7 to 14. They speak of the calling, establishment, and exalting of the nation. That thought is introduced with the words of verse 7...

#### **<sup>7</sup> “Remember the days of old,**

*zekor yemoth olam* – “Remember days antiquity.” The verb is singular. It could be speaking of Israel collectively or as a directive to each person individually. Based on the poetic structure of the verse, I would say it is the latter. Each person is to remember.

The word *olam* is a common one that has to be carefully translated to avoid confusion. It speaks of time out of mind, either into the past or into the future. In this case, because it is defining the word “remember,” it refers to ancient days gone by.

In some instances, it can speak of days completely out of mind, where there is no understanding of the reference at all. This is found, for example, in Micah 5 when referring to the coming Messiah –

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
Though you are little among the thousands of Judah,  
Yet out of you shall come forth to Me  
The One to be Ruler in Israel,  
Whose goings forth *are* from of old,  
From everlasting.” Micah 5:2

The very nature of the surrounding words calls forth the idea of Someone who will come, but who had already existed for a period that cannot even be mentally grasped.

However, the days that Moses now refers to are not unknowable. This is because Moses is specifically calling for remembrance. As this is the case, there is an oral or written account of what occurred that is being called to mind.

Thus, *olam* here is speaking of days that are knowable, but which are out of mind to the hearer only in the sense that they predate his personal existence. The record of those days is being called to memory as a tool for future instruction. That continues to be understood from the next words...

<sup>7</sup> (con't) **Consider the years of many generations.**

*binu shenoth dor va'dor* – “Mentally scan years generation and generation.” Whereas the verb in the last clause was singular, it is now plural, “you all.” The alternating use of the singular and plural is a marvelous tool that Moses employs to captivate the collective mind of the audience as well as each individual mind within it.

The minds of the people are now asked to contemplate that which occurred long ago, mentally scanning what has been so that they can rightly understand what now is. As it is written as a witness to Israel for all generations (31:19-21), then it is something that is to be a living and active call to remember throughout their history.

Repeating the word “generation” as he does (*dor va'dor*) is a poetic way of stating a plural not unlike how we may employ such a thought today –

*Today I am living here*

*Just as did my ancestors, year to year*

Moses has marvelously employed both switching of the number and parallelism in these first two clauses –

(a) +Remember (sg) \*days -antiquity

(a) +*Mentally* scan (pl) \*years - generation and generation

He will continue with this in the next two clauses...

<sup>7</sup> (con't) **Ask your father, and he will show you;**

*sheal avikha v'yagedekha* – “Ask your father and he *is to* declare to you.” The words switch back to the singular, but this is surely referring to each individual – “Each of you is to ask.” Further, the verb of the response to the question is a jussive which is a mood that expresses almost a command. In essence, “When you ask, he is given the command to know and be able to then pass on what you have inquired of.” Likewise...

<sup>7</sup> (con't) **Your elders, and they will tell you:**

*zeqenekha v'yomeru lak* – “Your elders and they will say to you.” The father is the spiritual elder of the house. The elders are the spiritual fathers of the people. “Just as the father is to know and convey a response to you, so the elders are to do.” Again, notice the parallelism and the change in number –

Ask:

(b) +Your father \*and he (sg) -*is to* declare to you.

(b) +Your elders \*and they (pl) -will say to you.

Just as when reading Shakespeare, one can see that there is attentive thought to every word and all words in each clause. Taken together, the four clauses read –

(a) Remember (sg) \*days -antiquity.

(a) *Mentally* scan (pl) \*years - generation and generation.

Ask:

(b) +Your father \*and he (sg) -*is to* declare to you.

(b) +Your elders \*and they (pl) -will say to you.

Great attentive care is certainly the case with the next words...



**<sup>8</sup>When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations,**

The NKJV gives a good sense of what the meaning is. A literal rendering says: *b'hankhel elyon goyim* – “In bequeathing Most High nations.” In other words, the nations of the world were purposefully divided by Elyon, the Most High. He is above all nations, and He is the Decider of their place and destiny.

What has taken place is not arbitrary. As such, there is a deterministic force that has caused the nations to be who they are and where they are. This is to be understood from both testaments of the Bible, both implicitly and explicitly –

“But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. <sup>6</sup>And the LORD said, “Indeed the people *are* one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. <sup>7</sup>Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” <sup>8</sup>So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. <sup>9</sup>Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.”

-Genesis 11:5-9

It is implied by the dividing of the languages that the people will then be gathered according to those languages. This is clearly stated in the Table of Nations found in Genesis 10 and is based upon the division of these languages found in Genesis 11. This is found in the last words of Genesis 10 –

“These *were* the families of the sons of Noah, according to their generations, in their nations; and from these the nations were divided on the earth after the flood.” Genesis 10:32

The hand of the Lord, directing the people in this way, is clearly evidenced. Likewise in Acts 17, Paul builds upon this thought, stating it to the people of Athens in a manner which they could understand. In his speech, he cites the words of two Greek philosophers – Aratus and Cleanthes – in order to show them that this knowledge still existed in their collective mind –

“And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of

their dwellings, <sup>27</sup> so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; <sup>28</sup> for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’” Acts 17:26-28

<sup>8</sup> (con’t) **When He separated the sons of Adam,**

*b’haprido bene adam* – “In His separating sons of man.” There are two opposing opinions regarding the correct interpretation of the word *adam*: should it be rendered as a descriptor of man or as a reference to the first man, Adam. The word means both, but the parallelism calls for the former, man.

Adam begat Seth and so on until Noah. During his time, the world was destroyed by flood. From there, the sons of Noah were then divided among their descendants, as is recorded in the table of nations, by name, as it repeatedly says, e.g., “according to their languages, in their lands *and* in their nations” (Genesis 10:20).

This is understood even many generations later as is stated repeatedly in the psalms concerning the sons of Ham –

“Israel also came into Egypt,  
And Jacob dwelt in the land of Ham.” Psalm 105:23

Likewise, the establishment and continuance of the nations and their locations, even into the distant future, is spoken of as a surety in the prophets many hundreds of years later –

“I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company *with* bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords. <sup>5</sup> Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them *with* shield and helmet; <sup>6</sup> Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah *from* the far north and all its troops—many people *are* with you.” Ezekiel 36:4-6

So deterministic are these words of Moses that they even apply to the last chapters of the last book of Scripture –

“Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison <sup>8</sup> and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the

earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number *is* as the sand of the sea. <sup>9</sup>They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city.” Revelation 20:7-9

Even on the last page of the Bible, the nations are identified as individual entities –

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. <sup>2</sup>In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, *was* the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each *tree* yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.”

-Revelation 22:1, 2

The sons of man have been separated, and they will retain distinct natures even when all things have been restored to the perfection originally intended for humanity. Again, notice the structure of the clauses –

(a) In +bequeathing Most High \*nations (pl)

(b) In His -separating \*sons (pl) *of* man

It is in doing these things that the Lord has determined the groups of people, but in order for them to be groups, they need to be grouped. That is seen in the next words...

<sup>8</sup> (con't) **He set the boundaries of the peoples**

*yatsev gevuloth ammim* – “He establishes boundaries peoples.” The verb is another jussive. It is as if the Lord commands the establishment of the boundaries. He has determined how they will be placed, if they will be uprooted, and where they will go. Jeremiah confirms that this is solely at the direction of the Lord –

“Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: <sup>6</sup>‘O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?’ says the LORD. ‘Look, as the clay *is* in the potter’s hand, so *are* you in My hand, O house of Israel! <sup>7</sup>The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy *it*, <sup>8</sup>if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. <sup>9</sup>And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant *it*, <sup>10</sup>if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.” Jeremiah 18:5-10

However, despite nations being destroyed before Him, it is the Most High who defined their borders in a very purposeful manner, which is...

<sup>8</sup> (con't) **According to the number of the children of Israel.**

*l'mispar bene Yisrael* – “To number sons Israel.” This is one of the most debated and argued over clauses of the entire song, and it is a verse that is used, and manipulated, in order to justify rather poor theology. Two variant readings of it are:

“angels (meaning ‘messengers’) of God” (LXX (Greek), DSS)  
“sons of God” (Symmachus, Latin)

Which translation is correct is hard to know. People will pick the translation that fits their presupposition concerning their view on other passages in Scripture which they want to support. However, the LXX, the Symmachus, and the Latin are all translated from Hebrew manuscripts.

As this is so, the word “God” is probably likely. From there, the compilers of the Masoretic Text (which is used as the source for the NKJV and many other versions) probably then decided that this was referring to Israel who are the “sons” or “messengers” of God.

It would seem likely that “sons of God” would be interpreted as “angels” (meaning messengers) by some, rather than the opposite, which is a common misunderstanding of the use of the term “sons of God” found in Genesis 6:2 and Job 1:6 & 2:1.

As such, if I were to hypothesize, the true original would be *l'mispar bene elohim*, or “To number sons of God,” meaning true believers in the Lord God. As I said, the Masoretes then decided that this must be referring to them and changed “God” to “Israel” to define them as the subject.

By doing this, it would argue *against* the Christian belief that it included them because they are “sons of God” through faith in Christ. This is not an unimportant exercise in analysis, but it is a key point upon which a lot of other theology hangs.

The Masoretic text has been purposefully corrupted in other areas to hide passages that clearly reveal the coming of Christ Jesus. If my proposition is correct (and why would I be wrong?), the words are actually stating that the nations are aligned as a tally of true

believers in the Lord, something that would correspond to what is said in Deuteronomy 32:21, and which Paul uses in Romans 10:19 when referring to the Gentile believers.

“They have provoked Me to jealousy by *what* is not God;  
They have moved Me to anger by their foolish idols.  
But I will provoke them to jealousy by those who are not a nation;  
I will move them to anger by a foolish nation.” (32:21)

This would also then correspond to the truth that there were Gentile believers in the Lord *prior* to the establishment of Israel as is clearly recorded in Genesis and in Job 1 & 2. The structure would then look like this –

- (a) He +establishes boundaries peoples
- (b) To -number sons *of* God

With this in mind, we can then see the parallelism of the verse more clearly –

- (a) In +bequeathing Most High \*nations (pl)
- (b) In His -separating ^sons *of* man (sg)
- (a) He +establishes boundaries \*peoples (pl)
- (b) To -number ^sons *of* God

Obviously, I am coming at this with my own presuppositions as well, but they are based on a rational and consistent analysis of the greater concepts that are found elsewhere in Scripture, not on a sensationalistic approach, or one that denies that Messiah has come and has fulfilled what is prefigured in the interpretation of this otherwise really difficult verse. With that noted, Moses next says...

**<sup>9</sup> For the LORD’s portion *is* His people;**

*ki kheleq Yehovah amo* – “For portion Yehovah His people.” The words are all in the singular. The immediate context is obviously Israel. But, being in the singular, it must include those who came before Israel, such as Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and so on. Also, it must include Job and the other “sons of God” who are noted in Genesis 6 and Job 1 & 2.

As this is so, then it – by default – must ultimately be inclusive of any who belongs to the Lord. However, the next clause seems to deny this...

<sup>9 (con’t)</sup> **Jacob *is* the place of His inheritance.**

*Yaaqov khevel nakhalato* – “Jacob line His inheritance.” The word *khevel*, signifies a cord, territory, band, line, and so on. It comes from *khaval* meaning to bind or to pledge. Ultimately, it comes from a root signifying to wind tightly, as a rope.

A cord, or a line, is used to measure something, thus establishing a set number, portion, allotment, and so on. As such, the inheritance of the Lord is found measured in Jacob. It is speaking of the man, not the location where he will settle. That makes it seem that Jacob, who is Israel (meaning his descendants), is the sum total of the inheritance of the Lord.

But there is no reason to assume that based on two things. First, Jesus descends from Jacob, and in Him is found the joining of Gentiles into what is given to Israel –

“Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—<sup>12</sup> that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.<sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” Ephesians 2:11-13

There is, therefore, no reason to assume that what Moses says now excludes any outside of Jacob in the absolute sense. Rather, the line of Jacob encompasses those who come to Christ by faith. This can be seen in how the verses are set in parallel –

For:

- (a) +Portion Yehovah ^His people
- (b) -Jacob line ^His inheritance

Jacob defines the parameter of who the Lord’s people are because Messiah comes through Jacob. And so, secondly, this must be so because Abraham, for example, is clearly one of the Lord’s people, and yet Jacob descends from him.

There is an immediate context, and there is a greater context that must be inferred. With that in mind, the call of Jacob is next referred to by Moses...

*There is no other God; I know not one  
Search in the highest heavens and there will be only Me  
Seek throughout the earth until your days are done  
And no other god shall you see*

*I alone am the Lord your God  
And I alone led you in those early days  
Out of a howling, a wasteland you did tread  
Therefore, you shall commit yourself to Me always*

*Trust in Me, and I will give you rest  
I will lead you on soft paths, lush and green  
In your soul, you shall be forever blessed  
Because you have no other gods; to you only I am seen*

## **II. The Establishment and Exalting of Israel (verses 10-14)**

### **<sup>10</sup> “He found him in a desert land**

The verbs here and in the verses to come are imperfect, producing a state of vividness: *yimtsaehu b’erets midbar* – “He finds him in a land – a wilderness.” It is as if a movie is playing while Moses describes what is occurring as it happens. Hosea was probably thinking of these words when he wrote –

“I found Israel  
Like grapes in the wilderness;  
I saw your fathers  
As the firstfruits on the fig tree in its first season.” Hosea 9:10

Now, Moses proceeds...

### **<sup>10</sup> (con’t) And in the wasteland, a howling wilderness;**

*u-b’tohu yeled yeshimon* – “And in chaos – a howling, wasteland.” The word *tohu* has only been seen once so far, in Genesis 1:2, where it described the formless earth. There is also a new word, found only here in the Bible, *yeled*. It is a noun, not a verb, signifying “a howling.”

Everything about what is said gives the sense of aimlessness, confusion, and a lack of order or purpose. But then...

### **<sup>10</sup> (con’t) He encircled him, He instructed him,**

*yesovevenhu yevonehu* – “He encompasses him; He educates him.” The first verb is *savav*. It can mean to turn about, go around, or encircle. As such, it could be the Lord is leading him around, or that He is personally encompassing him. “Encompassing” would form proper parallelism. The words speak of the event with a sense of stability and purpose. The chaos is ending.

The second verb is *bin*, to discern. As such, it is more than instruction, which may or may not take hold. Rather, it is instruction that leads to discernment. Thus, “He educates him” is the intent. There is no longer a chaotic state, a howling, but a reasoned understanding. And more...

<sup>10</sup> (con’t) **He kept him as the apple of His eye.**

*yitserenhu k’iyshon eno* – “He guards him as little man His eye.” It is a marvelously poetic way of describing the pupil. The word *ishon* is a diminutive form of *ish*, or man. Thus, it is the “little” man. Being in the Lord’s eye, it signifies His pupil.

The sense is that as one will guard his pupil from any harm, so the Lord guarded Israel with the same intensity. The four clauses form two parallel ideas.

There is what is lost and what is unknown being replaced with safety and education. And there is insecurity and a lack of definition which is replaced with security and intent. Taken together, the four clauses appear thus –

- (a) He finds him \*in a land – ^a wilderness
- (a) And \*in chaos – ^a howling, wasteland
- (b) +He encompasses him; He educates him
- (b) +He guards him as little man His eye

Moses next continues with the calling...

<sup>11</sup> **As an eagle stirs up its nest,**

It is masculine and describes the father: *k’nesher yair qino* – “As eagle wakes up his nest.” The Lord is prompting Israel to get up and take flight, abandoning Egypt. He has taught them and protected them in the land where they dwelt, He has guarded them and kept them while destroying their enemies. Now it is time to fly from that nest...

<sup>11</sup> (con’t) **Hovers over its young,**



*al gozala yerakheph* – “Over His young He flutters.” The word *gozal*, or young bird, was seen in Genesis 15:9, in the first Song of Moses. It is now seen for the second and last time. The word *rakhaph* has only been seen in Genesis 1:2 where the Spirit of God moved over the surface of the waters.

The Spirit of God brooded over the waters, preparing the creation according to His wisdom. Here, the Lord broods over His young, preparing His people according to His wisdom. Moses is surely tying the preparation of the world for man to His preparation of Israel for being His people. When they are ready, He is...

**11 (con't) Spreading out its wings, taking them up,**

The object is singular, not plural. One young is taken: *yiprosh kenapha yiqakhehu* – “Spreads His wings; He takes him.” It is Israel who is taken up and brought forth from the nest. The imagery is marvelous as the Father cares for His young...

**11 (con't) Carrying them on its wings,**

Again, it is singular: *yisaehu al evrato* – “He lifts him up on His pinions.” It is a new and different word than “wings” of the previous clause, *evrah*. It signifies the pinions of the bird that the young can cling to. The young need do nothing but enjoy the ride. The idea is similar to that expressed in Exodus 19 –

“And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, ‘Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: <sup>4</sup>“You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself.”’” Exodus 19:3, 4

Notice the new structure for this verse which forms an aa/bb set of parallels –

- a) +As eagle -wakes up his nest
- a) +Over His young -He flutters
- b) \*Spreads His wings; ^He takes him
- b) ^He lifts him up \*on His pinions

Moses pulls out every tool he has available from his store of poetical devices in order to delight the senses of his audience. Next...

**12 So the LORD alone led him,**

*Yehovah bedad yankhenu* – “Yehovah alone He leads him.” The imperfect verbs continue, providing a vivid sense of action to the mind. The words now speak of the actual Exodus while the pillar of fire and cloud went before Israel as they departed –

“So they took their journey from Succoth and camped in Etham at the edge of the wilderness. <sup>21</sup> And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. <sup>22</sup> He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night *from* before the people.” Exodus 13:20-22

In this state of being led by Yehovah, Moses further says...

<sup>12</sup> (con't) **And *there was no foreign god with him.***

*v imo el nekar* – “And no with Him god foreign.” The “Him” refers to the Lord, not Israel. No other god aided Him as He led His people out. As such, Albert Barnes wisely states –

“The Lord alone delivered Israel; Israel therefore ought to have served none other but Him.”

Moses, still pulling out literary delights, provides a contrasting parallel in this verse –

- (a) Yehovah alone He leads him
- (b) And no with Him god foreign

With the calling complete, Moses moves to the future of where they are now, speaking of the establishment of Israel in the land...

<sup>13</sup> **“He made him ride in the heights of the earth,**

*yarkibehu al bamote arets* – “He makes him ride upon high places earth.” The idea is that of the Lord causing Israel to subjugate the land, allowing them to take possession of it. The expression is explained in Amos and Micah where the same words are used –

“For behold,  
He who forms mountains,  
And creates the wind,  
Who declares to man what his thought *is*,  
And makes the morning darkness,

Who treads the high places of the earth—  
The LORD God of hosts *is* His name.” Amos 4:13

“For behold, the LORD is coming out of His place;  
He will come down  
And tread on the high places of the earth.” Micah 1:3

Ultimately, this then looks to be the Lord Himself subduing the earth. But immediately, it speaks of Israel doing so. In the subjugation of the land, Israel can then occupy and enjoy its plunder...

**13 (con't) That he might eat the produce of the fields;**

*vayokal tenuvoth saday* – “And he eats produce fields.” It is a new word, *tenuvah*, signifying fruit or produce. It is ultimately derived from a word signifying “to germinate.” Hence, that which produces from the seed is what is being referred to.

**13 (con't) He made him draw honey from the rock,**

*v'yeniqehu debash mi'sela* – “And he makes to suck honey from crag.” Israel is a rocky, stony, craggy place. The word *sela* signifies a craggy rock. In such places, bees will form their hives. Thus, it signifies sweetness, even from a place that would otherwise seem inhospitable.

Despite this as a literal occurrence, *debash*, or honey, is equated to the word of God in Scripture –

“And He said to me, ‘Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you.’ So I ate, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness.”  
-Ezekiel 3:3

The word *sela*, or craggy place, is metaphorically used to refer to the Lord at times –

“The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer;  
My God, my strength, in whom I will trust;” Psalm 18:2

As such one can infer that this metaphorically can speak of Israel drawing out the word of God from the Lord when in the land given to them. A very suitable analogy.

**13 (con't) And oil from the flinty rock;**

*v'shemen m'khal mish tsur* – “And oil from flinty rock.” This is certainly referring to the growth of the olive trees, even out of hard, flinty rock.

Their roots entwine with the rocks, providing them with a stable, enduring foundation. Also, the moisture that results from the changes in temperature causes condensation which is used to feed the tree. Thus, oil is produced from the flinty rock.

However, there is another metaphor being conveyed. Oil in Scripture speaks of anointing, and thus, the presence of the Spirit. And the *tsur*, or flinty rock is equated to the Lord, even five times in this chapter –

“*He is the Rock, His work is perfect;  
For all His ways are justice,  
A God of truth and without injustice;  
Righteous and upright is He.*” Deuteronomy 32:4

As such, it is a metaphor for the coming forth of the anointing of the Spirit from the Lord, something that would occur in and among Israel. In this verse, we have a new structure where the first clause leads to the resulting second thought, and then to the subordinate clauses –

He makes him ride upon high places earth  
And he may eat produce fields  
And he makes to suck  
-Honey from crag  
-And oil from flinty rock

The words of the next verse continue to reveal the delights to be obtained from having entered and subjugated this beautiful land that is provided by the Lord...

**14 Curds from the cattle, and milk of the flock,**

*khemat baqar v'khalav tson* – “Curd cattle and milk flock.” The curd signifies milk that is in a partially solid or solid state, such as in thick cream or even butter. It, along with honey, is expressly stated to be what Messiah will be nourished on –

“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. <sup>15</sup> Curds and honey He shall eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good.” Isaiah 7:14, 15

The curd is then complemented with the fresh milk of sheep. In Scripture, milk is equated to the word as well –

“Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, <sup>2</sup> as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, <sup>3</sup> if indeed you have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious.” 1 Peter 2:1, 2

Moses also notes...

<sup>14</sup> (con't) **With fat of lambs;**

*im khelev karim* – “With fat lambs.” Fat is a metaphor for abundance and health of life. The word to describe the lambs is one that signifies them being full-grown and plump. The picture is one of complete abundance and prosperity. Along with that...

<sup>14</sup> (con't) **And rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats,**

*v'elim bene bashan v'athudim* – “And rams sons of Bashan and goats.” The type of rams, *elim*, signify strength. Bashan is an area especially noted for its livestock. As such, it indicates the finest of animals in the best of condition.

The *athudim*, or rams, signify those that are full grown. The word comes from *athad*, signifying “to be ready.” Thus, they are perfectly suited for the finest of meals. And there is yet more...

<sup>14</sup> (con't) **With the choicest wheat;**

*im khelev kilyot khitah* – “With fat kidneys wheat.” The fat around the kidneys is the purest of fat. It is the fat that was removed from the animal and burnt upon the altar in the sacrifices of Israel. The kidney is that which signifies the mind and reasoning in the Bible.

These are then used as descriptors of the wheat, it being the very finest of all wheat, being large and with the germ that is exceedingly healthy and ready to burst forth. With

this abundance noted, Moses provides one more note in this verse to close us out today. It is stated in the form of an address...

**\*14 (fin) And you drank wine, the blood of the grapes.**

*v'dam enav tishteh khamer* – “And blood grape you drink wine.” In this is a word found only this once in Scripture, *khamer*, or wine. It comes from a word signifying to ferment. As such, this is a poetic way of saying that the wine is fermented and pure. Like blood, it is unmixed.

The structure must be considered with the previous verse. Although I'm not a poetic specialist, I would think this is how the two verses are presented by Moses. If someone has a better way to present them, mail it to me with a \$10 evaluation charge.

He makes him ride upon high places earth

And he may eat produce fields

\*And he makes to suck

-Honey from crag

-And oil from flinty rock

\*Curd cattle and milk flock

-With fat lambs

-And rams sons of Bashan and goats.

\*With fat kidneys wheat

\* And blood grape you drink wine

In these verses, there are both shadows and hints of the Messiah, as well as that which He provides to His people. There is food for the young, there is food for the mature. There is drink for the young, and there is drink for the mature.

There is that which strengthens the weak to grow, and there is nourishment for the mature to be sustained. It is a beautiful reflection of what is found in Christ and in His word.

This is what Israel was provided for their physical lives, both for continuance and enjoyment. And it anticipates that which is for believers in God's Christ for our growth, nourishment, and enjoyment as well.

We will see how Israel will fare with these blessings in the verses ahead, and we should contemplate how we will fare as we receive, or ignore, our spiritual blessings.

The Song of Moses speaks of realities concerning the future of Israel in a poetic fashion, but it also speaks of things that we can both reflect on and receive in our life before God.

But just as important as this, the song conveys to us ideas and concepts that will help strengthen our understanding of the rest of Scripture in various ways. It will illuminate the errors and follies of Israel and yet it will also illuminate the unceasing faithfulness of the Lord towards them, despite that.

Let us thank God that He will treat us in the same faithful manner when we are called by Him. The Lord will give us abundance and blessing as we live for Him, and He will chasten us as we fail to do so. But the Lord has never cast off Israel, and He will faithfully keep us to the end as well.

This is the greatness of God towards His redeemed. Let us keep this in mind and hold fast to that. But let us also not test Him as Israel was prone to do. In this, we will remain in the sweet spot of being always on His favorable side.

**Closing Verse:** *“Show Your marvelous lovingkindness by Your right hand,  
O You who save those who trust in You  
From those who rise up against them.  
8 Keep me as the apple of Your eye;  
Hide me under the shadow of Your wings.” Psalm 17:7, 8*

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 32:15-22 *More of this amazing body of poetry...* (The Song of Moses, Part III) (95<sup>th</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

## **The Song of Moses, Part II**

“Remember the days of old  
Consider the years of many generations  
Ask your father, and he will show you  
Your elders, and they will tell you; so take your learning stations

When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations  
When He separated the sons of Adam, as the word does tell  
He set the boundaries of the peoples  
According to the number of the children of Israel

For the LORD's portion is His people, this is His stance  
Jacob is the place of His inheritance

"He found him in a desert land  
And in the wasteland, a howling wilderness: barren and dry  
He encircled him, He instructed him  
He kept him as the apple of His eye

As an eagle stirs up its nest  
Hovers over its young, so it does these things  
Spreading out its wings, taking them up  
Carrying them on its wings

So the LORD alone led him, not by merely a whim  
And there was no foreign god with him

"He made him ride in the heights of the earth  
That he might eat the produce of the fields  
He made him draw honey from the rock  
And oil from the flinty rock, so it yields

Curds from the cattle, and milk of the flock  
With fat of lambs they did eat  
And rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats  
With the choicest wheat

And you drank wine  
With the blood of the grapes you did dine

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true



And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## **Deuteronomy 32:15-22** **(The Song of Moses, Part III)**

My dad mentioned to me many years ago that when typing a book, the less references there are to a specific period, the more likely the book will be relevant at any time. If one refers to Ronald Reagan in the book, the material becomes dated. As such, it will only be relevant to those who are looking into that specific era or topic.

I've tried to remember that lesson and have attempted to make things I write more useful to any generation. However, there is also the truth that when writing things, there is often more of an appeal to the audience if a lesson from "right now" is included.

It is hard to get away from "right now," because it is our reference point to gauge the past and compare it to our own circumstances. This can be especially relevant in a sermon where people need to wake up to what is happening around them.

It may be helpful to make a comparison of Israel as Moses describes him in today's passage to some other point in time, like ancient Rome that also grew fat and complacent, but if that is all that is stated, it ignores the obvious connection to us today.

This sermon will refer to our circumstances in the US as we become the latest example in the history of the world to follow the same pattern since creation. Society is formed, society develops until man increases and has ease, man forsakes God and grows in wickedness, and man is judged, reaping what he has sown.

**Text Verse:** *"Yet hear now, O Jacob My servant,  
And Israel whom I have chosen.  
<sup>2</sup> Thus says the LORD who made you  
And formed you from the womb, who will help you:  
'Fear not, O Jacob My servant;  
And you, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen. Isaiah 44:1, 2*

The Lord formed Jacob His servant, and He chose Jeshurun, meaning Israel. As such, there should have been a resulting appreciation for what the Lord had done, a clinging to Him, and an ever-increasing bond between them.

But that is not human nature. Instead, people, communities, nations, and indeed the entire world tend to move away from God as they prosper and develop. The more prosperous the city, the more liberal and wicked the people become.

This is why a nation, such as the United States, may have massive areas of conservative voters that are spread out across the nation, but the cities and populated states quickly turn left and take on a distasteful shade of blue. There is a joining together of those who are prosperous, and the result is discussions about new, inventive, and exciting ways of doing evil.

With the global prosperity that has arisen in the past century, the entire world is heading down the same path as the pre-flood world. Only when real calamity arises will people turn back to the Lord. Unfortunately, when real calamity arises, it is often too late.

When a nuke detonates over Rome, for example, there won't be much time to think on how to get right with God. Only those on the outskirts of the blast zone will have time to maybe humble themselves and reach out to Him before the radiation consumes what is left of them too. And those further away may, if they are wise, see and turn.

But it all started with a life of ease. When things are going well, we forget our God and find other things to chase after. Let us be wise and pay heed to Him now, before things devolve, not after.

Such lessons as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. The Rock of His Salvation (verses 15-18)**

We have been following the progression of the Song of Moses as it develops. There has been an introductory call. Moses then proclaimed the perfections of Yehovah. He then provided a contrast by noting the imperfections of Israel. Next, he spoke of the calling, establishment, and exalting of the nation. Verses 15-18 will tell of Israel's abandonment of Yehovah because of prosperity and ease, leading to apostasy from Him and to false gods...

<sup>15</sup> **"But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked;**

As was the case previously, the verbs are imperfect, giving the sense of the events happening right before our eyes: *va'yishman Yeshurun va'yivat* – "And he grows fat, Yeshurun, and he kicks." Jeshurun is a proper noun and is a play upon the name "Israel." One can see the similarity when written in Hebrew:

Yisrael: יִשְׂרָאֵל

Yeshurun: יִשְׁרׁוּן

It will be seen only four times – here, in 33:5 & 33:26, and in Isaiah 44:4. It is derived from the word *yashar*, which means straight, level, or upright. Some see it as a diminutive and thus a term of endearment, which is then something like “Child of the Upright,” or “Blameless Little People.”

Others say it is a descriptor: “Upright One.” But if you look at the other times it is used, it is given synonymously for the name Jacob. As such, it is a proper noun: “Upright” –

“Moses commanded a law for us,  
A heritage of the congregation of Jacob.  
<sup>5</sup>And He was King in Jeshurun,  
When the leaders of the people were gathered,  
All the tribes of Israel together.” Deuteronomy 33:4, 5

Of this name for Israel, Moses describes his state as “he grows fat.” It is a new verb, *shamen*, meaning to grow fat. It is always used in conjunction with Israel. The idea is that of having plenty and thus being at ease.

In such a state, there is a resulting lack of reliance on the Lord. In essence, “All is good and I have no needs. I can do as I want without a care.” The other three uses of the word show the process by which Israel departed from the Lord. The first to note is found in Isaiah, prior to any thought of exile –

“And He said, “Go, and tell this people:  
‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand;  
Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’  
<sup>10</sup> “Make the heart of this people dull, [lit: make fat]  
And their ears heavy,  
And shut their eyes;  
Lest they see with their eyes,  
And hear with their ears,  
And understand with their heart,  
And return and be healed.”” Isaiah 6:9, 10

From there, Moses’ words are fulfilled in the people as described by Jeremiah –

“They have grown fat, they are sleek;  
Yes, they surpass the deeds of the wicked;  
They do not plead the cause,  
The cause of the fatherless;  
Yet they prosper,  
And the right of the needy they do not defend.  
<sup>29</sup> Shall I not punish *them* for these *things?*’ says the LORD.  
‘Shall I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this?’” Jeremiah 5:28

And then, after the exile, Nehemiah recalls the state of the people –

“And they took strong cities and a rich land,  
And possessed houses full of all goods,  
Cisterns *already* dug, vineyards, olive groves,  
And fruit trees in abundance.  
So they ate and were filled and grew fat,  
And delighted themselves in Your great goodness.” Nehemiah 9:25

One can see how ease (growing fat) leads to a growing fat of the heart, meaning the understanding, and that then leads to a rejection of the Lord and a need for His corrective measures. If one can’t see that in our nation today, he is not looking very hard.

Moses says that in this state of growing fat, “and he kicks.” It is another new and rare verb, *baat*. It will only be seen one more time and the sense of the meaning is understood from it –

“Why do you **kick** at My sacrifice and My offering which I have commanded *in* My dwelling place, and honor your sons more than Me, to make yourselves fat with the best of all the offerings of Israel My people?” 1 Samuel 2:29

The idea is “to despise.” In Jeshurun’s growing fat, their attitude towards the Lord and His goodness towards them is to despise Him. As before, it is exactly what is seen in our nation today. Next, Moses again uses the word signifying to grow fat along with another new word...

<sup>15</sup> (con’t) **You grew fat, you grew thick,**

It is correct: *shamanta avita* – “You grew fat! You grew thick!” The aspect of the verbs is now in the perfect. Note the change –

“And he grows fat, Yeshurun, and he kicks.”

“You grew fat! You grew thick!”

From the action of growing fat, the result is realized. Along with that, a new word, *avah*, or “to be thick,” is seen. One can see Upright, no longer upright. He is a blob that has grown out instead of up. So much so that...

15 (con't) **You are obese!**

*kasita* – “You *are* bulging!” The verb *kasah* is found only here. It comes from the cognate noun *kasah*, meaning to cover. A literal translation would be, “You *are* covered.” But the unstated meaning is being covered with fat. Yeshurun has gorged himself so much and so often that he is nothing but a roly-poly blob. As such...

15 (con't) **Then he forsook God *who* made him,**

*va'yitosh eloha asahu* – “And he deserts God *who* made him.” Explaining the verb *natash* will clarify the action. It comes from a root meaning to pound. As such, when something is pounded, it spreads out and the edges move farther and farther away.

What is evident is that as Israel grows, there is a resulting movement away from God. It just happens. It is the inevitable result of prosperity. The same has been the case in the US. We have grown fat, really fat.

We have “kicked” in our obesity, and the disdain we have shown for God has only grown as the prosperity has increased. This is so much the case that to even speak of Him in public is considered objectionable by the left. They literally hate Him and want Him erased from every public meeting place.

Israel was there before we were, but many of Israel are still here. The halls of our government are inclusive of Jews who literally hate the thought of God, but they are only a part of the left's machine of this hatred. They are just more practiced at it after all of this time...

15 (con't) **And scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation.**

*vay'navel tsur yeshuato* – “And he humiliates Rock his salvation.” The verb *navel* speaks of being foolish or stupid. As this is used causatively, the action is toward the Lord, and it is hard to come up with a suitable word to convey the intent, but I would liken what they do to how Christ was treated on the cross. He was mocked and humiliated. In this, the sense seems to come through appropriately. Verse 15 has a particular parallel structure to it –

(a) And he grows fat, Yeshurun, (b) and he kicks.

- (a) You grew fat! You grew thick!

- (a) You *are* bulging!

- (b) And he deserts God *who* made him.

- (b) And he humiliates Rock his salvation.

Israel looked around and saw that life was good. There is no need for anything and no care for life with the Lord, and so they looked down on Him instead of looking up to Him. Yeshurun humiliates the Rock of His salvation. On to the next verse...

#### **<sup>16</sup> They provoked Him to jealousy with foreign gods;**

*yaqniuhu b'zarim*– “They move Him to jealousy in strangers.” Notice how the words have gone to the plural. Israel forsook the Lord, and all of the people go astray in their own unique way. One after this, and one after that.

The words themselves are reminiscent of the man in Numbers 5 who is jealous of his wife who has strayed. There it says, “if the spirit of jealousy comes upon him and he becomes jealous of his wife, who has defiled herself” (Numbers 5:14).

The people go after strangers, meaning gods other than the Lord. In this, they move Him to jealousy. It is the US today, ten thousand false gods – wood, stone, digital, sexual, powerful influence, financial, religious... it goes on and on. There is time for anything and everything except for the Lord. As such, it is...

#### **<sup>16</sup> (con't) With abominations they provoked Him to anger.**

*b'toevot yakisuhu* – “In abominations they are provoking Him to indignation.” The jealousy leads to the anger. Their false attitude towards Him is the grounds for His anger. This is perfectly seen in the record of Jeroboam, where the same verb is used –

“because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he had sinned and by which he had made Israel sin, because of his provocation with which he had provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger.” 1 Kings 15:30

Jeroboam had set up the golden calves in Bethel and in Dan for the people to worship, but even more offensively, he ascribed to them the people’s deliverance from Egypt –

“It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!” 1 Kings 12:28

But this is what the people had already done, even from the very moments after they had accepted the terms of the covenant –

“And Aaron said to them, ‘Break off the golden earrings which *are* in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring *them* to me.’<sup>3</sup> So all the people broke off the golden earrings which *were* in their ears, and brought *them* to Aaron.<sup>4</sup> And he received *the gold* from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf.

Then they said, ‘This *is* your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!’” Exodus 32:2-4

But Aaron went further by then stating that what they had just made was, in fact, the Lord, saying, “A feast to Yehovah, tomorrow!” (CG). In these things, the people not only prostituted themselves to others, but they did so while claiming that what they were worshipping – something which is a part of what He created – is actually the self-existent Creator, Yehovah.

It is like watching the pope kiss the feet of a plastic model of baby Jesus or a wooden image of Jesus hanging on a cross and calling it a good thing, as if that is somehow connected to the Lord who actually came and walked among us and who was then crucified for our sins. There is no reasoning as to the true nature of their actions before the Lord. In this verse, we see reverse parallelism –

- (a) They move Him to jealousy (b) in strangers
- (b) In abominations (a) they are provoking Him to indignation

It is future, but it is assured. The charges against them are laid out, in advance. But more indictment against Israel is ahead...



**<sup>17</sup> They sacrificed to demons, not to God,**

*yizbekhu la'shedim lo eloha* – “They are sacrificing to the demons, not God.” It is a rare and difficult word, *shed*, found only here and in Psalm 106:37. Some say it is of foreign origin, like the Arabic word for Satan. As such, and being plural, it would be “to the Satans,” and thus demons.

It may also come from the Hebrew *shud*, signifying waste. This would still refer to demons, as something malignant. Moses was aware of them, in advance, and the Psalm bears out that Israel did exactly this, even with their own children –

“They even sacrificed their sons  
And their daughters to **demons**,  
<sup>38</sup> And shed innocent blood,  
The blood of their sons and daughters,  
Whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan;  
And the land was polluted with blood.” Psalm 106:37, 38

The horror of their actions cries out from the pages of their own Scriptures, testifying against them both in advance and after the fact. This is what Paul later warned the church of –

“Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. <sup>21</sup> You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons. <sup>22</sup> Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?” 1 Corinthians 10:20-22

This is a practice often seen in Roman Catholicism where the false gods of the nations are actually incorporated into the church through what is known as syncretism – the merging of different religious expressions.

Just two years ago, a statue of Pachamama (Mother Earth) of Amazonian worship was incorporated into a Vatican display during prayer services. As praise and prayers are considered sacrifices to God, this is perfectly akin to what Israel was charged for. Their allegiances were directed...

<sup>17</sup> (con’t) **To gods they did not know,**

*elohim lo yedaum* – ““Gods no they knew.” The Lord was God to them. He had removed them from a land of gods to be their only God, but they didn’t just go back to the old gods of Egypt. They actively went seeking after new gods to serve...

**17 (con’t) To new gods, new arrivals**

It is a plural adjective: *khadashim miqarov bau* – “Newbies, from near they came.” The word *qarov*, or near, can mean in time or in vicinity. Due to the structure of the verse, it is probably referring to time. They are newbies...

**17 (con’t) That your fathers did not fear.**

*lo searum avotekem* – “No have they dreaded, your fathers.” One gets the sense of appeasement with these words. The word *sa’ar* doesn’t mean to just fear, but to be terrified of. It comes from a root signifying “to storm.”

Thus, it speaks of being terribly afraid. We can imagine the false gods conjure up by people when telling stories. Eventually, like in a Hollywood movie, the people become terrified of them. In order to pacify them, sacrifices are made to them.

This is unlike their fathers who were close to the Lord. Their relationship was not of terror, but of awe that indicated a right fear of Him. Instead of trusting in and fearing the Lord (we’ll say, “Take a chance on Me!”), they feared the demons and sacrificed to them (to the Lord they said “So long!”). Hence the abba structure –

- (a) They are sacrificing to the demons, not God.
- (b) ‘Gods’ no they knew. (previously unknown)
- (b) Newbies, from near they came. (previously unknown)
- (a) No have they dreaded, your fathers.

Enough pop music for now! Of the false gods, they were mindful, but of the Lord from whom they issued, however...

**18 Of the Rock *who* begot you, you are unmindful,**

The second verb is a jussive: *tsur yeladekha teshi* – “Rock brought forth you; may you forget!” It is also a word unique in Scripture, *shayah*. It comes from a root signifying to keep in memory; be unmindful. Being a jussive, however, it is as a command to forget.

Also, the words are all in the singular: You, Israel. Therefore, it is a play on words. There is the Rock, stable and unchanging, who brought Israel forth, and then there is Israel being practically commanded by Moses to forget Him because of their actions toward Him...

<sup>18</sup> (con't) **And have forgotten the God who fathered you.**

*va'tishkakh el mekholelekha* – “And you have forgotten God in travail with you.” The idea conveyed is the process the Lord went through in order to establish Israel. It is as if He brought them forth as a woman in labor. All of His efforts were expended to do so, and yet Israel has forgotten Him. Moses uses the same term to describe the formation of the world itself –

“Before the mountains were brought forth,  
while Thou wast yet in travail with earth and world,  
and from eternity unto eternity Thou art God!” Psalm 90:2 (Ellicott)

Again, we see here reverse parallelism –

(a) Rock brought forth you; (b) may you forget!  
(b) And you have forgotten (a) God in travail with you.

*The Rock of our salvation is not like any other God  
He is steadfast and mighty to save  
To Him alone do the redeemed shout and applaud  
A marvelous thing He did when His Son He gave*

*Let us refrain from provoking Him  
By following after that which is less than bubbles  
That will set us on a path, dark and grim  
And set our feet on a way filled with troubles*

*In Him alone, let us find our rest  
And to Him alone, let us direct all of our praise  
He is worthy of it all, even our very best  
And He is worthy of it all, even to eternal days*

## **II. I Will Provoke Them to Jealousy (Verses 19-22)**

With Israel's abandonment of the Lord noted by Moses, he will now bring out Yehovah's rejection of them, His turning from them, and His judgment upon them. However, in verse 21 it will allude to His plan to lure Israel back to Himself through His active turning to another group of people.

**19 "And when the LORD saw *it*, He spurned *them*,**

*va'yar Yehovah va'yinats* – "And saw, Yehovah, and spurned." The words are of Moses beholding the results of Israel's actions. They are direct, comprehensive, and unambiguous. Israel's doings are completely open and exposed before the Lord. In seeing what they have done in spurning Him, He in turn snubs them. We cannot help but see the ultimate spurning of Him in the Person of Jesus.

It's not that they just rejected Him and nailed Him to the tree, but they continued to do so, even after the innumerable evidences that He had resurrected and that in His name healing came to the people through miracles being performed. And so, He spurned them...

**19 (con't) Because of the provocation of His sons and His daughters.**

*mi'kaas banav u-benotav* – "From provocation His sons and His daughters." Here, the idea of the previous verse continues. The Lord brought them forth and He was in travail with them.

Taken with the previous verse, one can see an additional parallelism where the forgetting of the people leads to the spurning of them by the Lord and how the forgetting of their Father is equated to provocation of the children. It is an a/b/a/b pattern –

- a) Rock brought forth you; may you forget!
- b) And you have forgotten God in travail with you.
- a) And saw, Yehovah, and spurned.
- b) From provocation His sons and His daughters.

They are His sons and His daughters, but they are disobedient and unfaithful to their Father...

**20 And He said: 'I will hide My face from them,**

*va'yomer astirah panay me'hem* – “And He said, I will hide My face from them.” This is the result of His spurning them. Moses speaks on behalf of the Lord: “I will hide my face from them.” This thought was first expressed in the previous chapter –

“And the LORD said to Moses: ‘Behold, you will rest with your fathers; and this people will rise and play the harlot with the gods of the foreigners of the land, where they go *to be* among them, and they will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them. <sup>17</sup> Then My anger shall be aroused against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them, and they shall be devoured. And many evils and troubles shall befall them, so that they will say in that day, “Have not these evils come upon us because our God *is* not among us?” <sup>18</sup> And I will surely hide My face in that day because of all the evil which they have done, in that they have turned to other gods.’”

-Deuteronomy 31:16-18

When the expression “I will hide my face from them” is used, one can get the sense of the Father not allowing his disobedient children to come into His presence. Cambridge stupidly says the words “And He said” are a gloss that overloads the rhythm. A gloss is added only to highlight the rhythm, not overload it.

The words are perfectly placed to draw out the thought of the Lord for us to consider. The people are cast off and left to their own devices as a form of discipline against them. The Lord is curious how they will fare...

<sup>20</sup> (con't) **I will see what their end *will be*,**

*ereh mah akharitam* – “I will see what their end.” For sure, the Lord knows their end. It is an ironic way of saying it, just as a parent would say when a child threatens to run away – “Go ahead and go then! We’ll see how far you get.” The Lord knows that without Him, their end won’t be a happy one...

<sup>20</sup> (con't) **For they *are* a perverse generation,**

*ki dor tahpukoth* – “For generation contrariness.” It is a new noun to Scripture, *tahpukah*, coming from *haphak*, meaning to turn or overturn. Hence, it refers to them as those who are contrary, always turning things around. This word will be seen nine more times, all in the Proverbs. A good example of it is –

“A violent man entices his neighbor,  
And leads him in a way *that is* not good.  
<sup>30</sup> He winks his eye to devise perverse things;  
He purses his lips *and* brings about evil.” Proverbs 16:29, 30

Like the violent man whose facial expressions give away the things of his heart, so is Israel as they devise things that are perverse and mull over doing evil. They are...

<sup>20</sup> (con't) **Children in whom *is* no faith.**

*hemah banim lo emun bam* – “They children no trustworthiness in them.” It is a new noun, not an adjective, *emun*. It is derived from *aman*, to confirm or support. Thus, it speaks of the state of being established or trustworthy. Israel is being equated to children that are asked to do the chores while dad is away, and when he comes home, he finds that nothing was done.

Instead, the house is sloppier than before, the animals all ran away because the gate was left open, and the day’s vegetables have bugs in them because they weren’t taken inside and washed. And instead of memorizing their daily Bible passage, they have torn out the pages and made paper airplanes.

One can see the a/a/b/b structure of the verse when it is set forth as a whole –

And said,

- a) I will hide My face from them.
- a) I will see what their end.
- b) For generation contrariness.
- b) They children no trustworthiness in them.

In their untrustworthiness, He says...

<sup>21</sup> **They have provoked Me to jealousy by *what* is not God;**

*hem qinuni b’lo el* – “They provoked me jealous in ‘no-god.’” Israel worshipped anything and everything that they could set before them. Not one of the things they set before them was God. The singular is used to describe all of the various things as one. Cumulatively, they are all a “no-god.” The Lord contrasts Himself to them, giving the reason for His jealousy. But there is more...

21 (con't) **They have moved Me to anger by their foolish idols.**

*kiasuni b'havlehem* – “They have moved Me to indignation in their bubbles.” The word *hevel* signifies vapor or breath. To give the sense of something that can be seen but has no substance, I said bubbles. They look like something, but they are nothing – like your breath that you see on a cold morning, and then it is gone.

Because of worshipping something so ridiculously stupid, they have moved the Lord to a state of vexation. As this is so, a plan has been devised to bring them back to their senses...

21 (con't) **But I will provoke them to jealousy by those who are not a nation;**

There is an emphasis in the words: *va'ani aqniem b'lo am* – “And I, I will provoke them to jealousy in no-people.” One can almost hear the Lord call out as He contrasts what He will do to what they have done. “They have done this, and I, I will do that.” He then contrasts their “no-god” to His “no-people.”

It is the call of the Gentiles. Israel’s gods were many and thus they are no-god. The Gentiles are many peoples and thus they are “no-people.” The contrasting thought continues with...

21 (con't) **I will move them to anger by a foolish nation.**

It is a brilliant statement forming a play on words between two clauses and an alliteration between two different clauses. The words *go naval*, or nation foolish, are set against *havlehem*, or bubbles, forming a play on words. The words *naval* and *hevel* are spelled with only one letter difference in the Hebrew.

The alliteration is seen in the words *aqniem* (provoke to jealousy) and *akisem* (move them to anger). Moses is speaking for the Lord in a unique and remarkable way. Great structure can be seen in the verse –

(a) They provoked me jealous (b) in ‘no-god.’

(a) They have moved Me to indignation (b) in their bubbles [הבל].

(a) And I, I will provoke them to jealousy [אקניאם] (b) in no-people.

(b) In nation foolish [נבל] (a) I will move them to indignation [אכעיסם].

This verse is carefully used by Paul as he makes his case for the gospel of justification by faith alone through the calling of the Gentiles in Romans 10 –

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? <sup>15</sup> And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace,  
Who bring glad tidings of good things!”

<sup>16</sup> But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “LORD, who has believed our report?” <sup>17</sup> So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

<sup>18</sup> But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed:

“Their sound has gone out to all the earth,  
And their words to the ends of the world.”

<sup>19</sup> But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says:

“I will provoke you to jealousy by *those who are* not a nation,  
I will move you to anger by a foolish nation.”

<sup>20</sup> But Isaiah is very bold and says:

“I was found by those who did not seek Me;  
I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me.”

<sup>21</sup> But to Israel he says:

“All day long I have stretched out My hands  
To a disobedient and contrary people.” Romans 10:14-21

Israel failed to find Christ and the Lord turned to the Gentiles to provoke them. But His anger was also to be brought to bear against them...

**<sup>22</sup> For a fire is kindled in My anger,**

*ki esh qadekhah b’api* – “For fire kindled in My nostril.” Here is a new word *qadakh*. It signifies to kindle. The Lord spoke through Jeremiah of this using the same word –

“And you, even yourself,  
Shall let go of your heritage which I gave you;  
And I will cause you to serve your enemies  
In the land which you do not know;  
For you have kindled a fire in My anger *which* shall burn forever.” Jeremiah 17:4



The idea of the burning nostril is that of fire shooting forth from it. His anger and hot displeasure burn forth as such...

<sup>22</sup> (con't) **And shall burn to the lowest hell;**

*va'tiqad ad sheol takhtith* – “And shall burn even to Sheol lowest.” The word *sheol* can signify various things: the pit, the underworld, the grave, and so on.

The word “hell” is an archaic word used to refer to Hades, the underworld. Today, hell takes on the thought of the place of eternal damnation. This is not the intent. The fire will burn to the lowest places, even the realm of the dead. One can think of Jesus’ parable about Lazarus and the rich man. Nowhere will be safe from the burning anger of the Lord. As such...

<sup>22</sup> (con't) **It shall consume the earth with her increase,**

*va'tokal erets vibulah* – “And consume land and her increase.” This is specifically referring to the land of Israel at this time. The judgment being referred to is solely upon Israel. As far as the connection to the corresponding clause, it says in Genesis 3:19 –

“In the sweat of your face [literally: nostril] you shall eat bread  
Till you return to the ground,  
For out of it you were taken;  
For dust you *are*,  
And to dust you shall return.” Genesis 3:19

Man tends to the ground as the sweat rolls down his nostril to bring forth the increase of the earth. The fire of the Lord’s nostril shoots down upon the earth and consumes all that Israel has worked for. Nothing will be left; everything in the land will be devoured...

\*<sup>22</sup> (fin) **And set on fire the foundations of the mountains.**

*va'telahet mosde harim* – “And enflame foundations mountains.” Moses uses another new word, *lahet*. It is derived from a root meaning to lick. Thus, by implication, it means to enflame as tongues of flames lick up everything.

This is a poetic way of speaking of the strongest fortifications, even those set directly into the base of mountains, being utterly consumed by the fire the Lord kindles. There would be flames and burning until nothing was left.

- (a) For fire kindled in My nostril.
- (b) And shall burn even to Sheol lowest.
- (a) And consume land and her increase.
- (b) And enflame foundations mountains.

The marvelously structured and worded verses are given to excite the imagination and provide an anchor for remembering the content. But the contents are based on an actual meaning. They were given by Moses as a warning of what lay ahead for Israel.

Unfortunately, they failed to pay heed, and the terrors that were prophesied came to pass. Their failure continues to this day, and greater terrors lie ahead in the contents of the poem. But more, what lies ahead also includes the world at large.

Thus, the poem, along with the rest of Scripture, is given as a testament and a warning to the world. But the big question is, “Does anyone think the world will pay heed when even the church doesn’t?”

The large majority of the church is asleep at the wheel. Entire denominations are being led astray by truly wicked people. The holiness and sanctity of the word is disregarded. It is relegated to a bunch of myths outside of a few verses that somehow demonstrate that all will be well, and that God accepts what we do, no matter how depraved and vile it is.

This is not the case. Israel failed to pay heed, and even after the millennia of judgments upon them, they still have their heads buried deeply in the sand. The church has – for all intents and purposes – followed suit. And thus, the world has no reason to assume that the contents of Scripture hold any merit at all.

In this state, things will not – indeed they cannot – go well. But you, fellow Christian, I would ask you to take stock of what you have heard, apply it to your life, and not be led astray by those who say, “All is well; the Lord does not see or care.”

They are deluded, and in this, the wrath of God shall come upon the entire world. This is the warning of Scripture, but it is preceded with a mark of grace. God was willing to spend His wrath towards us in His own beloved Son.

The pains and wrath that Christ faced were sufficient to stay the wrath of God that we deserve, because the righteousness He bears is sufficient to remove from us the sin we bear. In Him, and in Him alone, the exchange can be made.

Israel has yet to figure this out, but the people of God – those who understand the significance of the cross – have seen and understood. If you are like disobedient Israel, today is the day for you to wake up from your slumber and reach out to the God who loves you enough to do what He did... just for you. Don't waste a moment but call out to Him for life and length of days, even to eternity in His presence.

**Closing Verse:** *"For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. <sup>26</sup> And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:*

*'The Deliverer will come out of Zion,  
And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;  
<sup>27</sup> For this is My covenant with them,  
When I take away their sins.'" Romans 11:25-27*

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 32:23-34 *The majesty of the words will go on some more...*  
(The Song of Moses, Part IV) (96<sup>th</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **The Song of Moses, Part III**

"But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked  
You grew fat, you grew thick. You are obese!  
-----you disobedient nation  
Then he forsook God who made him  
And scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation

With foreign gods they provoked Him to jealousy  
With abominations they provoked Him to anger exceedingly

They sacrificed to demons, not to God  
To gods they did not know, they drew them near  
To new gods, new arrivals  
That your fathers did not fear

Of the Rock who begot you, you are unmindful, sad but true  
And have forgotten the God who fathered you

“And when the LORD saw it, He spurned them  
-----this disobedient nation  
Because of His sons’ and His daughters’ provocation

And He said: ‘I will hide My face from them  
I will see what their end will be  
For they are a perverse generation  
Children in whom is no faith towards Me

They have provoked Me to jealousy by what is not God  
They have moved Me to anger by their foolish idols  
-----that cannot soothe  
But I will provoke them to jealousy by those who are not a nation  
By a foolish nation, I will them to anger move

For a fire is kindled in My anger  
And shall burn to the lowest hell, below the deepest fountains  
It shall consume the earth with her increase  
And set on fire the foundations of the mountains

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## Deuteronomy 32:23-33 (The Song of Moses, Part IV)

In some of our verses today, Moses, speaking as the Lord, says that He would have utterly eradicated Israel if it were not for the sake of the enemies misunderstanding what had taken place, and why. As such, the Lord would have to put up with the boasting of the enemies as it would be an indication to them that He is not what the Bible portrays Him to be.

Obviously, the Lord has already proclaimed that regardless of their actions, Israel would be kept as a people. But the Song of Moses highlights the keeping of Israel for this particular reason as well.

When considering this, one cannot help but think of the words of Sennacherib, King of Assyria, as called out by the Rabshakeh to the people of Jerusalem...

**Text Verse:** *“Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim and Hena and Ivah? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand? <sup>35</sup> Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?” 2 Kings 18:34, 35*

In response to this degrading talk, Hezekiah went before the Lord with the words of Sennacherib and prayed to him. His concluding words were, “Now therefore, O LORD our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You *are* the LORD God, You alone” (2 Kings 19:19).

Should Sennacherib have prevailed and utterly destroyed Israel, the words of the Lord as conveyed by Moses would have been exactly what would have come to pass. As this is so, is this thought any less true today? Absolutely not. Despite what replacement theologians say, the keeping of Israel is intimately connected with the honor of the Lord.

And that truth is no more poignantly highlighted than in the supposedly sacred, but actually Satanic, book known as the Hadith. From a website about Islam Q&A, we read –

“It is narrated in the hadith that the Prophet [meaning Mohamed] ... said: ‘The Hour will not begin until you fight the Jews, until a Jew will hide behind a rock or a tree, and the rock or tree will say: “O Muslim, O slave of Allah, here is a Jew behind me; come and kill him.”’

There are three possibilities with this: 1) Either the Bible is true, and the Hadith is false, or 2) The Bible is false, and the Hadith is true, or 3) both are false. A fourth option is not possible, that of both being true.

As such, Israel will be kept as a people forever, and the Lord has demonstrated that He is God, or Israel will someday be eradicated and Moses is wrong, logically following that then would be that the Lord is not God.

There is a whole lot tied up in the preservation of Israel if one understands the words of the books of Moses. It truly is unfortunate that replacement theology has arisen in the world. Those who hold to it actually place the integrity of the Bible on the same par as Israel's enemies, even if they don't intentionally do so. The result is the same.

Let us be sound in our thinking and not get caught up in strange teachings that do not accurately reflect what God is doing in redemptive history.

Great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. Amassed Evils (verses 23-25)**

Since verse 19, the poem has highlighted the results of Israel's abandonment of the Lord. In response to that, Moses has highlighted the Lord's rejection of them. Since verse 20, Moses has been writing in the first person as if his words are those of Yehovah.

That continues now, referring to His rejection of them, His turning from them, and His judgment upon them. However, verse 21 alluded to His plan to lure Israel back to Himself through His active turning to another group of people.

While that has been occurring, the devastations upon Israel continue today. They are words of terrifying disaster that accurately, but most mournfully, reflect the state of the people of Israel since their rejection of Him at the time of their visitation by Christ Jesus. With that understood, the words of Yehovah continue...

**<sup>23</sup> 'I will heap disasters on them;**

*aspe alemo raoth* – "I will amass upon them evils." One can imagine sheets of paper, each with a different evil written upon it, being torn off the stack and tossed onto the

land. With the coming of each sheet, another disaster arrives. Soon, the land and the people are completely destroyed, and nothing is left but the sheets of doom lying in heaps, testifying against the people.

They have done evil before the Lord in defiance of His word, and so He sends forth His word to testify against them. As it comes, so come the evils He had promised. They are piercing and they are deadly...

<sup>23</sup> (con't) **I will spend My arrows on them.**

*hitsay akaleh bam* – “My arrows I will expend in them.” Whereas the Lord amasses evils *upon* the people, as if they are coming down from above, it now says He expends all of His arrows *in* them – as if He is standing amongst them and shooting at one after another directly until all His arrows are gone.

The arrow, in this case, signifies a plague of some sort. The word is being used metaphorically, as can be seen from Ezekiel 5 –

“When I send against them the terrible arrows of famine which shall be for destruction, which I will send to destroy you, I will increase the famine upon you and cut off your supply of bread.” Ezekiel 5:16

Even Job, a man outside of the covenant people, understood this symbolism –

“For the arrows of the Almighty *are* within me;  
My spirit drinks in their poison;  
The terrors of God are arrayed against me.” Job 6:4

An interesting internal a/b/c-c/a/b structure is provided with this verse –

(a) I will amass (b) upon them (c) evils  
(c) My arrows (a) I will expend (b) in them

These evils and arrows are defined by the words of the coming verses...

<sup>24</sup> **They shall be wasted with hunger,**

The entire verse is direct, and it calls for the mental insertion of prepositions and verbs that Moses simply leaves out. That begins with this first clause: *maze ra'av*– “Emaciated,

hunger.” The adjective *mazeh* is found only here. It comes from an unused root signifying “to suck out.”

Thus, one can think of people that are simply skin and bones, as if a straw was inserted into them and their body fat and muscle were sucked out. The only thing left of them is a state of agonizing hunger. It is a perfectly suited description of the condition of the people when the Nazi death camps were liberated.

So starved were the people that when soldiers showed them a kindness by offering them a candy bar or some other food from their kits, some of the people’s bodies went into shock, and they died. An act of tender kindness turned into an unintended sentence of death. Next, the horror of the arrows progresses...

**24 (con’t) Devoured by pestilence and bitter destruction;**

*u-lehume resheph v’qetev meriri* – “And consumed fever and depletion bitter.” Two new nouns are spoken forth. The first is *resheph*. It comes from *saraph*, meaning “to burn.” Thus, it is that which burns, like a hot coal. In this case, I would think it is referring to an intense fever resulting from the emaciation.

The second is *qetev*. This comes from an unused root meaning to cut off. Thus, it is a state of ruin. To maintain it as a noun, I have said “depletion.”

Again, one can think of the horrors of the concentration camps and other such times of immense deprivation that have come upon the people as history has recorded. The people claimed to be Jews, they claimed to be united to the Lord, and yet, they have all but ignored Him.

The wounds, though stated as active events coming from the Lord, are actually self-inflicted wounds. They are the inevitable consequences of their failure to respond favorably to Him. But again, the Lord next states that these are a direct punishment from His hand...

**24 (con’t) I will also send against them the teeth of beasts,**

Making the words more pronounced, the word is singular, “tooth.” It is a way of uniting all teeth of every formidable beast into one giant weapon: *v’shen behemoth ashalakh bam* – “And fang beasts I will send in them.”



The tooth (fang) becomes a symbol for the chaos it wreaks. One can think of tearing flesh, blood, bits of bone and hair, all being openly displayed among the people. It is a horrifying thought of appalling devastation. And that terrifying weapon has a companion in its destructive purposes...

<sup>24</sup> (con't) **With the poison of serpents of the dust.**

*im khamath zokhale apha* – “With a burning, reptiles dust.” The word translated as “a burning” is given to signify the state that occurs when bitten. Thus, venom or infection is to be understood. The next word, *zakhal*, is new. It comes from a verb meaning to shrink back or crawl away as if being shy or afraid.

As other words are translated as snake and serpent, I chose reptile because other reptiles also have bites that cause a burning of the body through venom or infection. The translation of the NKJV is less literal, but it is more understandable.

I am guessing on the structure of this verse, but the use of the connecting conjunctions is notable –

- (a) Emaciated, hunger.
- (a) And consumed fever and depletion bitter.
- (b) And fang beasts I will send in them.
- (b) With a burning, reptiles dust.

The terrors come from all directions. They come from above and from within. They come in many forms, and they come with a variety of horrors. But more is yet ahead, and they will be indiscriminate in who they come against...

<sup>25</sup> **The sword shall destroy outside;**

*mikhuts tesakel kherev* – “From out shall bereave sword.” In other words, the terror from outside is the sword that will leave a person childless – be it in war, enemy attack, looters, or whatever. There will be danger on the outside that will leave the parent childless. And more...

<sup>25</sup> (con't) **There shall be terror within**

It is a plural noun followed by another noun: *u-mekhadarim emah* – “And from inner chambers, dread.” This is set in contrast to the previous clause. Outside is one place

where there is bereavement. However, any place inside, as indicated by the plural, is a place of dread. This is comparable to the curses of Deuteronomy 28 –

“And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul. <sup>66</sup>Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life. <sup>67</sup>In the morning you shall say, ‘Oh, that it were evening!’ And at evening you shall say, ‘Oh, that it were morning!’ because of the fear which terrifies your heart, and because of the sight which your eyes see.” Deuteronomy 28:65-67

And these terrors will be...

<sup>25</sup> (con’t) **For the young man and virgin,**

*gam bakhur gam betulah* – “Also young man; also virgin.” It speaks of those who are young with their entire lives ahead of them. They may be innocent to the things of the world, but the world is there to devour them.

While they think that a long and full life lies ahead, the termination of their days is at hand. It is like considering the tragedy of a man ready to be married, but who is then called up for the draft. Before the happiness can be realized, only sadness and loss are experienced. Further...

<sup>25</sup> (con’t) **The nursing child with the man of gray hairs.**

Because this is a verb and two nouns, it was hard to give the same structure in the English: *yoneq im ish sevah* – “Suckling with man advancement.” The word *sevah* signifies being gray and thus old. The word “advancement” is the only noun I thought accurately matches what is said here while still conveying the intent.

This is then set against the young man and the virgin. Those who are much less developed, and those who are much more developed – even from the very beginning of life to the very ending of it – are not exempt from what is promised to come upon the people.

- (a) From out shall bereave sword. (location/result)
- (a) And from inner chambers, dread. (location/result)
- (b) Also young man; also virgin. (comparison)

(b) Suckling with man advancement. (comparison)

It is rather amazing to see the variety of poetic structures Moses uses in his words. They go from one to another, often completely unique from those around it. And yet, they flow together harmoniously. Because of the tragedy, the words convey, the majesty of how they are penned is easy to overlook.

With these terrors duly noted, especially with them noted along with the calling of the Gentiles while they are ongoing, the tenor of the words next takes on a new direction...

*Bitter destruction and days of pain are our lot  
As multiplying terrors are found on every side  
Surely it is as if a terrible plot  
Is waged against us until all have died*

*From without there is evil to slay any and all  
From within there is terror at what lies ahead  
Around all the people has descended a dark pall  
The enemy attacks wanting everyone dead*

*From where will come comfort and an end to this plight?  
When will the Lord relent and end this disaster  
Only horror and terror come to our sight  
Save us O Lord, our God, and our Sovereign Master!*

## **II. Our Hand is Exalted (Verses 26 & 27)**

<sup>26</sup> **I would have said, “I will dash them in pieces,**

The word “would” is not correct. The first verb is perfect and the second is known as cohortative. In other words, the first verb is as if the action is accomplished while the second expresses an intention to perform: *amarti aphehem* – “I have said: ‘I will blow them away.’”

Here we find another word found only this once in Scripture, *paah*. It comes from a primitive root meaning “to puff.” As such it is then an onomatopoeia meaning “to blow away.”

One gets the sense of the Lord breathing in deeply and then rapidly exhaling – “Paaaaaah!” It was the intention of Him to do just that, and in His anger at this disobedient nation, He exclaims that this is exactly what He will do. In this frame of mind, the dialogue marches on...

<sup>26</sup> (con't) **I will make the memory of them to cease from among men,”**

Again, the first verb is cohortative. The Lord intends to do this thing: *ashbitah menovosh zikram* – “I will cause to cease from mankind memory them.” This complements what was just said. The Lord says purposefully that He will blow the people away.

It will be such a great and pronounced exhaling that they will simply be eradicated. There will be of them not even a memory of a memory left among humanity. The structure of this verse is a simple a/a parallel –

I have said:

(a) ‘I will blow them away.’

(a) I will cause to cease from mankind memory them.

Despite the adamant proclamation that the Lord would eliminate Israel, there is a caveat that will spare them...

<sup>27</sup> **Had I not feared the wrath of the enemy,**

*lule kaas oyev agur* – “If not provocation enemy I would abide.” The words here are difficult and are widely rendered by scholars, even if most translations are similar. The word *kaas* is the same as in verse 32:19 last week. It signifies to provoke.

Also, the word *gur* is used. It signifies to sojourn, reside, live as an alien, and so on. But at times it is rendered as “fear.” Hence, most translations take this route. It is mentally easy to justify for the sake of the reader.

But that does not seem to be the intent, even if it is the result. If the Lord were to blow away the people, He would have to live in the provocation of Israel’s enemies for as long as man remained on earth. Thus, there would be, in the mind of the enemy, the thought that the Lord was incapable of controlling His own people.

Therefore, the idea would be that in His frustration at them, He decided to just entirely eliminate them. If this was the case, then what kind of a God would He be? This translation is then fully supported by the next words...

<sup>27</sup> (con't) **Lest their adversaries should misunderstand,**

The word “misunderstand” is just the opposite of what is stated, even if it may be implied: *pen y'nakeru tsaremo* – “Lest should discern their adversaries.” The meaning is clear. The adversaries see that Israel is destroyed. It is a fact that they have recognized.

But this brings in all of the complications that could possibly come forth from such an event. The Lord established them. He gave His word through and to them. He brought the Messiah through them, but He also promised to keep them as a people and never break His covenant with them. On and on the thoughts would go.

The entire fabric of the redemptive process, up to and including the coming of Jesus and His promised return to Israel, would be suddenly and inextricably unwoven.

Just think of nations like Hitler's Germany or Iran. They have been or they are completely set on the destruction of Israel. It is their greatest desire and their deepest hope. With the destruction of Israel would come a defiling of the name of the Lord, and an exaltation of the name of their supposed god.

The Lord would have to live in their provocations. At this point in the Song of Moses, everything is centered on the fact that Israel must continue, even though they have been as faithless as Hosea's wife.

As these words are recorded concerning a time that occurs at the same time as the calling of the Gentiles, it is an absolute testimony to the fact that Israel was, is, and shall remain. Otherwise, the enemies of God would have an unearned right...

<sup>27</sup> (con't) **Lest they should say, “Our hand is high;**

*pen yomeru yadenu ramah* – “Lest they will say: ‘Our hand is exalted!’” The terrors described above included the sword, implying enemies who wield the sword.

The Lord may use pestilence, famine, or other means, but to completely eliminate a group of people that is scattered around the world – in part or in whole – would require

the sword to fully accomplish the task. If Hitler had prevailed, one can see him rejoicing and taking credit for what he was able to do.

Likewise, if this came about today, it is absolutely certain that adherents to Islam would take credit for the victory, and for the rest of time they would proclaim that their false god was actually the victorious and true god. The Lord could not, and indeed He cannot, allow that to occur.

In the world, there would be a complete misperception concerning what actually transpired...

<sup>27</sup> (con't) **And it is not the LORD who has done all this.”**

*v'lo Yehovah paal kal zot* – “And no Yehovah who accomplished all this.” The obvious meaning is, “It is we who have destroyed Israel and Yehovah neither had anything to do with it, nor was He able to stop it. We have prevailed, we are exalted, and Yehovah is not God.”

The Lord would have to abide in this. Any other options would be completely contradictory to His nature. In other words, and by default, the very act of Him blowing Israel away so that they were eliminated from mankind is also completely contrary to His nature. Israel, despite what they deserve, must stand.

The words of this verse are set in an a/b pattern –

- (a) If not provocation enemy I would abide. (provoking)
- (b) Lest should discern their adversaries. (discernment, but in the sense of not discerning)
- (a) Lest they will say: ‘Our hand *is* exalted! (provoking)
- (b) And no Yehovah who accomplished all this. (not discerning)

*Who is great like our God? Who is he?  
Who does such great wonders and mighty things?  
Is there another so great? Can there be?  
No! To our God alone all of creation sings*

*He has redeemed His people for His own  
And He has kept them despite their constant falling away  
Through this people His fame has grown*

*Great is His name, and greater day by day*

*Who could restrain Himself as has the Lord?  
From destroying those who so callously turn away  
But because of His faithfulness to His word  
He has kept this people as His own, to this very day*

### **III. Their Rock Had Sold Them (Verses 28-33)**

With the last section complete, a new idea is put forth by Moses. It is in verses 28-33 that the evident nature of Israel's unworthiness to be spared is detailed. As such, it highlights that they are, in fact, spared.

<sup>28</sup> **"For they *are* a nation void of counsel,**

I disagree. The nation is a nation filled with counsel, of the highest sort and from the most impeccable Source. It is not that they are void of counsel. Rather: *ki go obad esot hemah* – "For nation devoid prudence they."

The word *go*, or nation, is usually used when referring to Gentiles. However, they are here likened to any other nation. In fact, they are actually much duller than any other nation. That is seen in the word Moses introduces here.

It is the word *etsah*, coming from a verb signifying advice. As such it speaks of counsel, prudence, purpose, and so on. It is not at all that Israel lacked counsel. They had the law, they had the prophets, they had the Redeemer Himself. And then came the apostles after Him.

They had miracles, signs, and wonders performed among them. And yet, they had as much sense as that of a tree root, and maybe less. If God Himself appeared among them... wait a minute, He did. And even then, they could not perceive it. They failed to recognize the time of their visitation. And to this day, they remain blinded...

<sup>28</sup> (con't) **Nor is there any understanding in them.**

*v'en bahem tevunah* – "And no in them understanding." This is a parallel thought to the previous clause. Just as there is no prudence in their thinking, they are also devoid of understanding. Both words of this verse now are used in a single verse in Proverbs –

*There is no wisdom or understanding [tevunah]  
Or counsel [etsah] against the LORD. Proverbs 21:30*

In this, “counsel” is fine because that speaks in relation to the Lord about a thought or action against Him. However, here in Deuteronomy it is speaking of the state of Israel having counsel but not applying it because they lack the prudence or discernment to do so. One can see this in the parallelism –

- (a) For nation devoid prudence they.
- (a) And no in them understanding.

But this is not the Lord’s fault. He has done everything to make it otherwise, even giving them the prophetic word to warn them...

**<sup>29</sup> Oh, that they were wise, *that* they understood this,**

The first verb is perfect, the second is imperfect: *lu hakemu yaskilu zot* – “If they were wise, they would understand this!” In other words, they have their history, they have the prophecies, they have the promises, and they have the WORD OF GOD to guide them.

It is all recorded there, both the past and the future. What has happened isn’t because they didn’t have sufficient information, but because they have been unwilling to simply check out the facts.

A perfect example of their inability to discern is seen in regard to the coronavirus issue. All of the information one needs to know concerning what is going on is out there. But Israel was the first to jump into the proverbial pot, implementing mandates of all sorts, and they have continued to seethe in the boiling water as the spices have been added.

They do not have the reason to grasp what is so painfully obvious. How much more ridiculous are they in regard to the weightier matters set before them...

**<sup>29</sup> (con’t) *That* they would consider their latter end!**

An important preposition, *to*, is overlooked: *yavinu l’akharitam* – “They would consider to their latter end!” The words are parallel to the previous clause and can be understood when combined with the opening thought – “[If they were wise], they would consider to their latter end.”



This is speaking of the nation. It is true that blessings are promised to them in the Messianic age, but that is clearly indicated as being preceded by a time of great wrath and destruction upon them. This is evident from the words of Moses, the prophets, and Jesus Himself.

If they considered the time “to their latter end,” they would know that things will only get worse before they finally get better. But like sappy churches that fill the world, the focus is always, always, always on the blessing, the good, the prosperity, and the favor.

And yet, this is only a portion of what God says belongs to Israel, and what belongs to the church. The sadness of not considering what the word says to the people to whom it is directed – and indeed to the whole world – will fully, finally, and tragically be realized someday.

If they were wise:

(a) They would understand this!

(a) They would consider to their latter end!

As for Israel, the question is asked...

<sup>30</sup> **How could one chase a thousand,**

*ekah yirdoph ekhad eleph* – “How could chase one *a* thousand?” It is the opposite, and multiplied, of what was promised to Israel as a blessing in Leviticus 26 –

“Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you.” Leviticus 26:8

Here, Moses indicates that the opposite is in store for Israel in the future. Asking it as a question implies that there is a fixed answer that is as obvious as the nose on one’s face. But before he explains how it could be, he provides a parallel example...

<sup>30</sup> (con’t) **And two put ten thousand to flight,**

*u-sh’nayim yanisu revavah* – “And two cause to flee *a* multitude?” It is another and greater multiplication. Where one will chase a thousand, a foe of only two will cause an entire multitude to flee. The word *revavah* simply means a vast multitude whether definite or indefinite. But how could this happen...

<sup>30</sup> (con't) **Unless their Rock had sold them,**

It is not conditional. It is a perfect verb preceded by a positive conjunction: *ki tsuram mekaram* – “For their Rock had sold them.” The Lord gave them sure and great promises that He would be with them in battle and that they would defeat their enemies.

But in a state of being sold, the impossible would come to pass. It speaks of an amazing defeat of the people because they turned from their Rock, and then, He sold them...

<sup>30</sup> (con't) **And the LORD had surrendered them?**

*v'Yehovah hisgiram* – “And Yehovah delivered them.” Yehovah is clearly stated in parallel to the Rock of the previous clause. The word here literally means to shut up or to close. But it figuratively means “to deliver.” When one is shut up, he can be delivered over. This is seen, for example, in Amos where the same word is used –

“The Lord GOD has sworn by Himself,  
The LORD God of hosts says:  
'I abhor the pride of Jacob,  
And hate his palaces;  
Therefore I will deliver up *the* city  
And all that is in it.’” Amos 6:8

The amazing words show how far the people have gone from the Lord that the Lord would sell off and surrender the people.

- (a) How could chase one *a* thousand?
- (a) And two cause to flee *a* multitude?
- (b) For their Rock had sold them.
- (b) And Yehovah delivered them.

<sup>31</sup> **For their rock *is* not like our Rock,**

*ki lo ketsurenu tsuram* – “For no like our Rock their rock.” Moses, speaking of the Lord, makes a comparison between the gods of the enemies and Yehovah. They are not at all like Him. This is stated throughout Scripture, such as –

“Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their lands,<sup>19</sup> and have cast their gods into the fire; for they *were* not gods, but the work of men’s hands—wood and stone.” Isaiah 37:18, 19

The contrast is absolute. Yehovah is God and all other “gods” are simply the work of men’s hands or the imagination of their minds. With that stated, Moses next says...

<sup>31</sup> (con’t) **Even our enemies themselves *being* judges.**

*v’oyevenu pelilim* – “And our enemies, judges.” Many translations insert words here hoping for clarity. Others paraphrase what is said in an attempt to explain what is being said. But none that I found really explain what the meaning of the words must be.

It is apparent that the clauses are parallel. In looking at it as such, the meaning may come forth. I have set forth two variations either of which can be grammatically correct—

For no:

- (a) like our Rock (b) their rock
- (b) And our enemies, (a) judges

- (a) For no like our Rock (b) their rock
- (b) And our enemies, (a) judges

What appears to be the case here, and it is tough to be dogmatic, is that it is one of two options based on how the word “judges” is set in parallel to the Lord – either in a positive or a contrasting parallel.

If contrasting, it is saying that the Lord is the Rock and their gods are no rock. Likewise, their enemies are not judges. It is the Lord who made the decision, and both sold and surrendered them. The enemies actually had nothing to do with what occurred. I would prefer this.

However, it could be a positive parallel. If so, then He is the true Judge, and they are judges only because the Lord has allowed it. Said differently, Israel was sold by Yehovah to the enemy who then judged them. This makes less sense to me. Either way, the verses are set in parallel, and one of these two meanings seems to be the case.

<sup>32</sup> **For their vine *is* of the vine of Sodom**

*ki mi'gephen sedom gaphnam* – “For from vine Sodom their vine.” It is debated who this is referring to, Israel or the Gentiles just mentioned. The answer must be Israel. Israel is compared to a vine again and again throughout Scripture, such as –

“Yet I had planted you a noble vine, a seed of highest quality.  
How then have you turned before Me  
Into the degenerate plant of an alien vine?” Jeremiah 2:21

Also, it is only they who are morally compared with Sodom and Gomorrah in the rest Old Testament –

“Hear the word of the LORD,  
You rulers of Sodom;  
Give ear to the law of our God,  
You people of Gomorrah:” Isaiah 1:10

This then is given to explain the reason why the Lord sold them and surrendered them. That then leads to...

<sup>32 (con't)</sup> **And of the fields of Gomorrah;**

*u-mishadmoth amarah* – “And from fields Gomorrah.” It is another new word, *shedemah*, coming from *sadeh*, or “field.” It is a field that is cultivated and should produce. However, what is produced by the vine and the field is next noted...

<sup>32 (con't)</sup> **Their grapes are grapes of gall,**

*anavemo ineve rosh* – “Their grapes, grapes of poison.” Their produce of the vineyard is of no value at all, and in reality, it is harmful. The grapes here speak of the people’s actions, the fruit of their conduct. Putting up with them is like drinking wormwood.

<sup>32 (con't)</sup> **Their clusters are bitter.**

*ashkelot merorot lamo* – “Clusters bitter to them.” This is the conduct of the people. It is a society filled with repulsive wickedness and perversion, as if they are carrying around entire clusters of inedible grapes. It is all they produce because their vine and their fields can produce nothing else.

- (a1) For from vine Sodom their vine.
- (a2) And from fields Gomorrah.
- (b1) Their grapes, grapes of poison.
- (b2) Clusters bitter to them.

Moses is explaining to the people their very nature in the future and the reason why all the evils will come upon them. As such, they deserve the same punishment that Sodom and Gomorrah received. But more of their character is brought forth next...

<sup>33</sup> **Their wine is the poison of serpents,**

*khamath tannim yenam* – “Burning of serpents their wine.” This means that their wine is that made of serpent’s poison, which causes burning. The type of serpent, tannin, can only be guessed at. The word is used when speaking of things in the sea in Genesis 1:21, and it is what Moses’ rod turned into in Exodus 7:9. It was obviously poisonous because Moses ran from it.

Regardless of that, as wine is representative of a cultural expression in Scripture, it means that their entire culture is one that is just like the poison of serpents. It permeates everything about them as a people, flowing through them. Moses then further describes what the culture of Israel is like...

\*<sup>33</sup> (fin) **And the cruel venom of cobras.**

*v’rosh pethanim akzar* – “And poison vipers cruel.” Here is a new word, *pethen*. It is a venomous snake either in the cobra or viper family.

Due to the variety of vipers found in Israel, using “vipers” is a good possible translation, but there are also black desert cobras there as well. Regardless of the type of snake, the meaning is obvious. The “wine,” or cultural expression, of Israel is that of a highly venomous snake. Taken together, the clauses are set in a simple a/a parallel.

- (a) Burning of serpents their wine.
- (a) And poison vipers cruel.

The words of Moses are the words of Moses, and the Lord inspired them. Hence, one cannot say that what is said here is not reflective of the people without denying that these are the true words of God.

As a general statement concerning Israel, they must be considered a true, accurate, and current description of them as viewed from the Lord's perspective. They have rejected their Messiah, they do not adhere to the word of the Lord, and they are filled with wickedness and self-righteousness.

And yet, despite their state before Him, He has kept them, and He will continue to keep them. The day is coming when they will again be His holy people. In the meantime, they have been handed over to Satan for what they rightly deserve.

But as I remind you each week, they are simply a snapshot of us. We are His people, and yet we fail Him constantly and in many ways. Despite that, just as His covenant with Israel stands, so His covenant with any who come to Him stands.

God, because of Jesus Christ, could no more reject one of His saved believers than He could reject His own Son. The covenant has been cut, the blood has been shed, and the commitment has been made.

Israel's failings will not, nor can they ever, negate the faithfulness of the Lord to His side of the covenant. Likewise, our failings will not, nor could they, negate His faithfulness to the seal with which He has sealed us.

Because of this, how much more should we be willing to live for Him instead of following after the same failings that upset the Lord. If you are secretly caught up in adultery, you must consider your ways. If you are thieving from others, it is time to change what you are doing. If you treat your spouse with less than the greatest of respect, it is time for you to redirect your actions.

These are things that the Lord looks unfavorably on. And why should we be recorded in the annals of history as being just like those of Israel who have so greatly displeased the Lord? Let us do our utmost to live for God because of His great love with which He first loved us. May it be so, starting even today.

**Closing Verse:** *"I overthrew some of you,  
As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah,  
And you were like a firebrand plucked from the burning;  
Yet you have not returned to Me,'  
Says the LORD.*

<sup>12</sup> *'Therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel;  
Because I will do this to you,  
Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!'" Amos 4:11, 12*

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 32:34-43 *Amazing words, and that ain't no jive...* (The Song of Moses, Part V) (97<sup>th</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **The Song of Moses, Part IV**

'I will heap disasters on them without haw or hem  
I will spend My arrows on them

They shall be wasted with hunger  
Devoured by pestilence and bitter destruction  
I will also send against them the teeth of beasts  
With the poison of serpents of the dust; a horrid concoction

The sword shall destroy outside  
There shall be terror within, terrifying cares  
For the young man and virgin  
The nursing child with the man of gray hairs

I would have said, "I will dash them in pieces, right there and then  
I will make the memory of them to cease from among men

Had I not feared the wrath of the enemy  
Lest their adversaries should misunderstand  
-----their thinking being amiss  
Lest they should say, "Our hand is high  
And it is not the LORD who has done all this

"For they are a nation void of counsel as if from jackals  
----- they stem  
Nor is there any understanding in them

Oh, that they were wise, that they understood this, and wisdom  
-----they would spend  
That they would consider their latter end!

How could one chase a thousand  
And two put ten thousand to flight  
Unless their Rock had sold them  
And the LORD had surrendered them in their plight?

For their rock is not like our Rock who needs no nudges  
Even our enemies themselves being judges

For their vine is of the vine of Sodom  
And of the fields of Gomorrah through and through  
Their grapes are sour gall  
Their clusters are bitter too

The poison of serpents is their wine  
And on the cruel venom of cobras they dine

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...



## **Deuteronomy 32:34-43 (The Song of Moses, Part V)**

If you grab the pages of the epistles of Paul between two fingers, it is an astonishingly slim body of writing. Try it and you will actually be amazed at how thin it is. And yet, people have been debating and arguing over what Paul wrote for two thousand years.

And this isn't simply because no one has sat down and analyzed his words closely to determine their exact meaning. Every single word has been studied and analyzed. They have been counted and compared, they have been meditated upon and memorized – by innumerable really intelligent scholars.

People argue over the meaning of many words, verses, and concepts in those few pages gleefully claiming they have the truth, and those of an opposing view are just a bunch of heretics. Despite this, one thing is for sure: If you don't thoroughly know the man and his point of reference, you will not understand what he is saying in many cases.

And the only way to know those things is to know the body of literature in which he was schooled. Paul was a Pharisee, and he was of Israel. You must look at the Scriptures that formed him to understand what he is saying. If you don't, you will misread the intent of his words.

There is another problem: our own incorrect presuppositions. Unless they are corrected, we will continue to be faulty until we finally stand before the Lord and are corrected by Him personally.

**Text Verse:** *“Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. <sup>18</sup> If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. <sup>19</sup> Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’” says the Lord.”* Romans 12:17-19

In those verses, Paul cites the words of Deuteronomy 32 that we will look at today. He quoted Moses there in Romans, and the author of Hebrews uses it in a different context as well. Though not named, it is pretty certain that Hebrews was also written by Paul.

Since Paul's writing consistently quotes the Old Testament, having a knowledge of it gives needed context. Because if you don't have it, you will never properly understand what he is saying. In getting these things wrong, your understanding of our state now, and of what is coming in the future as well, will be skewed. This includes the book of

Revelation because what we will look at today is a foundational part of what will later be revealed there.

It is so good that you are joining us as we look at each word, clause, and verse of this unbelievably marvelous piece of literature. It opens up what lies ahead and presents it to Israel and to us in a remarkable way.

Yes, great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. Where Are Their gods? (Verses 34-39)**

While going through the verses of this poem, we've been following a breakdown of them I made concerning their structure. In the previous section (28-33), the evident nature of Israel's unworthiness to be spared was detailed. Because of this, it highlighted that they have been, in fact, spared.

Now, verses 34-38 reveal the wisdom of allowing Israel to be brought to a state of utter calamity. When all of the other gods they pursue fail to deliver, that leads to... verse 39 which reveals that Yehovah has, through His interaction with Israel, demonstrated that He alone is God. With that understood, we now enter into these verses...

<sup>34</sup> ***'Is this not laid up in store with Me,***

*halo hu kamus imadi* – “They not stored with Me?” Here is another word found only this once in the Bible, *kamas*. It comes from a primitive root meaning to store away. As such, it is used here figuratively to mean “stored in the memory.” What is this referring to?

There are varying views. One is that this is speaking of what will next be said concerning vengeance and wrath. I would disagree and say that it is looking back to what was already stated in order to then form a reason for what will be stated. In order to see this, one has to go back to the first verse of the previous section, verse 28 –

“For they *are* a nation void of counsel,  
Nor *is there any* understanding in them.”

As such, most translations here are wrong, saying this in the singular, “Is this not...” However, two things are being referred to, counsel and understanding.

One can see how Moses is carefully weaving together the case against Israel, while at the same time he is carefully demonstrating the righteousness of the Lord in how He carries out His plans. He sets forth a premise, demonstrates how Israel fails based on that premise, and then calls the premise back to mind by showing that the qualities presented there belong to the Lord.

As such, if Israel would have followed sound advice, as is found in the Proverbs, they would have avoided all of these ills –

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart,  
And lean not on your own understanding;  
<sup>6</sup>In all your ways acknowledge Him,  
And He shall direct your paths.” Proverbs 3:5, 6

Of this store of understanding and counsel, Moses next asks...

<sup>34</sup> (con’t) **Sealed up among My treasures?**

*khatum b’otsrotay* – “Sealed in My treasures?” The word is *otsar*. It signifies a treasury, a place for depositing things, but it is in the plural construct. As such, it is referring to the secret places where the counsel and understanding of the Lord are kept away. A similar rendering is found in 1 Kings 15 –

“Now there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.  
<sup>17</sup> And Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. <sup>18</sup> Then Asa took all the silver and gold *that was* left in the treasuries of the house of the LORD and the treasuries of the king’s house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants. And King Asa sent them to Ben-Hadad the son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, who dwelt in Damascus, saying, <sup>19</sup> ‘*Let there be* a treaty between you and me, as there was between my father and your father. See, I have sent you a present of silver and gold. Come and break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel, so that he will withdraw from me.’” 1 Kings 15:16-19

If one were to spend every moment of every day seeking new knowledge, such treasuries of the Lord could be considered. Within the minutest particle, there are treasuries of wisdom where atoms, protons, electrons, and so-ons spin and whirl.

In DNA, there are sequences that work in a four-dimensional manner, where time itself is factored into its operation. The treasuries of the Lord's counsel and understanding are infinite. Each is sealed up, awaiting the time when it is to be opened in order to show forth the splendor of His wisdom.

And in the unfolding narrative of time, the storehouses of understanding and counsel are opened up to reveal His hand in the details of what occurs. And to show that it is He who has done it, he has given the prophetic word to show us that it is so.

In the structure of the verse, one can see how the Lord (as revealed through Moses) identifies these storehouses directly with Himself. As such, where His counsel and wisdom are kept they then form an expression of who He is –

- (a) *They* not stored with Me,
- (b) Sealed in My treasuries?

<sup>35</sup> **Vengeance is Mine, and recompense;**

*li naqam v'shilem* – “To Me vengeance and recompense.” Here the noun *shilem* is seen in its only use. It is a repayment or a requital. The idea of the previous thought now naturally leads to this one.

Israel is a nation lacking prudence and understanding. These are found in the Lord, but Israel has rejected the Lord and gone their own perverse way. Therefore, He will display His counsel and understanding by bringing forth His vengeance and recompense. One thing leads to the next...

<sup>35</sup> (con't) **Their foot shall slip in *due* time;**

*l'eth tamut raglam* – “To time shall waver their foot.” Notice the use of the plural and the singular together – “Their foot.” Israel is a people. It is as if they are on a climb through the ages and they are successfully progressing. But then they suddenly come to a point that is unstable and precipitous.

At this point, they have to tread carefully, but they cannot. Their foot begins to waver because their strength fails them...

<sup>35</sup> (con't) **For the day of their calamity *is* at hand,**

*ki qarov yom edam* – “For near day their calamity.” It is a new word, *ed*. “Calamity” or “ruin” is probably the best way to express the thought. To understand what is being articulated, all we need to do is look at what is going on in the world in relation to Israel today.

Israel will be at a point where they have climbed the hill. They are on the way to the summit. They have attained the status among the nations that they absolutely crave – proving that it is by their hand, their might, their innovation, their smarts, and their superiority that they have gone from nothing to the epitome of national grandeur. But then, their foot will slip, and their calamity will be right in front of them...

<sup>35</sup> (con’t) **And the things to come hasten upon them.’**

*v’khash athidoth lamo* – “And hasten readied [things] to them.” Again, Moses pulls out a new word, *athid*. It is an adjective coming from a word meaning “to be ready.” As such, it is a way of saying that there are things that have been prepared to occur, and at that time – when their foot begins to give way, those readied things will come rushing upon them.

One can think of someone strolling along life’s highway, thinking everything is fine, but because he has rejected the Lord, certain disaster lies ahead. A perfect example of this would be the king of Babylon, as is seen in Daniel 4 –

“At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon. <sup>30</sup>The king spoke, saying, ‘Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?’

<sup>31</sup>While the word *was still* in the king’s mouth, a voice fell from heaven: ‘King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you! <sup>32</sup>And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling *shall be* with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.’” Daniel 4:29-32

This is what it will be like for Israel. They will look around, assured of their greatness, and everything will collapse around them, all because they failed to include the Lord in their devices.

Our text verse today cited a portion of this verse. Likewise, it is used by the author of Hebrews to remind Hebrew believers of that to which Moses refers, meaning the unchanging character of God in regard to such things –

“Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? <sup>30</sup> For we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord. And again, ‘The LORD will judge His people.’ <sup>31</sup> It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Hebrews 10:29-31

In looking at this verse, it is seen that the first clause sets up what is presented in the next three –

- (-) To Me vengeance and recompense.
- (\*) To time shall waver their foot.
- (\*) For near day their calamity.
- (\*) And hasten readied [things] to them.

It is in this setting up of the events of the future, to demonstrate His very nature, that the Lord then acts...

### <sup>36</sup> **“For the LORD will judge His people**

*ki yadin Yehovah amo* – “For will judge Yehovah His people.” Depending on who is commenting, this is taken as a judgment of Israel or a judgment for Israel. What seems likely is that it is both. The words have all led to the thought that Israel is in need of being judged. This is a given.

But if the Lord were to judge them according to their conduct, they would be utterly obliterated as a people. But that would be to violate the very covenant promises that He had obligated Himself to. Thus, as the Bible later reveals, He will allow the nations to be His means of judgment upon Israel while at the same time He will judge against the nations in favor of Israel...

### <sup>36</sup> (con’t) **And have compassion on His servants,**

*v’al avadav yitnekham* – “And upon His servants He will comfort.” The sense appears to be properly explained by Albert Barnes, “The verse declares that God’s judgment of His

people would issue at once in the punishment of the wicked, and in the comfort of the righteous.” This will come about...

<sup>36</sup> (con’t) **When He sees that *their* power is gone,**

*ki yireh ki azelath yad* – “For He sees for is disappeared hand.” And yet another new word comes in, *azal*. It signifies “to go.” As something goes, it is then gone, disappeared. The hand signifies authority, ability, power, etc. In this case, it is specifically their power that is being referred to.

A really good way of thinking of this might be Israel’s modern Iron Dome system. They do, and will, rely on it for their protection. And, indeed, how incredible it was to see it perform recently! But once the war was over, it desperately needed to be replenished.

The US agreed and sent them replacements. Israel is used to simply buying more, getting better, relying on their own power and might to forge ahead.

However, someday, there will be no more replacements. Israel will want to buy more but that will be a problem. There will be no more aid. They will stand naked and exposed, readied for total defeat...

<sup>36</sup> (con’t) **And *there is no one remaining, bond or free.***

The clause forms an alliterative paronomasia: *v’ephes atsur v’azuv* – “And none restraining and relinquishing.” The words speak of the state of people.

There are those who are at home, and there are those who head out. Those who are getting married, and those who are getting divorced. There are those who are having children, and those whose children are grown up and moving away. It is simply a way of saying, “This refers to everybody.”

The second two clauses of this verse give an explanation for what is stated in the first two. And within the sets there are obvious comparisons that I have set off with matching characters –

(a) For \*will judge Yehovah -His people.

(a) And upon -His servants He \*will comfort.

For He sees:

(b) for is \*disappeared -hand.

(b) \*And none -restraining and relinquishing.

**37 He will say: ‘Where *are* their gods,**

*v’amar ay elohemo* – “And He said: ‘Where their gods?’” It is almost a mocking of their stupidity. They have trusted in vapor. Anything they thought they could rely on has vanished, and the Lord looks down upon them knowing what they would be without Him. But instead of worshipping Him, they had squandered away everything by hiding within futility...

**37 (con’t) The rock in which they sought refuge?**

*tsur khasayu bo* – “Rock they refuged in?” Again, there is a new verb, *khasah*, to seek refuge. As before, the thought of the Iron Dome comes to mind. To the mind of the people, it is almost a “god” of protection that encompasses them. “We are invincible because of what we have created.”

And so, the Lord lets them simmer in their giddiness, knowing that it is a system of Tinker Toys that simply cannot be trusted. This is a good analogy to the words of this clause. “Where is your trust?” That is what Israel should contemplate and resolve, but only when the answer is, “The Lord.”

This verse contains a statement leading into two parallel clauses –

And He said:

(a) ‘Where their gods?’

(a) Rock they refuged in?

**38 Who ate the fat of their sacrifices,**

The NKJV makes this verse into a question, but it is a statement of fact (and maybe even exclamation) concerning the gods just mentioned. Also, the verb is imperfect: *asher khelev zebakhemo yokelu* – “Who fat their sacrifices they eat!”

It is as if the gods of Israel are sitting down having a feast while the people are being eradicated. The people offered to these false gods, and they are too busy enjoying the offerings to care what is going on around them...

**38 (con’t) And drank the wine of their drink offering?**



*yishtu yen nesikam* – “They drink wine their libations.” The sense of mocking continues. It is a real party as the gods fill themselves up on what has been offered – “Hey, pour out some more wine!” Israel’s gods, that are no gods at all, are having a party while the nation is on the brink of utter ruin.

If Israel has been making offerings to these gods, well then...

<sup>38</sup> (con’t) **Let them rise and help you,**

The verbs are imperfect, adding to the taunting effect: *yaqumu v’yazerukhem* – “They arising and they helping you!” It is as if the Lord is saying, “Herrrrre they come... any minute now. They just have to finish another bite. Maybe a bit more wine too. Hoold on, hold on...” With that, He then says...

<sup>38</sup> (con’t) **And be your refuge.**

The words begin with a jussive: *yehi alekhem sithrah* – “May it be over you haven!” The sense is that they have chosen their worthless gods that are too busy dining on their offerings to do anything else. But the Lord says, “Tough! You want them to protect you, then they are your hiding place, your haven. See how that works out!”

In this verse, the first two clauses are set in parallel, but turned around for effect, while the second two are parallel with the first anticipating a fulfilled action in the second –

- (a) Who \*fat their sacrifices -they eat!
- (a) -They drink \*wine their libations.
- (b) They arising and they helping you.
- (b) May it be over you haven!

<sup>39</sup> **‘Now see that I, even I, am He,**

There is a strong emphasis in the Hebrew: *reu atah ki ani ani hu* – “See now! For I, I HE!” The Lord is adamantly telling Israel to open their eyes and understand. There are no other gods, not even one. He alone is God, and He alone called and established them. And yet, they have to open their eyes before they can see it.

The sentiment that is pronounced here is partially repeated in various ways in Isaiah 41-46. None state it exactly, but an example is found in the word of the Lord to the pagan king Cyrus –

"I *am* the LORD, and *there is* no other;  
*There is* no God besides Me.  
I will gird you, though you have not known Me,  
<sup>6</sup>That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting  
That *there is* none besides Me.  
I *am* the LORD, and *there is* no other;  
<sup>7</sup>I form the light and create darkness,  
I make peace and create calamity;  
I, the LORD, do all these *things*." Isaiah 45:5-7

Likewise, the next clause is found in the same section of Isaiah and also elsewhere in Isaiah as well...

<sup>39</sup> (con't) **And *there is* no God besides Me;**

*v'en Elohim imadi* – "And no God with Me." There is God, and there are gods. There is no contradiction in saying this if the reference is understood. What is clearly being stated is that Yehovah is God. He alone. Any other god is a part of what He has created, but with Him, there is no God.

It is something that can be logically deduced. Because there is existence, say you and me, then God (a Necessary Being) must exist. This is an undeniable truth, and because God cannot create another "one and only God." Therefore, there must be – by default – only one God.

This is all explained in the Genesis 1:1 sermon using what are known as the First Principles. What the Lord states here is to be taken as an axiom. Israel has failed to complete its courses on logic and Theology Proper. For now, the Lord speaks on...

<sup>39</sup> (con't) **I kill and I make alive;**

The verbs are imperfect: *ani amith va'akhayeh* – "I, I terminate, and I life-sustain." The power of both life and death belong to the Lord alone. What he decides should end will be terminated, and what He determines should continue will continue. This phrase was remembered and then quoted by Hannah in her prayer at the dedication of Samuel to the Lord –

"The LORD kills and makes alive;  
He brings down to the grave and brings up." 1 Samuel 2:6

Along with this, the Lord speaks further...

39 (con't) **I wound and I heal;**

The second verb is imperfect, adding to the dramatic effect: *makhatsti va'ani erpa* – “I have shattered, and I heal.” One might think of the world at the flood. It was broken up and destroyed, shattered and thrown into complete confusion. Yet, in the shortest of spans, Noah and his family simply walked off the ark and began life again.

Israel, too, will be crushed and shattered, along with the entire world, but the Lord will return it to a state of healing not seen before the events of the tribulation took place. All of this is from the workings of the Lord...

39 (con't) **Nor is there any who can deliver from My hand.**

*v'en miyadi matsil* – “And no from My hand deliver.” In verse 36, the hand, or power, of Israel was demonstrably gone. But here in verse 39, the power of the Lord, His hand, is said to be without limit. There is none who can deliver from it. What He determines to hold will be held and what He determines to destroy will be destroyed. His hand is effectual in power to begin and to complete.

Again, the words are picked up later in Isaiah 45 –

“Indeed before the day *was*, I *am* He;  
And *there is* no one who can deliver out of My hand;  
I work, and who will reverse it?” Isaiah 45:13

In this verse, the first clause is parallel to the second and third clauses, while the second is parallel to the fifth (a/b/a/a/b) –

- (a) See now! For I, I HE!
- (b) And no God with Me.
- (a) I, I terminate, and I life-sustain.
- (a) I have shattered, and I heal
- (b) And no from My hand deliver

*Who is God like Me, near or far?  
Who can deliver from My hand?  
Can you open what I do not leave ajar?*

*Can you thwart that which I have planned?*

*There is no other God! No not one!  
And there is none other at all like Me  
None can even attempt what I have done  
To even think it so demonstrates great stupidity*

*I am God who has established you for Me  
And I am God whom you have rejected  
You spurned My coming and nailed Me to a tree  
In this, your flawed streak is detected*

*Turn, O Israel, turn unto Me  
I am your God who came down from that tree*

## **II. Rejoice You, Nations, His People! (verses 40-43)**

Verses 40-42 will next call out the judgment of the nations for failing to recognize what God has done, which is manifestly evident through His treatment (establishment, care for, spurning of, punishment upon, sparing, and defense) of Israel.

**<sup>40</sup> For I raise My hand to heaven,**

*ki esa el shamayim yadi* – “For I lift up unto heavens My hand.” The thought is that of making a proclamation and an oath. It is seen, for example, in Revelation 10 –

“The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven <sup>6</sup> and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer, <sup>7</sup> but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.” Revelation 10:5-7

**<sup>40</sup> (con't) And say, “As I live forever,**

*v'amarti khai anokhi l'olam* – “And I say, ‘Live I to eternity.’” The word *olam* signifies that which is concealed, the vanishing point. It can mean forever, or something less. But in the case of the proclamation here, because of the One who makes it, it signifies to eternity itself.

The words then mean, “What I am about to say is as inviolate as is My very being. It stands, and will stand, untouched and pure.”

This is an a/b pattern where the first clause prepares the way for the second –

(a) For I lift up unto heavens My hand.

(b) And I say, ‘Live I to eternity.’

**41 If I whet My glittering sword,**

*im shanoti beraq kharbi* – “If I whet brilliance My sword.” The scene now is personal as Yehovah is likened to a Warrior. The “if” makes the statement conditional, and yet assured. It will happen and the result will not be thwarted...

**41 (con’t) And My hand takes hold on judgment,**

*v’tokhez b’mishpat yadi* – “And grasps in judgment My hand.” It is referring to the sword of brilliance that has been whetted. With the whetting, and the grasping of it in judgment, there will be an inevitable and unstoppable result...

**41 (con’t) I will render vengeance to My enemies,**

*ashiv naqam l’tsaray* – “I will return vengeance to My adversaries.” The word *tsar* comes from a word signifying “narrow.” Hence, it speaks of those who are crowded in against. God is God. Any who crowd in on Him are adversaries to Him.

To come against that which is His, such as Israel, is to come against Him. In such an instance, by crowding in on the Lord, or on what is His, He will return vengeance. The prospects for those who do so are not good. Not good, indeed. And more...

**41 (con’t) And repay those who hate Me.**

*v’limsanay ashalem* – “And to those hating Me I repay.” The idea is that to those who hate Yehovah, there is a debt to be paid before there can be a state of completion. Without that, the debt remains. This is speaking in a metaphoric sense, but even so, if a debt is outstanding, the Lord will repay in vengeance concerning what is owed. It is a woeful thought, indeed.

Here, the first and second clauses are parallel, as are the third and fourth. But the latter two reverse the internal structure –

- (a) If I whet brilliance My sword.
- (a) And grasps in judgment My hand.
- (b) \*I return vengeance to -My adversaries.
- (b) And to -those hating Me \*I repay.

**42 I will make My arrows drunk with blood,**

*askir hitsay mi'dam* – “I make drunk My arrows from blood.” Here Yehovah is an Archer set to shoot against the foe. When He does, it is as if the arrows are thirsty, and so the Lord fills them. But He does so to the point that they are utterly intoxicated from the banquet. And then, the sword is again unsheathed...

**42 (con't) And My sword shall devour flesh,**

*v'kharbi tokal basar* – “And My sword devours flesh.” In Hebrew, the edge of a sword is considered its mouth. As such, it is a devourer, tearing into flesh and consuming the life it takes. This is the terrifying imagery that is considered here. That imagery then extends on...

**42 (con't) With the blood of the slain and the captives,**

*mi'dam khalal v'shivyah* – “From blood slain and captives.” The idea is that of the arrows standing in the bodies of the slain, draining them of blood, and the sword not sparing the captives as it turns from side to side. It is a battle that sees the utter ruin of the enemy and all with him. And this extends on again...

**42 (con't) From the heads of the leaders of the enemy.”**

It is singular: *merosh parot oyev* – “From head freemen enemy.” It is difficult to be sure of the meaning of these words. There is a new and rare word, *pera*, which is the same as *pera* – hair, or locks. It is found only here and in Judges 5:2, and it is uncertain what it means.

However, Robert Young seems to have accurately defined it as “freemen.” Just as hair is free and becomes unkempt, so are these freed men. They would then be set in contrast to the captives of the previous clause. Instead of being bound, they are unkempt and free.

The words seem to be a standard a/a/b/b pattern –

- (a) I make drunk My arrows from blood.
- (a) And My sword devours flesh.
- (b) From blood slain and captives.
- (b) From head freemen enemy.

It is easy to see in these verses the climactic return of Christ and His execution of judgment upon the armies gathered against Israel which is recorded in Revelation 19. With that now fully expressed, we come to the final verse of the song.

It is a finishing call to the world who knows Yehovah that He has kept His covenant promises to this nation of disobedience by providing them the atonement they do not, in fact, deserve. With that in mind...

**<sup>43</sup> “Rejoice, O Gentiles, *with* His people;**

*harninu goyim amo* – “Rejoice you, nations, His people!” The word “with” is not included in the Hebrew, and thus it probably is better rendered “nations” than “Gentiles.” The reason this is important is that Paul cites this in Romans 15, ascribing it to the Gentiles rejoicing *with* the Jews. That will be seen in our closing verse.

As such, I would argue that this is referring to both Jews and Gentiles through the use of the word *goy*, or nation. In other words, Israel is one nation among the nations. In saying, “Rejoice you, nations, His people,” it includes all nations, inclusive of Israel. This would then correspond to Revelation 21:24 which is clearly inclusive of both –

“And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.” Revelation 21:24

**<sup>43</sup> (con’t) For He will avenge the blood of His servants,**

*ki dam abadav yiqom* – “For blood His servants He will avenge.” This refers to the repayment of the ill-treatment of God’s people during the tribulation period. It is spoken of as a call to God in Revelation 6:10. It is then stated as an accomplishment in Revelation 18:20. And it is then referred to again in Revelation 19:2. Next, it says...

**<sup>43</sup> (con’t) And render vengeance to His adversaries;**

*v'naqam yashiv l'tsara* – “And vengeance He returns to His adversaries.” It is again a clear presentation of what is more fully expressed in Revelation as well as throughout the writings of the prophets.

Those who come against the people of God will receive their just due, which will come in due time. All things must find their place in the unfolding events, and they will be accomplished without one being missed.

**\*43 (fin) He will provide atonement for His land *and* His people.”**

*v'kipper admato amo* – “And He has atoned His earth, His people.” Rather than *erets*, or land, the word *adamah*, or earth, is used. Both are often used interchangeably, and both are variously translated. But *adamah* gives the sense of the ground, coming from the same word as *adam*, the man who was taken from the ground.

That then extends to the entire earth – all of which required atonement for the worldwide shedding of blood, especially in the tribulation period. One must understand the reference to understand what is being conveyed. As such, the words “His people” extend to all who are saved out of the tribulation, either through death or through entering the millennium.

It is a complete atonement for what occurred. Only when this is accomplished will Israel be able to take its rightful position as the head of the nations. At that time, the promises prophesied both about and to them will find their fulfillment. It will happen, and it cannot be otherwise. The Lord has spoken, and what He has said in His word will come to pass.

This final verse repeats the a/b/b/a pattern used earlier in the song. This one has a contrasting parallel in the middle two verses –

- (a) Rejoice you, -nations, \*His people!
- (b) For blood +His servants He will avenge.
- (b) And vengeance He returns to -His adversaries.
- (a) And He has atoned -His earth, \*His people.

As this song now comes to its ending, it is a good time to note that the Song of Moses is referred to in Revelation 15. There it says –



They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb,  
saying: “Great and marvelous are Your works,  
Lord God Almighty!  
Just and true *are* Your ways,  
O King of the saints! Revelation 15:3

In this chapter of Revelation, John noted those “who have victory over the beast, over his image and *over* his mark and over the number of his name.” He also noted that they had harps of God. Of them, he next said, “They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God.”

The term “servant of God” is fittingly applied to Moses, having been called the Lord’s servant several times in the Old Testament (see Exodus 14:31, Numbers 12:7, and Psalm 105:26). He is referred to in this manner in Hebrews 3:5 as well.

Of this, Ruckman says, “Here is another verse that proves that no Christian goes through the Tribulation. The people in verse 2 [sic] sing ‘the song of Moses’ (the Mosaic Law) and ‘the song of the Lamb’ (Jesus Christ dying for sinners – John 1:29). That’s *works and faith* ... No Christian has any business singing ‘the Song of Moses’ at all.”

While it is true that pre-tribulation Christian believers will not go through the tribulation (in part or in whole), the logic Ruckman uses is faulty. Citing the Song of Moses is not a works-based statement. Rather, it is a note of fulfilled prophecy.

There are two songs of Moses recorded in the Old Testament. The first is in Exodus 15 when the children of Israel were led out of bondage and through the Red Sea to safety. The great world power that had hold over Israel was crushed and defeated by the Lord.

The second is recorded in Deuteronomy 32. It details the history of the people of Israel from the time they enter the Promised Land through to the end of the ages. Which Song of Moses is being referred to? Actually, both fit the mold of what is said. However, it is surely the latter song that is first and foremost being considered.

The people in the Revelation verse are “those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark *and* over the number of his name.” In the final verse of the song recorded in Deuteronomy 32, we just finished with these words –

“Rejoice, O Gentiles, *with* His people;  
For He will avenge the blood of His servants,

And render vengeance to His adversaries;  
He will provide atonement for His land *and* His people.”

To ensure we don't make the error Ruckman made, Paul even cites this verse in Romans 15:10 when speaking of believers in the church age. Moses prophesied of a time when the Gentiles would rejoice along with the people of Israel. That time came when Christ fulfilled and annulled the Mosaic Covenant, set it aside, and established the New Covenant in His blood.

Further, the words of Deuteronomy 32 refer to avenging “the blood of His servants.” This is exactly what is being pictured in the Revelation martyrs standing on the glassy sea. Thus, both Jews and Gentiles can sing the Song of Moses (Rejoice, O Gentiles with His people), “and the song of the Lamb” (You are worthy to take the scroll...) as is recorded in Revelation 5:9, 10.

Though the two songs of Moses are different songs, the words of Moses in both songs ultimately refer to the work of God in Christ. Thus, songs such as are found in Exodus 15, Deuteronomy 32, and Revelation 5 all build upon the same theme – the greatness of the Lord God.

As for Israel in relation to the words of this song, none of what replacement theology teaches concerning the nation makes any sense when it is taken in the proper light of what Moses pens. And when this song is taken in its proper light, everything occurring in the world, or that will come to pass in it, correctly aligns with what the Lord is doing.

Nothing could be clearer from what has been said here. But what has been said here only builds upon everything else Moses has been saying since the start of Deuteronomy. He is not speaking to the church, and the Gentiles are only included in what is going on; they are not the main focus of it.

Jesus Christ is the main focus, and it is His coming to His own people, Israel, to be received by them that is anticipated. When that didn't happen on His first advent, the narrative neither stopped nor was it in error. That was simply an anticipated part of the whole.

God has remained, and He continues to remain, faithful to His part of the covenant, even when Israel has consistently failed at theirs. Let us pray that before the terrifying times foreshadowed in these verses come to pass, many – both Jews and Gentiles – will

turn and call out for His saving hand. May it be so to the glory of God who has determined all things to be.

**Closing Verse:** *Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers,<sup>9</sup> and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written:*

*“For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles,  
And sing to Your name.”*

<sup>10</sup> *And again he says:*

*“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!”*

<sup>11</sup> *And again:*

*“Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles!*

*Laud Him, all you peoples!”*

<sup>12</sup> *And again, Isaiah says:*

*“There shall be a root of Jesse;*

*And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles,*

*In Him the Gentiles shall hope.” Romans 15:8-12*

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 32:44-52 *Moses you will die outside of the promise, sadly...*  
(Because You Did Not Hallow Me) (98<sup>th</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **The Song of Moses, Part V**

‘Is this not laid up in store with Me

Sealed up among My treasures?

-----So it is and so it shall be

Vengeance is Mine, and recompense

Their foot shall slip in due time

For the day of their calamity is at hand

And the things to come hasten upon them for their crime

“For the LORD will judge His people

And have compassion on His servants. Yes compassion from Me

When He sees that their power is gone  
There is no one remaining, neither bond nor free

He will say: 'Where are their gods whom they have bought  
The rock in which they refuge sought?

Who ate the fat of their sacrifices  
And drank the wine of their drink offering?  
Let them rise and help you  
And be your refuge; let them do this thing

'Now see that I, even I, am He  
And there is no God besides Me – this you shall understand  
I kill and I make alive, I wound and I heal  
Nor is there any who can deliver from My hand

For I raise My hand to heaven, changing never  
And say, "As I live forever

If I whet My glittering sword  
And My hand takes hold on judgment, just and plainly  
I will render vengeance to My enemies  
And repay those who hate Me

I will make My arrows drunk with blood  
And My sword shall devour flesh, for all to see  
With the blood of the slain and the captives  
From the heads of the leaders of the enemy

"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people  
For He will avenge the blood of His servants, His wayward sheeple  
And render vengeance to His adversaries  
He will provide atonement for His land and His people

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## **Deuteronomy 32:44-52 (Because You Did Not Hallow Me)**

One of the things that never ceases to surprise me is when someone who has been watching our sermons for a length of time, as much as multiple years, will email me, call me, or ask me about some point or another that stems from the modern-day Judaizers – the Hebrew Roots movement – and ask if that point is true.

We talk frequently about doctrine in the sermons and Bible studies. We've discussed positive things like eternal salvation, and negative things like reintroducing the law – in part or in whole.

There are some things I've mentioned only a few times and I can see how someone might have missed that point or maybe forgotten it. I have forgotten a ton of what I have taught in the past myself. But there are other things that I have brought up so often, and so directly, that I'm not sure how anyone who has seen more than even a handful of sermons or studies could fail to get what I am conveying.

This doesn't mean they agree or disagree with me on those points. I am referring to not knowing what I teach on them. How anyone could ask me, "Hey Charlie, I heard someone say we should not be eating pork. Is that correct?" When I hear something like that, I have to wonder if that person has paid attention for even one sermon.

**Text Verse:** *"For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, <sup>19</sup> for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God." Hebrews 7:18, 19*

The meaning of the words of our text verse is that the law, meaning the law of Moses, is annulled. The word means nullified, voided, repealed, and so on. The reason why that occurred is because it was 1) weak, and 2) it was unprofitable.

The law was incapable of making anything perfect, and so Christ – who was already perfect – brought it to an end. It is done. For more clarification on that, please also read Hebrew 8:13 and 10:9. There is no part of the Law of Moses that we are bound to. Not a single precept.

Rather, we learn from the law about Christ, and then we come to Christ and learn our doctrine and theology from the New Testament epistles. If there is nothing else that you

ever learn from the Superior Word, please hear this: Christ is the end of the law for righteousness for everyone who believes.

Do not listen to these Hebrew Roots people, or to anyone else who reinserts precepts from the Law of Moses into their New Covenant theology. Reject them! And yes, tithing is a precept of the Law of Moses too. Eat your pork, forget about tithing, and hold fast to Jesus. That's it!

It's all to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. For It Is Not an Empty Word from You (verses 44-47)**

The Song of Moses was completed in last week's sermon, but it is referred to in our first verses today. As it is his swan song, and because I would like you to hear it as I translated it, I will read it to you before we enter into the sermon verses.

I'm not saying this is a better translation; it's not. It's just more literal. Where Moses uses a verb as a noun, that it was I have done. Or where he uses a noun instead of an adjective, that is what I have done. Therefore, it is probably less understandable, but it is more precise than you might otherwise hear. And yes, I am sure there are errors in this. But it is my best effort after about 50 hours of study. I hope you will enjoy it as much as I did.

1. Give ear you, the heavens, and I will speak.  
And hear, the earth, words my mouth.
2. Let drop as the rain my teaching.  
Stream as the dew, my speech.  
As showers upon the tender grass.  
And as *abundant* drops upon the tender herbs.
3. For Name Yehovah I invoke.  
Ascribe you [all] greatness to our God!
4. The Rock!  
Perfect His work.  
For all His ways just.  
God of stability and no unrighteousness.  
Righteous and upright HE.
5. He [Israel] *has* corrupted himself.

Not His sons.  
Their blemish.  
Generation twisted and warped.  
6. Do to Yehovah you [all] do this?  
People foolish and no wise.  
Not HE your Father your Purchaser?  
HE made you and established you.  
7. Remember days antiquity.  
*Mentally* scan years generation and generation.  
Ask your father and he *is to* declare to you.  
Your elders and they will say to you.  
8. In bequeathing Most High nations.  
In His separating sons *of* man.  
He establishes boundaries peoples.  
To number sons Israel.  
9. For portion Yehovah His people.  
Jacob line His inheritance.  
10. He finds him in *a* land – *a* wilderness.  
And in chaos - *a* howling, wasteland.  
He encompasses him; He educates him.  
He guards him as little man His eye.  
11. As eagle wakes up his nest.  
Over His young He flutters.  
Spreads His wings; He takes him.  
He lifts him up on His pinions.  
12. Yehovah alone He leads him.  
And no with Him god foreign.  
13. He makes him ride upon high places earth.  
And he eats produce fields.  
And he makes to suck honey from crag.  
And oil from flinty rock.  
14. Curd cattle and milk flock.  
With fat lambs.  
And rams sons *of* Bashan and goats.  
With fat kidneys wheat.  
And blood grape you drink wine.  
15. And he grows fat, Yeshurun, and he kicks.  
You grew fat! You grew thick!  
You *are* bulging!



And he deserts God *who* made him.  
And he humiliates Rock his salvation.  
16. They move Him to jealousy in strangers.  
In abominations they are provoking Him to indignation.  
17. They are sacrificing to the demons, not God.  
'Gods' no they knew.  
Newbies, from near they came.  
No have they dreaded, your fathers.  
18. Rock brought forth you; may you forget!  
And you have forgotten God in travail with you.  
19. And saw, Yehovah, and spurned.  
From provocation His sons and His daughters.  
20. And He said, I will hide My face from them.  
I will see what their end.  
For generation contrariness.  
They children no trustworthiness in them.  
21. They provoked me jealous in 'no-god.'  
They have moved Me to indignation in their bubbles.  
And I, I will provoke them to jealousy in no-people.  
In nation foolish I will move them to indignation.  
22. For fire kindled in My nostril.  
And shall burn even to Sheol lowest.  
And consume land and her increase.  
And enflame foundations mountains.  
23. I will amass upon them evils.  
My arrows I will expend in them.  
24. Emaciated, hunger.  
And consumed fever and depletion bitter.  
And fang beasts I will send in them.  
With a burning, reptiles dust.  
25. From out shall bereave sword.  
And from inner chambers, dread.  
Also young man; also virgin.  
Suckling with man advancement.  
26. I have said: 'I will blow them away.'  
I will cause to cease from mankind memory them.  
27. If not provocation enemy I would abide.  
Lest should discern their adversaries.  
Lest they will say: 'Our hand *is* exalted!

And no Yehovah who accomplished all this.  
28. For nation devoid prudence they.  
And no in them understanding.  
29. If they were wise, they would understand this!  
They would consider to their latter end!  
30. How could chase one a thousand?  
And two cause to flee a multitude?  
For their Rock had sold them.  
And Yehovah delivered them.  
31. For no like our Rock their rock.  
And our enemies, judges.  
32. For from vine Sodom their vine.  
And from fields Gomorrah.  
Their grapes, grapes *of* poison.  
Clusters bitter to them.  
33. Burning *of* serpents their wine.  
And poison vipers cruel.  
34. *They* not stored with Me?  
Sealed in My treasuries?  
35. To Me vengeance and recompense.  
To time shall waver their foot.  
For near day their calamity.  
And hasten readied [things] to them.  
36. For will judge Yehovah His people.  
And upon His servants He will comfort.  
For He sees for is disappeared hand.  
And none restraining and relinquishing.  
37. And He said: 'Where their gods?'  
Rock they refuged in?  
38. Who fat their sacrifices they eat!  
They drink wine their libations.  
They arising and they helping you!  
May it be over you haven!  
39. See now! For I, I HE!  
And no God with Me.  
I, I terminate, and I life-sustain.  
I have shattered, and I heal.  
And no from My hand deliver.  
40. For I lift up unto heavens My hand.

And I say, 'Live I to eternity.'  
41. If I whet brilliance My sword.  
And grasps in judgment My hand.  
I will return vengeance to My adversaries.  
And to those hating Me I repay.  
42. I make drunk My arrows from blood.  
And My sword devours flesh.  
From blood slain and captives.  
From head freemen enemy.  
43. Rejoice you, nations, His people!  
For blood His servants He will avenge.  
And vengeance He returns to His adversaries.  
And He has atoned His earth, His people.

**<sup>44</sup> So Moses came with Joshua the son of Nun and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people.**

The order of words in the NKJV doesn't really convey the sense of the Hebrew. Plus, the Hebrew reads Hoshea, not Joshua. It more literally reads, "And comes Moses, and speaks all words *of* this song in *the* ears *of* the people – he and Hoshea *the* son of Nun."

The name Hoshea is used only three times when referring to Joshua. It is seen elsewhere in Numbers 13:8 and Numbers 13:16. In the latter, it says, "These *are* the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Joshua."

The name Hoshea means "Salvation." However, where the prefixed "H" at the beginning of the name is from is debated. It could be the definite article, thus meaning "The Salvation." It could also be affixed as a sort of exclamation. If so, Abarim then renders the name, "Yo! Saved!"

Moses is the principal who has come forth and spoken out the words. Hoshea has come with him, being only incidentally noted. He probably sat with Moses, but the reading was accomplished by Moses.

However, this is perfectly in accord with the words of verse 31:19 where the command to write down the words of the song was stated in the plural, indicating both Moses and Joshua –

“Now therefore, write [pl.] down this song for yourselves, and teach [sg.] it to the children of Israel; put [sg.] it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel.”

Moses and Joshua were to write it, meaning probably that Moses spoke it forth while Joshua wrote, thus both participating. And then Moses was to teach it and put it in their mouths. Thus, what is recorded now is a precise fulfillment of that.

As for using the name Hoshea (Salvation), instead of Yehoshua (the Lord is Salvation), regardless of any other reason, this absolutely identifies that it is the same person who had been faithful forty years earlier and who had stood on the side of the Lord when all the spies and the people had rebelled against Him.

Hoshea was designated to go into Canaan. At that time, Moses called him Yehoshua, a name he has been called since. However, just prior to entering the land, he is once again designated by his original name, Hoshea.

It is thus not unlike Jacob who was twice named Israel (Genesis 32:28 and Genesis 35:10). In this, (Hoshea/Yehoshua – Salvation/Yah is Salvation) we see hints of Jesus (Yeshua) who is Salvation, and who is the Lord (Yehovah) who is Salvation. Jesus came to save His people because He is the Lord who saves His people.

In this verse, and in the surrounding picture of events, there is this rather incredible expression of what God is doing. The Lord speaks His word to and through Moses (He who draws out). It anticipates the Lord Jesus drawing out the will of the Lord – His standard.

Joshua (Yah is Salvation – God in Christ) is there, included in the writing of the word. The Lord (Yehovah) is expressing Himself through the Word. Now, the name is changed to Hoshea (Salvation). He is there receiving the word. The humanity of Jesus receives the word and embodies it.

Moses cannot enter the promise but must die outside of it. Christ Jesus dies in fulfillment of the law and the law dies with Him. Jesus (Salvation) rises as the Giver of the New Covenant, confirming He is the Lord (Yehovah) who is Salvation.

How do you express all of what Christ Jesus is doing? You introduce several figures to represent the various roles, and in the middle of the process you introduce a secondary name to indicate the role He will then fulfill in a unique way.

The entire process is just at the edge of what the mind can grasp, but it is clear enough to reveal what God would do in Christ – the God/Man.

As for Hoshea's father, Nun, and as noted already, it is the confirmation that it is the same family, and he is the same faithful person noted in Numbers. And more, it is also a confirmation of what the Lord will do.

Nun is from the verb *nun*, to propagate, or increase. This is what Christ would do, increasing the family of God through His completed work. As for the law itself, which includes the speaking forth of the song...

<sup>45</sup> **Moses finished speaking**

*v'kal mosheh l'daber* – “And finished Moses to speak.” The meticulous recording of the fact is given to show complete and absolute obedience to the previous command. Nothing directed by the Lord has gone by the wayside, including the speaking out of...

<sup>45</sup> (con't) **all these words to all Israel,**

The voice of Moses personally spoke out the words to those who represented all of Israel. Hence, it is “to all Israel” not just at this time, but for all time. In his speaking forth the words, and in the recording that he has done so, it stands as a witness for all Israel for all time. This is certainly the sense that should be derived here, and it is reflected in what he next says...

<sup>46</sup> **and he said to them: “Set your hearts on all the words**

The Hebrew is direct – “Set to your hearts to all the words.” The heart refers to the mind, the seat of reasoning. Moses is telling them that they are to take the words and set them to their minds, meaning fix them firmly there.

This must be considered a command in and of itself. As such, to fail to do so, which is something anyone who has not completely memorized them is guilty of, then it is its own violation of the law. The impossible trap of noncompliance is practically written into what is said. It makes the knowledge of God in Christ all the sweeter to consider. Moses is referring to the words...

<sup>46</sup> (con't) **which I testify among you today,**

The verb *ud* comes from a root signifying to duplicate or repeat. It is that which comes around again. In other words, Moses is bringing around again that which he received, duplicating it in the ears of the people. It is that which the Lord spoke to Moses, using the noun form, *ed*, in the previous chapter –

“Now therefore, write down this song for yourselves, and teach it to the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel. <sup>20</sup> When I have brought them to the land flowing with milk and honey, of which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten and filled themselves and grown fat, then they will turn to other gods and serve them; and they will provoke Me and break My covenant. <sup>21</sup> Then it shall be, when many evils and troubles have come upon them, that this song will testify against them as a witness; for it will not be forgotten in the mouths of their descendants, for I know the inclination of their behavior today, even before I have brought them to the land of which I swore *to give them.*” Deuteronomy 31:19-21

Thus, they are the very words of the Lord, and they are those same words...

<sup>46</sup> (con't) **which you shall command your children to be careful to observe—all the words of this law.**

The words continue in the plural, “you all shall command.” It is a directive not just for the nation in general, but everyone in the nation in particular. The people were to learn the words, and they were to command them to their children. The unceasing nature of the mandate is clearly noted here.

It's rather tragic too, because if you were to ask the most basic question of the law to almost any Jewish person today, they might (?) get the names of the books of Moses right, but not much more. The utter failure of their keeping of the law is reflected in this, and the sentiment today is that found at the time of Jeremiah –

“Now therefore, speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD: “Behold, I am fashioning a disaster and devising a plan against you. Return now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.””

<sup>12</sup> And they said, “That is hopeless! So we will walk according to our own plans, and we will every one obey the dictates of his evil heart.” Jeremiah 18:11, 12

This is the burden of the law, and is it that which was intended to conduct the people to Jesus. This was its true and ultimate purpose. The law, with all of its stern warnings of

impending doom and judgment, is actually a letter of love pointing the weary soul to a restful abode in the presence of Christ.

But the law had to serve its time and have its purpose fulfilled. Until that time arrived, and until it was finally completed by Him, it was to be a guard for the people...

**<sup>47</sup> For it *is* not a futile thing for you,**

Though nobody translates it this way, the preposition is “from,” not “for.” And more, it bears an emphasis: *ki lo davar req hu mikem* – “For not word empty, IT, from you.” Therefore, this is not speaking directly about Moses’ words to them, but the repetition of Moses’ words to the children –

“Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe—all the words of this law. <sup>47</sup> For it *is* not a futile thing for [from] you, because it *is* your life, and by this word you shall prolong *your* days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess.”

The point here is that Israel is, in fact, going over to possess the land. But that possession will end if the word is not extended to those who come after this generation. Therefore, it is that Israel hears the word and applies it, but also passes it on. It is...

**<sup>47</sup> (con’t) because it *is* your life,**

Again, it bears an emphasis: *ki hu khayekem* – “For IT your life.” This is the last time that this thought is expressed in Deuteronomy. In fact, it is the last time that the word *khai*, or life, is spoken forth in the book. And it is directly speaking of the word. The word is equated to the life of the people. But what is the word that it can bear such power?

The word *hu*, or it, is a masculine pronoun, but because it is speaking of the word, the law, it is rendered “it.” However, in understanding one’s New Testament theology properly, one cannot help but see more clearly what John was thinking as he opened his gospel –

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. <sup>4</sup> In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” John 1:1-4

It is hard to imagine that John was thinking of anything other than exactly this. Though written in Greek, John's thinking was that of a Hebrew. Today, when the New Testament is translated into Hebrew, the same word, *davar*, is used when translating John 1:1.

Jesus Christ is the embodiment, the physical manifestation of, the word of God which is expressed through the law which Moses has put forth. Jesus explicitly said this to the people in both John 5:38, 39, and John 5:46. Therefore, to reject the word Moses conveys is to then reject everything anticipated in Christ. And to reject Christ, when He came, is to utterly reject the Lord God. As such...

**47 (con't) and by this word you shall prolong *your* days in the land**

It does not say "in the land," rather: *u-ba'davar ha'zeh taariku yamim al ha'adamah* – "and in the word, the this, you shall prolong days upon the ground." This is speaking less of Israel possessing Canaan itself than it is speaking of the people possessing life upon the ground.

What good would it be to possess the ground if the ground was barren, dried up, and dead? The people would die from famine. This is what is being more directly conveyed. Thus, "life" of the last clause is what is being connected to "prolong days." And that is upon the ground...

**47 (con't) which you cross over the Jordan to possess."**

As has been seen before, there is a sort of pun being conveyed here, where the verb translated as "cross over" is used: *asher atem overim eth ha'yarden shamah l'rishtah* – "which you 'crossers-over' the Jordan there to possess."

The word *overim*, or "crossers over," is identical in spelling to *ivrim*, or Hebrews. Hebrews are those who have "crossed over," and these now are the "crosser overs." As such, the typology of Christ is evident. Those who cross over the Jordan, which pictures the coming of Christ – the incarnation – are those who are the true Hebrews.

Israel is simply living out in type that which is more perfectly expressed in the person who comes to God through Christ.

*It is your life and your length of days  
Hold fast and cling to it, not in part but in whole  
It is the guide to lead you always*



*And is the protector of your very soul*

*Let this word dwell in you richly always*

*Let your mouths express it in songs, psalms, and hymns as well*

*Let it be the path upon which you walk all your days*

*This word is life. It is your life, so to you I tell*

*Cling to this Word, the word of God that He gave for us*

*Let your mouths confess Him; He is your life and length of days*

*Come to the Word; come to the Lord Jesus*

*And He shall guide you forever, even for eternal days*

## **II. Because You Did Not Hallow Me (verses 48-52)**

**48 Then the LORD spoke to Moses that very same day, saying:**

The words “that very same day” are from the Hebrew *b’etsem ha’yom ha’zeh*, “in bone the day the this.” It is an idiomatic expression found several times in Genesis through Leviticus, but this is the only time it is stated in Deuteronomy.

The expression “in bone” means “the same,” coming from Adam’s proclamation when he was presented with his wife –

“This *is* now bone of my bones  
And flesh of my flesh;  
She shall be called Woman,  
Because she was taken out of Man.” Genesis 2:23

To identify something “in bone” means it is that and none other. As such, this is referring to the fact that Moses spoke out the words of the song, and on that exact same day he was given the instructions that are just ahead. They are a close repeat to the words of Numbers 27 –

“Now the LORD said to Moses: ‘Go up into this Mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the children of Israel. <sup>13</sup> And when you have seen it, you also shall be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was gathered. <sup>14</sup> For in the Wilderness of Zin, during the strife of the congregation, you rebelled against My command to hallow Me at the waters before their eyes.’

(These *are* the waters of Meribah, at Kadesh in the Wilderness of Zin.)”

-Numbers 27:12-14

With that brought to memory, the narrative continues with...

<sup>49</sup> **“Go up this mountain of the Abarim,**

*aleh el har ha’avarim hazeh* – “Go up into Mount the Abarim the this.” Moses is instructed to go into the mount of the Abarim. The word comes from *avar*, meaning to pass over, by, or through. The “im” at the end is a plural marker, like our “s.” Thus, it is “The Crossings Over” or “The Regions Beyond.”

They are in the regions beyond Canaan, and Canaan is actually the point of reference. The specific mount is then next stated...

<sup>49</sup> (con’t) **Mount Nebo,**

The name Nebo is most likely derived from *navi*, or prophet. Thus, it means something like prophet, interpreter, spokesperson, or foreteller. Another word it is connected to is *navah*, meaning high or prominent. It is to the high places that people would go in order to get “nearer” to God and to receive a word from Him or sacrifice to Him. As such, a secondary meaning is height.

Therefore, it would be a high place where someone would go to receive a word, a vision, a prophecy, and so on. That is actually fitting for the occasion.

<sup>49</sup> (con’t) **which is in the land of Moab,**

The words are spoken to Moses who is in the land. He is not unaware of the fact. As such, the name is a reminder to him that he will not enter Canaan. He is dying in the land known as “From Father,” which is...

<sup>49</sup> (con’t) **across from Jericho;**

*al pene Yerekho* – “upon face Jericho.” The meaning is “facing Jericho.” When on the mountain, the immediate sight would be the city. The name Yerekho (with various spellings) has a dual significance. It means City of the Moon, and it means Place of Fragrance. It is from this place, the Mount of the Prophet (or the Mount of Height), looking toward the Place of Fragrance, that Moses will...

<sup>49</sup> (con't) **view the land of Canaan,**

The name Canaan is derived from the word *kana*, “to humble,” or “to subdue.” That comes from a root signifying “to bend the knee.” Thus, it signifies something like humiliated, or humbled, or even subdued. It is also connected to the word signifying a merchant. It is this land...

<sup>49</sup> (con't) **which I give to the children of Israel as a possession;**

It is the land of promise, the land of inheritance, and the land that will become the possession of Israel. The original intent was that it was to be their place of rest, but that was only so far as it is typical of the true place of rest which was lost at the fall of man.

Israel is the redeemed nation, and the land in that state of having been redeemed is Canaan. Everything being stated here, and everything which occurs is given in typology. It anticipates the coming of Christ, His work, and what that work then makes available to those who receive it. As for Moses, that is not the case...

<sup>50</sup> **and die on the mountain which you ascend, and be gathered to your people, just as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people;**

The Lord specifically brings in the matter of ascending (*alah*), being on a mountain, and dying – just as Aaron died on *hor ha'har*, or “Mount of the Mountain.” A one-to-one comparison to what happened to Aaron is being made concerning Moses' own death...

<sup>51</sup> **because you trespassed against Me among the children of Israel**

The word “because” gives the sense, but it reads more precisely, saying, *al asher mealtem bi b'tok bene Yisrael* – “upon which you (pl.) acted treacherously against Me in midst children Israel.”

Using this form, *al asher*, upon which, He is linking it to their ascent (*alah*). The two words are connected, the one *al* coming from the other *alah*. It thus helps explain why Aaron and now Moses had to ascend at their deaths. Their defiance was...

<sup>51</sup> (con't) **at the waters of Meribah Kadesh, in the Wilderness of Zin,**

The name Meribah is derived from what occurred. There was *riv*, or strife, and so the name of the place was called Merivah, meaning Place of Quarreling. The name Kadesh

comes from the verb *qadash*, meaning to hallow or set apart. Thus, the whole name would signify something like Sacred Place of Quarreling. That is said to be...

**51 (con't) in the Wilderness of Zin,**

The wilderness is a place of testing. Zin means “thorn.” But it also is connected to a word signifying a place of dryness. As such, it is where the thorn would flourish. This is where they were to draw water from the rock by speaking to it. But they failed to do so...

**51 (con't) because you did not hallow Me in the midst of the children of Israel.**

Again, the Lord repeats the words of the first clause: *al asher lo qidashtem oti b'tok bene Yisrael* – “upon which no you (pl.) hallowed Me in midst sons Israel.” Putting the corresponding thoughts side by side can help you see what is being conveyed –

“Go up (*alah*) into mountain.”

“And die on the mountain which you ascend (*alah*).”

“upon which (*al asher*) / you acted treacherously against Me / in midst sons Israel.”

“upon which (*al asher*) / you did not hallow Me / in midst sons Israel.”

The law (Moses and Aaron) is the problem that must be rectified, and it must occur before Israel can enter into the possession. Having said that, a note of grace is extended to Moses in his ascent...

**52 Yet you shall see the land before you,**

*ki mi'neged tireh eth ha'arets* – “For from before you shall see the land.” The meaning is clear. Moses will look forward from the ascent and he will front his face to Israel, viewing it from a distance...

**\*52 (fin) though you shall not go there, into the land which I am giving to the children of Israel.”**

The sentence of dying outside of the land of promise was pronounced. It will not be amended. Moses, who represents the law, will see the land from a distance, but he will not enter into what the sons of Israel shall receive.

*You shall die outside the inheritance  
Because You did not hallow Me  
Even when I gave you every chance  
You were unable to perform accordingly*

*There is a disconnect that must be corrected  
The law must be first taken away  
Because there is a flaw that has been detected  
And so, it must be this way*

*It is by the law that comes the knowledge of sin  
And in that knowledge, all become guilty before Me  
Through the law, one is completely done in  
If you don't get that, look to the cross and you will see*

*I the Lord will accomplish all that needs to be done  
When I give of Myself in giving My Son*

### **III. Pictures of Christ**

As we progressed through the verses, there has been some explanation of what is going on, but to draw it all together, and without trying to stretch the meaning too far, each word of the second section is intended to fit together to form a story.

Moses, he who draws out – meaning the law from the Lord – is to ascend the mountain of the Regions Beyond, the Mount of Height, which is in the land of From Father, across from the Place of Fragrance and there he will view the Land of the Humbled, the place which the children of Israel are set to possess.

Moses anticipates Christ who ultimately draws out the word of the Lord, being the very Word of God. The law must come first in order to anticipate Him. In order for the children of Israel to enter the promise, though, there must be a change in the structure of things.

A promise was already made to Abraham concerning the inheritance. It was based on faith, not on the law. As Paul says, “For if the inheritance *is* of the law, *it is* no longer of promise; but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise” (Galatians 3:18).

This must be resolved then. The law is contrary to the promise. The law is not of faith at all. The two are diametrically opposed. As this is so, Moses is given to anticipate what actually occurred in Christ. It was Christ Jesus who went to the regions beyond, outside of the promise.

He is the Prophet who came from the Father and who embodied the law that came from Him while in the Place of Fragrance, heaven, meaning the Land of the Humbled, remained at a distance. But it is set apart for the children of Israel. Their entrance is emblematic of those who will enter the promise once the law is dealt with.

The Land of the Humbled, Canaan, represents those who have humbled themselves before God in Christ. That is seen in several ways in the New Testament, but a couple of examples will show this –

“For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

-Ephesians 3:14

“But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. <sup>11</sup> For it is written:

‘As I live, says the LORD,

Every knee shall bow to Me,

And every tongue shall confess to God.’” Romans 14:10, 11

This is the goal, the hope, of those who come to Christ. But, as I said, before one can enter the Place of Fragrance, heaven, the law must be dealt with first. That is seen in the words concerning Aaron and Moses.

Both of them had to ascend mountains where they would die. Aaron ascended *hor ha' har*, or “Mount of the Mountain.” Moses ascended Mount Nebo, or “Mount of Height.” The symbolism seems somewhat obvious. They both have represented the law.

Together they violated the word of the Lord, destroying the typology of salvation by faith in the completed work of Christ. They were told to simply speak to the rock and water would issue forth, as was recorded in Numbers 20.

The rock pictured Christ in his exaltation, and water was to issue forth by the simple word of faith. Instead, they struck the rock as they had at Horeb. But that pictured Christ in His suffering. What they did by striking and not speaking was not of faith at all.

It shows that the law is not of faith. It is a path of working one's way to God, doing things in an attempt to receive what He instead freely offers. The work of the law was done by Christ Jesus. To instruct us on this more fully, Moses and Aaron, typical of the law, had to ascend under their own strength to the high place, and there they died – outside of the promise.

Their act of disobedience was recorded to highlight Christ's perfect obedience. He lived out the law and He embodied it. But the law is not of the inheritance, and so Christ had to die in fulfillment of it. Without that, none could enter the promise, just as Israel under Moses could not.

If you can stretch your mind a bit, think of Moses on Mount Nebo and of Christ on the cross. What does Paul say about that moment as He died?

“And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, <sup>14</sup> having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. <sup>15</sup> Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.” Colossians 2:13-15

Moses looked with longing at the land of promise, stretching his vision out to see what Israel would receive. Christ, the embodiment of the law, looked forward to what we would receive. Until He died, the inheritance remained distant and inaccessible to us, and – indeed – even to Him.

He had to complete what was set before Him. Moses ascended and looked, Jesus ascended and looked. Moses was to die because he failed to provide the word of faith. Jesus died so that He could provide the word of faith, and so that we could receive what that word of faith offers.

The lesson of Moses is one that escapes a large portion of the people of the world. You cannot “do” in order to enter the inheritance. You must receive by speaking the word of faith. Everyone is doing and doing in order to get what has already been done. And because it was done by God in Christ, there can be no more doing.

When Paul said that the law was nailed to the cross, he means exactly that. Jesus Christ, the embodiment of this law, and the one that Moses eventually saw after he realized his own shortcomings, was nailed to the cross.

What was given through Moses was spoken forth by God. Christ is the One that spoke it out. Christ is the One it spoke of. And Christ is the One that completed that spoken word.

He hung on the cross, nailed to it. And He took away that law, meaning His own life, through death. In His death, He not only annulled one covenant, He established another.

If anyone thinks that Israel entered Canaan through law observance, they haven't read the Bible. The priests bearing the ark stepped, by faith, into the rushing waters of the Jordan, and the waters stopped, allowing them to enter. That was an act of faith in the power of the Lord, and that ark was only a representation of the place where propitiation is made between God and man – the dead body of Jesus Christ.

Everything comes back to the thought of the cross. It is only through that marvelous spot where Jesus died that our heavenly hope is finally realized. The law was the obstacle, Christ removed that obstacle, and then He entered into His glory, making the way possible for us to enter with Him. This is the word of faith which we preach and by which you are saved.

Be sure to accept that word, believe with your heart, and confess with your mouth that God raised Him from the dead. In this, the things of life will go well with you.

**Closing Verse:** *“For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, <sup>20</sup> and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.” Colossians 1:19, 20*

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 33:1-5 (The Lord Came From Sinai) (99<sup>th</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **Because You Did Not Hallow Me**

So Moses came with Joshua the son of Nun  
And spoke all the words of this song  
In the hearing of the people  
So that forever they would carry it along



Moses finished speaking these words to all Israel  
And he said to them: "Set your hearts on all the words  
-----which I testify among you today  
Which you shall command your children  
To be careful to observe—all the words of this law, so to you I say

For it is not a futile thing for you  
Because it is your life, so to you I address  
And by this word you shall prolong your days  
In the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess

Then the LORD spoke to Moses that very same day  
Saying: "Go up this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo  
Which is in the land of Moab  
Across from Jericho

View the land of Canaan  
Which I give to the children of Israel as a possession  
And die on the mountain which you ascend  
And be gathered to your people; it is your final session

Just as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor  
And was gathered to his people, becoming a has been  
Because you trespassed against Me among the children of Israel  
At the waters of Meribah Kadesh, in the Wilderness of Zin

Because you did not hallow Me, so to you I tell  
In the midst of the children of Israel

Yet you shall see the land before you  
Though you shall not go there, as to you I tell  
Into the land which I am giving  
To the children of Israel

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## **Deuteronomy 33:1-5 (The Lord Came From Sinai)**

Despite very difficult Hebrew at times, there are unmistakable anticipations of Christ in our first three verses today. But the Hebrew is also beautiful in how it portrays the Lord even from a simple reading without looking at the finer details of what is presented.

What is rather interesting is that Moses says that the Lord came from Sinai, but some people conduct their lives as if He never left there. Instead, it is as if He is still there to this day, issuing out commands and prophecies.

At least, this is the substance behind their theology. Sinai was chosen to reveal things about what Jesus would do. It was also chosen to be a point of reference for the law itself and how the law fit into the greater picture of redemptive history.

It is not that the Lord came from Sinai and keeps coming from Sinai, but that Sinai is a point of reference for us to understand what He would do, what He did do, and what that means for our walk before the Lord.

Paul shows us this in the book of Galatians through a simple explanation of the metaphorical nature of what the word of the Lord has presented in three separate things—

- 1) the account of Abraham, his wife, his bondwoman, and the children that issued from them;
- 2) the giving of the law at Sinai; and
- 3) the administration of that law in Jerusalem, or the administration of the New Covenant from heaven.

His words form our text verse today...

**Text Verse:** *“Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?”<sup>22</sup> For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman.<sup>23</sup> But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise,<sup>24</sup> which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar—<sup>25</sup> for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children—<sup>26</sup> but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.” Galatians 4:21-26*

Abraham was given a promise. The promise cannot be later annulled by some other event. It stands between the Lord and him regardless of the introduction or fulfillment of any other thing.

In awaiting the continuance of that promise, which we later find out is a son through his wife (the freewoman) Sarah, Abraham had a child through Sarah's servant (the bondwoman), Hagar.

Paul tells us that God used those events to symbolically tell us a greater story. The child of the bondwoman, Ishmael, came in the normal way children come, according to the flesh. If you don't know about that yet, ask your mom. The point is that the son was born through a bondwoman.

The child of the freewoman, however, came according to a promise. As this is so, even if the child was conceived and born in the typical way, the fact that he came by a promise from God was not.

With this understood, Paul tells us that the birth of these sons symbolically anticipated what God would do through His covenants. The first covenant, the one at Sinai, brings forth sons born into bondage because the covenant itself is one of bondage.

This covenant, the one initiated at Sinai, was administered in Jerusalem, at the temple. It is a covenant of bondage. This is because sin is bondage. The law is what makes sin possible, and in violating the law, sin comes about. There is nothing free about the law. The law is bondage because it leads to sin. As this is so, those who are under the law are in bondage.

On the other hand, there is another covenant, the Christ Covenant that came through His work in fulfillment of the law. Being sinless, he had nothing binding Him. He was free, and He remained free.

In His death, He brought the law of bondage to an end for all who believe. As Paul says, "For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Romans 10:4). This is the covenant of promise, and it corresponds to Sarah's giving birth to Abraham's son Isaac, which came by promise.

This covenant is administered in the heavenly Jerusalem. And as Sarah was free, so is the Jerusalem in heaven. Thus, the sons of this covenant are free. There is no bondage because there is no sin that comes from or through the administration of this covenant.

As this is so, one must decide where he will hang his hat. It is not a matter to be taken lightly. It is the most important decision one who is presented with the two covenants can make. The Jews, to this day, have made their choice to follow Moses and the covenant made at Sinai.

Many supposed Christians have made the same choice as the Jews. One cannot have one foot in the law and one foot in Christ. It is one or the other, and if the law is a part of either, then the law – by default – takes precedence (see Galatians 5:3).

And then, there are those who have come to Christ alone in order to find their peace with God. They are free because Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes (Romans 10:4). Without law, there is no sin (Romans 5:13). Without sin, there is no bondage. Thus, in Christ, we are free.

This is an important point to understand because our verses today deal with it. It is great and glorious what Jesus Christ has done. The marvel of it is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. He Hides the Peoples (verses 1-3)**

#### **<sup>1</sup> Now this *is* the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed**

The Hebrew bears an article overlooked by all translations: *v'zoth ha'berakah asher berakh mosheh ish ha'elohim* – “And this the blessing which blessed Moses, man THE God.”

Out of about twenty-six hundred uses of the word *Elohim*, or God, the definite article is used with it less than four hundred times. It is always purposeful, and it is used when referring to man's relationship, or interactions, with the true God.

Moses is not just a man of God, but he is a man of THE God. His life was, and continues to be, noted as one that is fully in line with the intents, purposes, and goals of the one true God. This is the first time the title “man of the God” is found in Scripture. It will be a term used frequently of Elijah and Elisha in the books of Kings.

But more than even this, the statement indicates that his words – as recorded in the books that are credited to him – are the words of the true God as well. His words are

divine communications being conveyed through him. This includes the final words of his that are recorded in this chapter of Deuteronomy.

The inclusion of the article sets off Moses the man, and his words, as being aligned wholly and completely with Yehovah, the one true God. The blessing given is one by which Moses blessed...

<sup>1</sup> (con't) **the children of Israel**

*eth bene Yisrael* – “sons Israel.” The words speak of the sons of Israel by their names, Reuben, Judah, and the other remaining ones as well. However, the idea obviously extends to those who issue from them. The whole is accounted as Israel, but then there is a division that separates the whole into individual, set, and specific lines by which the people are designated.

Saying the term “children” as many translations do is not inappropriate. They are sons, but the people who issue from the sons are young and old, male and female, etc. But more to the point, they are “children” under the law. Paul explains this theological point in Galatians 4 –

“Now I say *that* the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, <sup>2</sup> but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. <sup>3</sup> Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. <sup>4</sup> But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

<sup>6</sup> And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’ <sup>7</sup> Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.” Galatians 4:1-7

As this is so, translating this as “sons” or as “children” are both acceptable, depending on what reference point is being spoken of. It is to this body of people, Israel, and specifically to the individual tribes that issue from him, that Moses will now bless the people...

<sup>1</sup> (con't) **before his death.**

The act of blessing here is one that was seen in the lives of both Isaac, who is the father of Israel, and of Israel, from whom these lines issue forth –

“Now it came to pass, when Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, that he called Esau his older son and said to him, ‘My son.’

And he answered him, ‘Here I am.’

<sup>2</sup> Then he said, ‘Behold now, I am old. I do not know the day of my death. <sup>3</sup> Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me. <sup>4</sup> And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring *it* to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die.’”

-Genesis 27:1-4

“And Jacob called his sons and said, ‘Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days:’” ... “And when Jacob had finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people.” Genesis 49:1 & 33

Isaac had intended to bless Esau, but through cunning and trickery Jacob had received the blessing. Just prior to his own demise, Jacob likewise gave forth his blessing upon his sons. As for Moses, he is the leader of the people and their lawgiver.

As they are a people under this law, they are as children united in a family relationship who are awaiting the promise which they alone are the heirs of – that of the promised coming of Messiah. It is to this group of people, waiting to be adopted as true sons of God through Him, that the blessing of their lawgiver will now come forth...

<sup>2</sup> **And he said:**

*va’yomar* – “And he said.” Because of the words “man of the God” in the previous verse, and now “And he said” here, many scholars say that this introduction was penned later. This would mean that Moses decided to bless the tribes, what he said was recorded as he spoke it out (possibly by Joshua), and that the one who recorded the blessings explained what happened.

But just as likely is that Moses, knowing that he would die, wrote out these words in advance, including the words “man of the God.” As such, it is a claim that the words are God’s, that they came through Moses, and that God approved them.

We can’t be sure either way, but I would personally lean to Moses being the author in any such debatable section. No matter what, his words of blessing now begin with...

<sup>2</sup> (con’t) **“The LORD came from Sinai,**

*Yehovah mi'sinay ba* – “Yehovah from Sinai came.” As an introductory note, this is the last time that Sinai (Horeb) is mentioned in the books of Moses.

As for the words themselves, they are poetic, and they speak of the Lord as if coming forth like the sunrise, illuminating the land. In this case, the Lord first manifested Himself to Israel by coming to Moses at the burning bush as is recorded in Exodus 3.

There Moses was told that he would be used to deliver the people. As an assurance of that, the Lord spoke clearly to Moses –

“So He said, ‘I will certainly be with you. And this *shall be* a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.’” Exodus 3:12

The Lord came forth from Sinai (Bush of the Thorn/Bush of the Lord), and He displayed His glory at Sinai, radiating out His majesty from there.

When the name Sinai is used instead of Horeb, it is given in connection with the redemptive workings of God in Christ and in anticipation of His cross. Moses next says...

<sup>2</sup> (con't) **And dawned on them from Seir;**

*v'zarakh mi'Seir la'mo* – “And irradiated from Seir to them.” The word *zarakh* gives the sense of shooting forth beams as the day dawns, even while the sun is rising, but before it has actually arisen.

From the coming forth of the Lord from Sinai, the glory of the Lord is seen to irradiate from Seir (Hairy). The name Hairy is because of the appearance of the mountain, being covered with low bushes thus giving it a hairy appearance. But hair in the Bible signifies an awareness of things, especially in relation to sin.

<sup>2</sup> (con't) **He shone forth from Mount Paran,**

*hophia me'har Paran* – “He shone forth from Mount Paran.” It is a new word, *yapha*. It signifies to shine forth, but not as the rising of the sun shoots forth. Rather, it is to be light itself; it is a causing of light to shine forth. A good example of this word is found in Psalm 50 which parallels the previous clauses as well –



“The Mighty One, God the LORD,  
Has spoken and called the earth  
From the rising of the sun to its going down.  
<sup>2</sup> Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,  
God **will shine forth.**” Psalm 50:1, 2

For now, Paran means Glorious. The word is used quite a few times in the Old Testament, but it is only affixed to the word “Mount” twice – here and in a similarly worded passage in Habakkuk 3 –

“God came from Teman,  
The Holy One from Mount Paran. *Selah*  
His glory covered the heavens,  
And the earth was full of His praise.  
<sup>4</sup> *His* brightness was like the light;  
He had rays *flashing* from His hand,  
And there His power *was* hidden.  
<sup>5</sup> Before Him went pestilence,  
And fever followed at His feet.” Habakkuk 3:3-5

As such, this refers to the Mount of Glory, or the Glorious Mount. Of the resplendent Lord, it next says...

<sup>2</sup> (con't) **And He came with ten thousands of saints;**

The translation is incorrect. It says “from,” not “with,” and the word “saints” is not right. It is a masculine singular noun: *v’athah m’rivot qodesh* – “And He came from myriads of holiness.”

The word translated as “came” is *athah*. It is a new word signifying “to come.” It is only used in words set off in a poetic manner, never in a general discourse. Because of this, it calls special attention to the coming, as if a herald is making a distinctive proclamation. Isaiah uses it ten times in his book, more than any other book in Scripture.

What is being said here is that the Lord has come from the place where the holy angels dwell. It is reflective of what is said of Him in Daniel 7 –

“A fiery stream issued  
And came forth from before Him.

A thousand thousands ministered to Him;  
Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.” Daniel 7:10

The Lord left the glory of heaven to come and allow His light to shine upon Israel. At this time...

<sup>2</sup> (con't) **From His right hand**

*mi'mino* – “From His right hand.” The right hand is a symbol of power and authority. It is from this...

<sup>2</sup> (con't) ***Came a fiery law for them.***

*esh dath la'mo* – “Fire-law for them.” This is the only time this expression is found in Scripture. Fire burns. In this it consumes, and purifies. What occurs is based on the substance that it interacts with. In the translation and its explanation, one can see anticipatory references to the coming of Christ –

\*Yehovah from Sinai came.

The Lord Jesus came from the place of the thorn, the cross.

\*And irradiated from Seir to them.

He illuminated the awareness of sin in man, becoming sin who knew no sin.

\*He shone forth from Mount Paran.

He shone forth from the Glorious Mount – where He was crucified.

\*And He came from myriads of holiness.

Having left heaven and the company of innumerable angels.

\*From His right hand...

He is at the right hand of God, and He bears the power and authority of the Lord. It is from this position that came...

\*Fire-law for them.

He is both the Giver of the law and the embodiment of it. He is the standard of God by which all are judged. They (if unsaved), or their deeds (if saved), will either be consumed or purified –

“And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. <sup>13</sup>The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. <sup>14</sup>Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. <sup>15</sup>And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” Revelation 20:12-15 (The unsaved).

“Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, <sup>13</sup> each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. <sup>14</sup> If anyone’s work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.” 1 Corinthians 3:12-15 (The saved).

As long as the reference is understood in whatever dispensation of time is being addressed, the parallels are clearly seen.

### <sup>3</sup> **Yes, He loves the people;**

It is plural: *aph khovev ammim* – “Also He hides the peoples.” Here is a word, *khavav*, found only this one time and translated as “loves.” It comes from a root meaning “to hide.” To say, “He hides (or secrets away) the peoples,” is not incorrect. But the meaning would be obscure.

Therefore, one can think of them being hidden away in the bosom, and thus there being a sense of cherishing, affection, and love. However, despite all other translations, my use of the word “hide” conveys the typology of Christ better.

### <sup>3</sup> (con’t) **All His saints *are* in Your hand;**

It is an adjective, not a noun: *kal qedosav b’yadekha* – “All His holies in Your hand.” It is referring to the saints, but they are being described by their characteristic, which is that they are holy.

If you noticed, it goes from the third person to the second person, but the context surely demands that this is speaking of the Lord in each word (His and Your), and yet it is showing a definite distinction in how the Lord is being presented.

Next, referring to the holies (the saints), it says...

**3 (con't) They sit down at Your feet;**

*v'hem tuku l'raglekha* – “And they gather to Your feet.” Another unique word is seen here, *takah*. It is unclear what it means. It comes from a primitive root meaning “to strew.” Thus “gather” seems to make good sense. The Greek translation says, “they are under thee.” That is somewhat of a paraphrase.

We can think of the peoples that the Lord loves gathered to the place of His feet. Thus, He is elevated as if on a throne with His people before Him. There...

**3 (con't) Everyone receives Your words.**

*yisa mi'daberotekha* – “Lifts up Him from Your words.” Here is another unique word, a noun, *dabarah*. It is an intensive, coming from the verb meaning “to speak.” The verb itself is imperfect, and it is third person singular. It means to lift up or to carry. Being imperfect, it is “lifts up” or “carries.”

There are as many opinions on this verse and what its meaning is as can be imagined. Translations are all over the place and more often than not, they stray from the precision of what Moses says in order to try to make the words convey some sort of sense.

But the Lord is working through Moses to reveal Christ: “For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me” (John 5:46). Israel will receive the blessings, but Christ is the Subject and the Object of what he is now conveying. So, with the most literal translation possible, it says –

\*Also He hides the peoples.

The word “peoples” is telling. It does not use a word signifying “tribes” as would be expected if speaking of Israel. Hence, it is referring to any peoples. Those who are in Christ, from any people group, are hidden (and thus beloved) in Christ –

“For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup>When Christ *who is our* life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.” Colossians 3:3, 4

\*All His holies in Your hand.

The holies, those holy to the Lord (Yehovah, “His”) because of Christ are in “Your” (meaning Christ’s) hand. They are under His control, power, and authority. They are the

Lord's because they are Christ's. The change in person only makes sense when the Subject is properly understood.

\*And they gather to Your feet.

Just a couple of the many references will show what this refers to. First, the gathering –

“For I *know* their works and their thoughts. It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory.” Isaiah 66:18

“...he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, <sup>52</sup> and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.” John 11:51, 52

And next, that it will be at Christ's feet –

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” 2 Corinthians 5:10

The “judgment seat” is an elevated seat known as the *béma*. The people will be gathered, and they will come before Him. The symbolism refers to Christ.

\*Lifts up Him from Your words.

The change in person and the way the words are presented are so striking that it is hard to imagine how they can point to anything but the Lord.

There are scholars who have come up with inventive interpretations, such as Yehovah rising up when Israel (singular) speaks to Him, but such a thought means anything can mean anything and it does not fit with the previous clauses.

What is being said is that the Lord (Jesus) lifts up (carries) the words of Moses, which are the Lord's (Yehovah's) words. This is absolutely something He did. He quoted the words of law to the people, lifting them up as a witness both to them and against them.

It is the words of the Lord through Moses that speak of Jesus, that He lived by, that He instructed by, and which He fulfilled. And as He is the Prophet like Moses, referred to in Chapter 18, this clause actually anticipates Christ's words continuing into the New Covenant as He continues to lift up the words of Yehovah.

*The glorious Lord who came from Sinai  
Also went to Calvary's cross  
As the years of the law passed by  
There was only continued death and tragic loss*

*As His light dawned on them from Seir  
It was destined that someday He would die  
Time marched on from year to year  
And the people experienced loss and wondered why*

*The Lord shone forth from Mount Paran  
And He rose again from the darkened grave  
And now His light shines eternally on  
He is the Lord our God, mighty to save*

## **II. King in Jeshurun (verses 4 & 5)**

**<sup>4</sup> Moses commanded a law for us,**

The words are definitive: *torah tsivah lanu Moshe* – “Law he commanded to us, Moses.” The change to the first person plural, “to us,” is noteworthy.

So much is this the case, that Cambridge naturally considers it a later insertion. As they say, “The change to 1st pers. plur. ... the introduction of Moses’ name, and the fact that the line is an odd one, raise the suspicion that it is a gloss.”

That is their excuse for everything. “We can’t figure this out, so it must be a later insertion” is the explanation for what is presented. John Lange does agree with this. He says that Joshua used the same words as Moses, but then included the people of Israel in what is said –

*torah tsivah eth Moshe* – “Law He commanded to Moses.”  
*torah tsivah lanu Moshe* – “Law he commanded to us, Moses.”

In other words, the subject is the Lord. He commanded the law to Moses who spoke out the words as in the first line. The scribe then repeated what is said, including Israel as the recipients because the law came from the Lord, through Moses.

The problem with this is that it then changes what Moses says. The words are complicated, and it is hard to definitively place them, but I think they were spoken just as they are written down.

The poem is about to enter into the blessings of the tribes. The law was given to them, and the blessings are likewise pronounced upon them.

The fact that the previous verses include the “peoples” doesn’t negate that the law was only for Israel. The result of what the Lord did, in relation to the law, is for all people. But Israel is the one who is given the schooling that is to lead to Jesus.

The lesson can be learned by all, but they are the ones who will live it out. Moses is of Israel, and so he is included in the address personally and as a part of the people. That explains why the words are given as they are – “Law he commanded to us, Moses.”

Ultimately, the law is from the Lord, and so He is the Subject, even if it is not stated directly. Hence, the words “to us” are inclusive of Moses, even if they came through Moses. He is not exempt from them. This is especially highlighted because it is he who will die outside of the land of promise.

#### <sup>4</sup> (con’t) **A heritage of the congregation of Jacob.**

*morashah qehilath yaaqov* – “Possession assembly Jacob.” The word being translated as “congregation” is incorrect. It should be “assembly.” The form of it used here is a feminine form of a more common word, and it is found in Scripture only here and in Nehemiah 5:7.

The words are speaking of the law. It is considered as a heritage, or possession, of the “assembly of Jacob,” meaning the tribes that issue from him. This is absolutely true. The law is not a heritage (or possession) of anyone else. It was given to Israel, it was to be lived out by Israel, and it awaited its fulfillment from within Israel.

Crossing the lines of who the law was given to, or who is required to observe it, forms the greatest controversy of the book of Acts, and it is the main subject of Paul’s earliest written epistle, Galatians.

It was a heritage of the assembly of Jacob, and it belongs to no other group of people, *except* as it is fulfilled in Christ who then annulled it through His death and instituted a New Covenant at the same time. With this understood, the words continue...

## <sup>5</sup> And He was King in Jeshurun,

*vayhi bishurun melek* – “And He was in Jeshurun King.” The subject here is clearly the Lord, thus demonstrating that the analysis of the previous verse is at least correct in the intent of what is said. Moses may have given the law to Israel (“to us”), but it is the Lord who gave it through Moses.

There are two reasons why some ascribe these words as referring to Moses though. The first is to alleviate the difficulty of the previous verse by making him the only subject. The second is that he was the ruler over the people in the capacity of a king.

Both of these thoughts are incorrect. The issue with the previous verse has been explained. Also, Moses clearly disassociated himself from the idea of him being a king in Chapter 17 –

“When you come to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, ‘I will set a king over me like all the nations that *are* around me,’ <sup>15</sup> you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses; *one* from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who *is* not your brother.”

-Deuteronomy 17:14, 15

The idea of a king did not exist in Moses, and it continued to not exist until the time of Saul where the Lord said –

“And the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.’” 1 Samuel 8:7

The words now refer to the Lord as King. The unusual nature of how Moses said what he said in the previous verse was certainly to highlight this fact. As such, the Lord, who gave the law through Moses, is said to be King in Jeshurun, or “Upright.” It is a proper noun used when referring to Israel.

As far as translating these words now as, “And He was King,” that is fine, but it must be understood what is being said. It is not saying, “He once was.” Rather, it is saying that at a certain point “He became the King.” There was a time when He was not the King of Jeshurun, and then at a particular point in time, He was. That point in time was...



<sup>5</sup> (con't) **When the leaders of the people were gathered,**

*b'hitaseph rashe am* – “In gathering leaders people.” This is referring to what was stated in Exodus 19 –

“So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him.” Exodus 19:7

At this time, the proposition was set forth by the Lord –

“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine. <sup>6</sup> And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.”

-Exodus 19:5, 6

The words, “a kingdom of priests,” implies there is a King by which they become a kingdom. It was at Sinai, mentioned in verse 2, that Moses now refers to the Lord becoming the King. This is again testified to with the final words of the day...

<sup>\*5</sup> (fin) **All the tribes of Israel together.**

*yakhad shivte Yisrael* – “together tribes Israel.” This continues to refer to the time at Sinai –

“Then all the people answered together and said, ‘All that the LORD has spoken we will do.’ So Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD.” Exodus 19:8

The leaders spoke for the tribes. Thus, when they accepted the words of the Lord, their answer stood for all of those under them. It was at this time that He was King in Jeshurun. Hence, the law was given to them, and they became the people of His kingdom.

As was seen, there are anticipations of Christ in the first verses of the passage today, but the law itself is a possession only of Israel. It has no part in what occurred in the Gentile world before the coming of Christ, and it has no part in the life of the people of God since Christ came, except as it is fulfilled in Him.

Unfortunately, this fact is either obscured or it is ignored because of faulty doctrine that has arisen within the church. There are those who say that the church has replaced Israel. The problem with this is that they will openly avow that the curses of the law have been, and continue to be, realized in Israel.

In this, there is an obvious disconnect in their thinking. If the law is finished and obsolete, and if the church has replaced Israel, then it cannot be that the curses of the law still belong to Israel. Or, if the law is not through, then the curses of Israel would then belong to the church. The thinking is unclear, unsound, and wrong.

Others claim that the precepts of the law are still binding on the church. But again, in this passage, as has been consistently seen, the law was given to Israel and to no other group. If the law is binding upon us today, it would mean that the church had, in fact, replaced or become a part of Israel.

As such, the curses would belong to this body, inclusive of those who had come to Christ. But this is completely contrary to the words of the epistles. An example is found in Galatians 3 –

“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree”), <sup>14</sup> that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Galatians 3:13, 14

Again, the thinking is unclear, unsound, and just plain wrong. We must keep our theological boxes straight, or we will fall into great error. In this, those who are taught that the church replaced Israel will never know the true Jesus who is presented in Scripture, nor will they accept the true gospel message which God has presented to the world.

The law anticipated Christ, and it awaited His coming. It was then fully lived out through His life’s actions, and it was annulled in the shedding of His blood. This is what we must remember as we contemplate what is presented by Moses. He wrote of Christ, and it is only in Him that this law finds its true purpose and value.

Our futile attempts at living it out, as if we are bound by it, do not glorify Him at all. Rather, they diminish what Jesus has done, and they bring a curse upon us. That is all the law can do with fallen man. Let us trust in Christ who took this great and terrible

burden from us. In this, God will be pleased with our lives as we live them out before Him.

**Closing Verse:** *“Blessed be the Lord,  
Who daily loads us with benefits,  
The God of our salvation! Selah  
20 Our God is the God of salvation;  
And to God the Lord belong escapes from death.” Psalm 68:19, 20*

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 33:6-11 *Moses will bless until the blessing is done...* (Moses Blesses Israel, Part I) (100<sup>th</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **The Lord Came From Sinai**

Now this is the blessing  
With which Moses the man of God, as we have read  
Blessed the children of Israel  
Before his death. And he said:

“The LORD came from Sinai  
And dawned on them from Seir  
He shone forth from Mount Paran  
And He came with ten thousands of saints from there

From His right hand like a diadem  
Came a fiery law for them

Yes, He loves the people  
All His saints are in Your hand  
They sit down at Your feet  
Everyone receives Your words, words so grand

Moses commanded a law for us  
A heritage of the congregation of Jacob

-----And He was King in Jeshurun  
When the leaders of the people were gathered  
All the tribes of Israel together as one

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## **Deuteronomy 33:6-11** **(Moses Blesses Israel, Part I)**

In the previous sermon, magnificent and splendid words began the blessing of Israel by Moses. It was as a flower of beauty slowly opening with each word. Today, the petals of this precious rose continue to gradually unfold and present themselves to us.

We will see the rather concise and curt blessing upon Reuben. From there a short, but most majestic blessing will be pronounced upon Judah. And then, words of remembrance, mingled with words of petition, are brought forth from the lips of Moses toward those of his own tribe, Levi.

The words were spoken, they have been recorded, and they remain as a memorial before the Lord as well as an instrument of instruction for Israel and for us.

It is hard to imagine that the Lord would give them, allow them to rest upon the people – through good and bad – and then have the people come to a sudden and crushing end without any hope of restoration or remedy.

But this is what much of the church has decided has occurred. Israel disastrously did not heed, they failed to recognize the time of their visitation, and the Lord cut them off forever. Does that sound like the covenant keeping Lord that we have seen throughout the books of Moses? It doesn't to me!

**Text Verse:** *"He has helped His servant Israel,  
In remembrance of His mercy,  
<sup>55</sup>As He spoke to our fathers,  
To Abraham and to his seed forever." Luke 1:54, 55*

It is true that the covenant of the Lord with Israel through Moses contains many stern warnings and curses, but it also is very precise in how it presents them. We have seen this again and again.

Moses speaks of cutting off the people, but never of cutting off the nation. The continuous movement of the words he has presented, especially in Deuteronomy, have been precisely chosen and laid before us to show that this is not the case.

Moses simply builds upon what the Lord has already said earlier in the law. For today, there is less of that type of speech, and more of a carefully selected line of thought that

provides hope and assurance to the individual tribes, while at the same time revealing really marvelous hints and pictures of the coming Messiah.

Woven into the words are also some unique patterns, linguistic nuances, and literary forms to help guide us in the often obscure nature of the words themselves. I do hope you will be pleased and even tickled with how these three blessings unfold. It was a joy to search them out, and now I joyfully present them to you.

Precious and wonderful things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. The Blessings Upon Reuben and Judah (verses 6 & 7)**

<sup>6</sup>“**Let Reuben live, and not die,**

The words are simple and direct in Reuben’s blessing. And yet, they are also quite complicated and even obscure in meaning. Hence, they are highly debated. In them, there are three jussives – indirect commands or petitions. The first two are found in this clause: *yehi Reuven v’al yamot* – “May live Reuben and not may die.”

The blessing of Reuben is one of life. The reason for Moses stating this is that, despite being the firstborn, Reuben was already removed from the honor and position of the firstborn because he slept with his father’s concubine, Bilhah. That is found in Genesis 35:22. Upon his death, Jacob’s blessing upon his sons did not reflect favorably upon Reuben –

“Reuben, you are my firstborn,  
My might and the beginning of my strength,  
The excellency of dignity and the excellency of power.

<sup>4</sup> Unstable as water, you shall not excel,  
Because you went up to your father’s bed;  
Then you defiled *it*—  
He went up to my couch.” Genesis 49:3, 4

Later, when the rebels came against Moses in the wilderness, some of the main insurgents were of the tribe of Reuben –

“Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben...”

-Numbers 16:1

Despite their troubled past, Moses’ petition is for Reuben’s continuance, “May live Reuben, and not may die.” However, the next clause is what becomes difficult and debated over...

<sup>6</sup> (con’t) **Nor let his men be few.”**

The third jussive is seen in this clause: *vihi metav mispar* – “And may his men *a* number.” Despite being just three words, there are pages of commentary on what Moses is saying. First, the word *mispar*, or “number,” signifies that which can be counted. If this is an independent clause, the meaning is the same as that found in Deuteronomy 4:27 –

“And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you.”

As such, it is a countable number –

\*May live Reuben, and not may die.

\*And may his men be few.

But “*a* number” may be a way of saying an indeterminate number and thus –

\*May live Reuben, and not may die.

\*And may his men be unnumbered.

Or, if “*a* number” is tied to the previous words, it would also be a large number because the “not” would carry on to the second clause –

\*May live Reuben, and not may die.

\*And (not) may his men be few.

And to throw a monkey wrench in that almost nobody would see coming, an ancient Greek translation of this verse inserts the name of Simeon here. This is because there is no other mention of Simeon in the entire blessing of Moses upon the tribes –

- \*May live Reuben, and not may die.
- \*And may the men of Simeon be few.

Simply because we are following the Hebrew, and because there is only one negation, I would go with the most literal translation and say that Moses is petitioning that Reuben not be extinguished as a tribe, and – being charitable – he is asking that he become an uncountable number.

The use of three jussives in the verse seems to exclude carrying the word “not” over to the second clause. Moses is directly petitioning with clarity and precision –

“May live Reuben and not may die;  
And may his men be *a* number.”

It is, then, a blessing for continuance and a petition for growth without a set limit. As such, Reuben, or “See a Son,” would picture Christ who did live and not die in the sense that He was never cut off because of His own sin. And He has also increased to an innumerable number –

“After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, <sup>10</sup>and crying out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’” Revelation 7:9, 10

Simeon then has no blessing at all. Jacob’s blessing of Simeon was joined with that of Levi –

“Simeon and Levi *are* brothers;  
Instruments of cruelty *are in* their dwelling place.  
<sup>6</sup>Let not my soul enter their council;  
Let not my honor be united to their assembly;  
For in their anger they slew a man,  
And in their self-will they hamstrung an ox.  
<sup>7</sup>Cursed *be* their anger, for *it is* fierce;  
And their wrath, for it is cruel!  
I will divide them in Jacob  
And scatter them in Israel.” Genesis 49:5-7



Because Simeon was to be divided and scattered, and because his tribe will be assimilated into Judah's land grant, they would – for all intents and purposes – be assimilated into Judah as well. As such, the blessing upon Judah should be taken – at least partially, even if not intentionally at this time – as also falling upon Simeon.

Because of this, the words of Moses continue with this fourth son of Jacob who is next blessed even before the third son, Levi –

**<sup>7</sup> And this he said of Judah:**

The introductory words are so short and precise in the Hebrew that it is hard to not see in them something stately and majestic, as if it is being proclaimed at the coming of a king: *v'zoth lihudah* – “And this to Judah.”

One can almost sense the blast of a trumpet, drawing all attention to what will be proclaimed as he heralds the royal arrival, “And this to Judah!”

**<sup>7</sup> (con't) “Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah,**

*vayomar shema Yehovah qol yehudah* – “And he said, ‘Hear, Yehovah, voice Judah!’” The blessing of Judah calls attention to his voice. Although we would be here for the next week or two, or longer, if we were to sufficiently evaluate the meaning of this, it can be summed up in the thought that a great portion of Scripture is based upon the voice of Judah.

It was building throughout the time of the judges, but it was heard in the most resplendent manner as the young shepherd boy from Bethlehem called forth to the great foe of Israel –

“You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. <sup>46</sup> This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. <sup>47</sup> Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle *is* the LORD's, and He will give you into our hands.” 1 Samuel 17:45-47

From that time on, the voice of Judah fills the pages of the psalms, the historical writings, the books of wisdom, and the words issued forth as prophecy. And then, the voice of Judah was heard in the most unique way of all in the first recorded words of the Lord –

“Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” Luke 2:49

At that time, and for the rest of Scripture, the voice of Judah is truly realized in the way that Moses now intends. He knew the words of Jacob when he blessed his fourth son, and he thus knew that the line of the Messiah was fixed through him –

“Judah, you *are he* whom your brothers shall praise;  
Your hand *shall be* on the neck of your enemies;  
Your father’s children shall bow down before you.

<sup>9</sup> Judah *is* a lion’s whelp;

From the prey, my son, you have gone up.

He bows down, he lies down as a lion;

And as a lion, who shall rouse him?

<sup>10</sup> The scepter shall not depart from Judah,

Nor a lawgiver from between his feet,

Until Shiloh comes;

And to Him *shall be* the obedience of the people.

<sup>11</sup> Binding his donkey to the vine,

And his donkey’s colt to the choice vine,

He washed his garments in wine,

And his clothes in the blood of grapes.

<sup>12</sup> His eyes *are* darker than wine,

And his teeth whiter than milk.” Genesis 49:8-12

The voice of Judah, which means “Praise,” is the praise of God because he is the praised of God. The voice of Judah is the voice of the Word of God that speaks forth life. The voice of Judah is the battle cry for the people of God to follow their King. The voice of Judah is the roar of the Lion and the humble call of the Servant. The voice of Judah is, ultimately, the voice of Jesus – the Lord.

<sup>7 (con’t)</sup> **And bring him to his people;**

*v'el amo tevienu* – “And unto His people [You] bring him.” Immediately, this refers to the tribe. Judah was separated from Israel, being the southernmost tribe and thus somewhat isolated from the rest. Throughout the Bible, Judah continues in this state of semi-separation.

However, Ezekiel prophesied of a time when Judah would be inseparably united to Israel—

<sup>15</sup> Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, <sup>16</sup> “As for you, son of man, take a stick for yourself and write on it: ‘For Judah and for the children of Israel, his companions.’ Then take another stick and write on it, ‘For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and *for* all the house of Israel, his companions.’ <sup>17</sup> Then join them one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become one in your hand. <sup>18</sup> “And when the children of your people speak to you, saying, ‘Will you not show us what you *mean* by these?’ — <sup>19</sup> say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Surely I will take the stick of Joseph, which *is* in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will join them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand.”’ <sup>20</sup> And the sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes. Ezekiel 37:15-20

The words of Moses, however, are certainly looking ahead in anticipation even more precisely than this. He is remembering the blessing of Jacob, and he is specifically calling forth for the coming of Messiah, to be brought to His people –

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
Though you are little among the thousands of Judah,  
Yet out of you shall come forth to Me  
The One to be Ruler in Israel,  
Whose goings forth *are* from of old,  
From everlasting.” Micah 5:2

The voice of Judah, through Micah of Moresheth – which is in the tribe of Judah – called forth for the coming of Israel’s Ruler who would be from Bethlehem Ephrathah, also in the tribe of Judah.

<sup>7 (con’t)</sup> **Let his hands be sufficient for him,**

The words are obscure and complicated: *yada rav lo* – “His hands abound to him.” The Greek reads “contend.” Because of the difficulty, many translations follow the Greek,

saying, “His hand contends for him.” The word is *rav*, signifying abundance, enough, many, mighty, and so on. It is a sort of superlative in whatever it is referring to.

As the hand is that which accomplishes things, I would say the intent is something like, “He is fully sufficient to perform, be it in war, productivity, salvation, deliverance, and so on.” As such, Judah has the strength to carry itself and its purposes through.

In anticipation of the Greatest of Judah, one could look to the words of Isaiah to find the ultimate intent of Moses’ words –

“Who *is* this who comes from Edom,  
With dyed garments from Bozrah,  
This *One who is* glorious in His apparel,  
Traveling in the greatness of His strength?—  
‘I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.’  
<sup>2</sup> Why *is* Your apparel red,  
And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress?  
<sup>3</sup> ‘I have trodden the winepress alone,  
And from the peoples no one *was* with Me.  
For I have trodden them in My anger,  
And trampled them in My fury;  
Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments,  
And I have stained all My robes.  
<sup>4</sup> For the day of vengeance *is* in My heart,  
And the year of My redeemed has come.  
<sup>5</sup> I looked, but *there was* no one to help,  
And I wondered  
That *there was* no one to uphold;  
Therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me;  
And My own fury, it sustained Me.  
<sup>6</sup> I have trodden down the peoples in My anger,  
Made them drunk in My fury,  
And brought down their strength to the earth.” Isaiah 63:1-6

With this in mind, the next words of the blessing might seem contradictory, but this is not the case...

<sup>7</sup> (con’t) **And may You be a help against his enemies.”**

*v'ezher mitsarav tiyeh* – “And help from his enemies may You be.” If the hands of Judah abound in might, then why would they need the Lord to help them? But the words are comparative. Judah is considered to be capable of meeting and defeating its foes, but even the mightiest nation cannot prevail if the Lord is not with it.

This has been and it will continue to be seen. If the Lord purposes triumph, there will be triumph if by many or by few. And if the Lord purposes defeat, then it will come without regard to number.

And again, the words of Moses toward Judah are but a reflection of words that apply to the ultimate Son of Judah. Though in one way He is mighty to save, working out salvation by His own arm, He is fully dependent on the Lord who sent Him forth –

“For dogs have surrounded Me;  
The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me.  
They pierced My hands and My feet;  
<sup>17</sup> I can count all My bones.  
They look *and* stare at Me.  
<sup>18</sup> They divide My garments among them,  
And for My clothing they cast lots.  
<sup>19</sup> But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me;  
O My Strength, hasten to help Me!  
<sup>20</sup> Deliver Me from the sword,  
My precious *life* from the power of the dog.  
<sup>21</sup> Save Me from the lion’s mouth  
And from the horns of the wild oxen!  
You have answered Me.” Psalm 22:16-21

Not only are the two clauses not contradictory, whether referring to Judah or to Jesus, they show the total dependence of them upon the Lord. And the Lord is with both, helping them against the foes who have arisen against them.

*There is a story to be found in the tribes of Israel  
There is God working out His plan  
Each detail calls out, “I have something to tell”  
Something that leads to the redemption of man*

*The names of the tribes are carefully given  
One shows one thing, and the next shows another*

*Each points to the greater story of hope-filled livin'  
When Christ would come – Israel's greatest Son and Brother*

*The things they did and the lives they lived out  
Are recorded in the Bible for us to read and to learn  
The stories are given for us to see and have no doubt  
The marvelous majesty, for which our souls now yearn*

*Christ is coming, so the word does tell  
And hints of Him are found in the stories of Israel*

## **II. The Blessing Upon Levi (verses 8-11)**

**<sup>8</sup> And of Levi he said:**

*u-l'levi amar* – “And to Levi he said.” Levi is the third son, and he receives the third blessing, even if it is out of order because of Simeon's assumed inclusion in the blessing of Judah. It is the tribe of Moses. It is the tribe of the priestly class, and it is the tribe that has no land inheritance but is instead to be found throughout the land in the Levitical cities. To Levi, he says...

**<sup>8</sup> (con't) “Let Your Thummim and Your Urim be with Your holy one,**

*thumekha v'urekha l'ish khasidekha* – “Your Thummin and Your Urim to man your godly.” The blessing of Levi concerns his office and duties. Here is a new word, *khasid*. It is an adjective signifying kind, godly, pious, and so on. It is mostly found in the psalms and at times it is rendered “saint.”

Levi is spoken of here as a godly man who possesses the special stones, the “Perfections and Lights,” used to determine the will of the Lord. They are what receive the infallible truths and revelations divulged by God.

Of the five times these stones are mentioned together, this is the only time that the Thummim is stated before the Urim. There is no explanation for this, and there are various conjectures as to its meaning, some imaginatively elevating one precept over the other. But I would think that this is a way of saying that both are on an equal standing.

In other words, if it always said, “Urim and Thummim,” one might think that “Lights,” meaning God’s revelations, come first and then “Perfections,” or the infallible truths, are based upon those revelations.

But in stating it as “Thummim and Urim” here, Moses is indicating that they are both of the same substance. God’s revelations are revealed in infallible truths, and His infallible truths are conveyed in His revelations. In essence, they are two sides of one coin.

The godly nature of Levi is to be revealed in the coming clauses. For now...

**8 (con’t) Whom You tested at Massah,**

*asher nisito b’Massah* – “Whom You tested in Massah.” The name Massah means Testing. Hence, it says, “Whom you tested in Testing.”

There is nothing directly stated of Levi concerning what occurred in Massah which is the account given in Exodus 17. As such, it leaves one wondering what Moses is talking about. But the next clause helps alleviate the difficulty...

**8 (con’t) And with whom You contended at the waters of Meribah,**

*terivehu al me merivah* – “You strived with him upon waters Meribah.” The name Meribah means “Place of Quarrelling.” The Lord strived with Levi at the “Place of Quarrelling.” This was when Moses and Aaron were to speak to the rock and have water issue forth. Instead, Moses struck the rock twice with his rod.

The connection between the two is that the event at Massah occurred just shortly after having departed from Egypt, and the event at Meribah occurred just as the spies were investigating the land of Canaan. As such they encompass, as book ends, the entire time at Sinai when the law was given.

Once the spies returned, the people rejected the word of the Lord, and they were punished with being exiled into the wilderness. As we have repeatedly seen, that is emblematic of the past two thousand years of exile for Israel. As such, Moses’ words now look to the time of the administration of the law.

Next, Moses takes us back to the time of the giving of the law...

**9 Who says of his father and mother,**

Levi is referred to by a verb prefixed by an article: *ha'omer l'abiv u-l'imo* – “The sayer to his father and to his mother.” Here, it is referring to Levi as an individual, a collective whole. He says...

<sup>9 (con't)</sup> **'I have not seen them';**

It is singular: *lo'reitiv* – “Not I have seen him.” The mother is the wife of the father and so the singular stands for both. The father and the mother are there, but it is as if they are not seen, and they are not regarded. The same attitude is again seen in the next words...

<sup>9 (con't)</sup> **Nor did he acknowledge his brothers,**

*v'eth ekhav lo hikir* – “And his brothers no regard.” Moses says that even though Levi had brothers, his mind was not on them when called to do what he must do. Moses is making a point about Levi's priorities. Moses next says...

<sup>9 (con't)</sup> **Or know his own children;**

*v'eth banav lo yada* – “And sons no know.” Any children of Levi are as if they are not even his when he is called to act. Levi has not seen the parents before him. He has not regarded the brothers around him, and he has not known his own sons. Despite them being the closest of family relationships, Moses speaks of Levi's priorities. What is it that Levi has put first? To tell us, Moses slips into the plural...

<sup>9 (con't)</sup> **For they have observed Your word**

*ki shameru imratekha*– “For they have heeded Your word.” The plural now speaks of the people of the tribe. They are Levi, but they are also Levites. The actions of the people are what is now being highlighted.

The word of the Lord takes precedence over even the closest of family relationships. If parents, siblings, or even children come between a person and the Lord, they are to be overlooked, disregarded, and treated as a stranger. Nothing can come between the faithful and the word of the Lord. Levi accepted the premise and applied it...

<sup>9 (con't)</sup> **And kept Your covenant.**



*uberitekha yintsoru* – “And Your covenant they have guarded.” The covenant of the Lord, which is based upon the word of the Lord, must take priority. To not heed it is to find death. To heed it is to find life. All family relations will end, but the covenant and the word remain. Levi was presented with a choice –

“Now when Moses saw that the people *were* unrestrained (for Aaron had not restrained them, to *their* shame among their enemies), <sup>26</sup> then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, ‘Whoever *is* on the LORD’s side—*come* to me!’ And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. <sup>27</sup> And he said to them, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel: “Let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.”’ <sup>28</sup> So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And about three thousand men of the people fell that day. <sup>29</sup> Then Moses said, ‘Consecrate yourselves today to the LORD, that He may bestow on you a blessing this day, for every man has opposed his son and his brother.’” Exodus 32:25-29

This incident is what Moses is referring to now. Levi has put the word of the Lord, and His covenant, first. They went throughout the camp without recognizing faces, and they slew any who came before them. Because of this, they were granted the high honor of the priestly class and of those attached to them.

This then explains why Moses chose Massah and Meribah as his points of reference. Because those two events encompass the time of the giving of the law, from redemption out of Egypt until standing at the door of Canaan, their zeal for the Lord was a highlight among all of the failings of Israel, and – indeed – all the failings of Levi, including those of Moses and Aaron.

What they did was a demonstration of what the Lord finds pleasing above all else, meaning attendance to His word. Because of their moment of faithfulness...

**<sup>10</sup> They shall teach Jacob Your judgments,**

*yoru mishpatekha l’yaaqov* – “They instruct Your judgments to Jacob.” Moses uses the word *yarah*, to shoot as an arrow. As such, it gives the sense of pointing out, as if aiming by the finger. Hence, it is instruction in the judgments recorded for them. Further...

**<sup>10</sup> (con’t) And Israel Your law.**

*v'torahtekha l'yisrael* – “And Your law to Israel.” This is still an explanation of the verb *yarah*, and thus the two clauses are set in parallel. Just as they point out the judgments of the Lord to Jacob, so they point out the law of the Lord to Israel. The substance of the clauses is simply a poetic parallel –

They instruct:

Your judgments to Jacob.

And Your law to Israel.

**10 (con't) They shall put incense before You,**

*yasimu qetorah b'apekha* – “They put incense in your nostril.” This and the next clause are again parallel thoughts. In this clause is a word found only here in Scripture, *qetorah*. It signifies the smoke of incense. This is specifically speaking of the twice-daily mandate to burn the specially compounded incense which was then presented each day before the Lord –

“Aaron shall burn on it sweet incense every morning; when he tends the lamps, he shall burn incense on it. <sup>8</sup> And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense on it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations.” Exodus 30:7, 8

Along with that...

**10 (con't) And a whole burnt sacrifice on Your altar.**

*v'kalil al mizbekhekha* – “And holocaust upon Your altar.” The words speak of the second twice-daily offering made to the Lord –

“Now this *is* what you shall offer on the altar: two lambs of the first year, day by day continually. <sup>39</sup> One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight. <sup>40</sup> With the one lamb shall be one-tenth *of an ephah* of flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of pressed oil, and one-fourth of a hin of wine *as* a drink offering. <sup>41</sup> And the other lamb you shall offer at twilight; and you shall offer with it the grain offering and the drink offering, as in the morning, for a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD. <sup>42</sup> *This shall be* a continual burnt offering throughout your generations *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet you to speak with you.”

-Exodus 29:38-42

The words of this verse then speak of the honor and the responsibilities given to Levi because of their act of faithfulness to the word and the covenant of the Lord. The clauses are parallel as they describe the twice daily duties that are actually both things that rise up before and to the Lord –

They put:

Incense in your nose nostril.

And holocaust upon Your altar.

Because of this, Moses calls for a special blessing upon them...

**11 Bless his substance, LORD,**

The words return to the second person singular: *barekh Yehovah khelo* – “Bless, Yehovah, his activity.” The word *khayil* speaks of the force of something. This is probably speaking of the future state of the tribe.

In other words, “Bless his activity” is asking for a blessing upon what Levi would accomplish in the future. They have their duties to perform, and Moses is asking for a blessing upon that. This appears to be what is being conveyed, but there is a reason for it that will take completing the verse first to understand. And more...

**11 (con’t) And accept the work of his hands;**

*u-pool yada tirseh* – “And deed his hands accept.” The word “work” or “deed” is singular. This is then parallel to the previous clause, and it refers to the future work of Levi in a collective sense – all of his works are one work.

As such, it is asking the Lord to accept their work in presenting the offerings, teaching the people, and so on. One can see the obvious parallel between the two –

Bless, Yehovah, his activity.

And deed his hands accept.

Next, Moses asks for a future blessing against any foes of Levi...

**11 (con’t) Strike the loins of those who rise against him,**

*mekhats matenayim qama* – “Shatter loins rising against him.” Some equate this to the rebellion of Korah from Numbers 16, but that was as much an internal rebellion as anything else. Instead, this is a petition to protect and defend not just the priesthood, but all of Levi.

The priests were the mediators of the law between God and the people, and the Levites then stood between the priesthood and the people. Moses is calling for those who would oppose this divinely instituted system to be shattered so that they cannot stand against them again. And more...

**\*11 (fin) And of those who hate him, that they rise not again.”**

There is a stress in the Hebrew on the last word: *u-mesana min yequmun* – “And those hating him, from their rising!” The exclamation point attempts to give the sense of what is conveyed. This and the previous clause are set in parallel, but they are marvelously structured to overlap in their presentation –

Shatter loins \*those rising (qum) against him  
And those hating him, from \*their rising (qum)!

Moses is asking for the Lord’s protection for the priesthood, bringing their enemies low so that the priests can continue with the ministrations of the law without interference.

Now, taking the clauses of verse 10 and 11 together, one can see another parallel that is set forth –

They instruct Your judgments to Jacob. (Levi’s work)  
And Your law to Israel. (Levi’s work)  
They put incense in your nostril. (Offering rising)  
And holocaust upon Your altar. (Offering rising)

Bless, Yehovah, his activity. (Levi’s work)  
And deed his hands accept. (Levi’s work)  
Shatter loins rising against him. (Protection from rising enemy)  
And those hating him, from their rising! (Protection from rising enemy)

One can see that because of the work of Levi, to present offerings, Moses is asking for the work of Levi to be uninterrupted by any enemy rising. Nothing is to interfere with the work.

With that noted, another parallel exists that is seen in the final two clauses of the blessing upon Judah which matches the final four clauses of the blessing upon Levi, meaning the work and the protection –

His hands abound to him. (The work of Judah/the Lord)

And help from his enemies may You be. (Protection from the enemy for Judah/the Lord)

Judah anticipates the coming Messiah, but so does Levi. Everything about the priests, the Levites, their duties, and their offerings – all of it – anticipates and typologically pictures the work of Jesus. Hence, one can see why Moses linked the blessings of Judah with those of Levi, but also why he placed Judah first.

Judah anticipates Christ in His Person while Levi (as a tribe) more closely anticipates Christ in His duties. In the end, everything is anticipating the coming of Messiah and of what He would do in fulfillment of this law.

It is a law that served its purpose well. It used fallible people who ministered it on behalf of fallible people who lived under it in order to show the impossibility of it bringing man any closer to God. The problem did not, however, exist in the law.

Rather, it exists in those under the law. Their defect, sin, is what kept this law from performing its purpose. In the identification of this defect, the need for One without sin to fulfill it becomes evident.

And more, it highlights the need for it to end, and for a New Covenant to enter into the fabric of God's redemptive workings. It would need to be a law based upon the work of the One without defect, but which would grant that same state of perfection to those who enter into it.

This is what Christ did. He completed the mission set before Him, fulfilled the law that stood against us, and then He offers His righteousness to us – not through that law, but through faith in His fulfillment of that law.

It is what we might call the greatest deal of all time. And it is a deal that extends to "all time." God has made the offer, and He asks you to accept Him at His word, "Adam blew it, the law highlights that fact. Now, I have done this for you, just accept that My word is true."

May you carefully consider this, and may you receive the marvelous gift that God has extended to you. And may you do so today.

**Closing Verse:** *“But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man’s offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. <sup>16</sup> And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification.”*

-Romans 5:15, 16

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 33:12-17 *Moses will continue to bless the tribes until the blessings are through...* (Moses Blesses Israel, Part II) (101<sup>st</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **Moses Blesses Israel, Part I**

“Let Reuben live, and not die  
Nor let his men be few, but be numbered high

And this he said of Judah:  
“Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah  
And bring him to his people as you please  
Let his hands be sufficient for him  
And may You be a help against his enemies

And of Levi he said:  
“Let Your Thummim and Your Urim  
-----be with Your holy one days unended  
Whom You tested at Massah  
And with whom You at the waters of Meribah contended

Who says of his father and mother  
-----‘I have not seen them’  
Nor did he acknowledge his brothers  
Or know his own children until the wrath was spent

For they have observed Your word  
And kept Your covenant

They shall teach Jacob Your judgments  
And Israel Your law, in this they shall not falter  
They shall put incense before You  
And a whole burnt sacrifice on Your altar

Bless his substance, LORD  
And accept the work of his hands among men  
Strike the loins of those who rise against him  
And of those who hate him, that they rise not again

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## Deuteronomy 33:12-17 (Moses Blesses Israel, Part II)

This may seem like a curiosity to you but right now there is an American oil company in Israel, that is drilling for oil in the area referred to in Moses' words today, and the owner is basing his reasoning on verses from Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33, both from the blessings spoken over Joseph –

“By the God of your father who will help you,  
And by the Almighty who will bless you  
*With* blessings of heaven above,  
Blessings of the deep that lies beneath,  
Blessings of the breasts and of the womb.  
<sup>26</sup> The blessings of your father  
Have excelled the blessings of my ancestors,  
Up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills.  
They shall be on the head of Joseph,  
And on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers.”  
Genesis 49:25, 26

“And of Joseph he said:  
“Blessed of the LORD *is* his land,  
With the precious things of heaven, with the dew,  
And the deep lying beneath,  
<sup>14</sup> With the precious fruits of the sun,  
With the precious produce of the months,  
<sup>15</sup> With the best things of the ancient mountains,  
With the precious things of the everlasting hills,  
<sup>16</sup> With the precious things of the earth and its fullness,  
And the favor of Him who dwelt in the bush.  
Let *the blessing* come ‘on the head of Joseph,’” Deuteronomy 33:13-16

Whether you agree with his reasoning or not, the land spoken of by both Jacob and Moses is still there, it is identifiable through historical records, and the company – Zion Oil and Gas – is there drilling wells.

**Text Verse:** “*I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*”

-Revelation 19:10



Whether you agree with his insights into the prophecies of Jacob and Moses, one thing is for sure: their words, and all the other prophetic oracles of God that are found in the Bible are true and they ultimately lead us to Jesus or at least an understanding of what He has done, is doing, or will do.

We will see more of that in our verses today. As far as Zion Oil and Gas, they put out occasional updates on the status of things. At the time I typed this sermon, their most recent update was as of February 16 –

Dear Zion Supporters and Shareholders,

2022 has kicked off to a fast and exciting start for Zion and its operations team as we prepare to continue developing and testing the MJ-02 well.

We are pleased to announce that all necessary services for completing the well, along with enhancement and reservoir testing, have been secured.

Zion has partnered with some of the leading Petro physicists and stimulation experts in the United States to plan the next phase of the operation.

As Zion continues to navigate manufacturing and logistical delays, the plan is to resume operations in quarter one.

These operations will start with necessary re-certifications and inspection of the rig while also upgrading critical systems that will benefit this operation and allow for enhanced drilling operations in the future.

Upon completing the inspections, upgrades, and rigging up, the crew will complete the final casing and tubular run before moving on to the enhancement and reservoir testing phase.

We continually give thanks to God and our loyal shareholders and supporters who make all this possible.

We will continue to provide material updates when we have relevant information to share with the public.

Sincerely,

Rob Dunn

CEO

The company is registered with the SEC, it has stocks for purchase, and who knows if they will ever hit the big time. If they do, the stock will probably be worth a lot, but it may not last long. If large amounts of oil show up in Israel, the nations will suddenly find a reason to go in and take things over.

That is always a possibility based on other very clear passages of Scripture. Amazing things such as this possible prophecy of oil in the land of Joseph are based on verses

found in God's superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. The Blessing to Benjamin (verse 12)**

In the previous sermon, Judah – the fourth son of Jacob and Leah – was blessed before Levi, the third son. Simeon was left out of a blessing, probably because he was eventually dispersed in, and assimilated into, Judah.

Now, the two sons of Jacob and his beloved Rachel will be blessed, and they are again out of birth order. Moses first blesses Benjamin and only then will he bless Joseph.

Because Benjamin is blessed before Joseph, critical scholars try to say that this order, and thus the blessing, actually dates to the time of the kings where Benjamin was the tribe of the first king of Israel, Saul. But there is no reason to assume this at all. Judah was already blessed before Levi, and Simeon has been left out of a blessing.

There is more reason to believe that God's foreknowledge of future events superintends over the blessings given by Moses than that the blessings are some sort of later fabrication.

As for an immediate reason why the blessings are noted as Judah / Levi / Benjamin, it cannot go without notice that the future temple of the Lord will be in Jerusalem.

This then forms a sort of geographical prophecy where Judah is to the south, the temple is in Jerusalem that is on Judah's northern border, and then Benjamin is on the north of that.

As the temple is identified with those who ministered in it, meaning the priests and the Levites, we can see the pattern found in Moses' order of blessing from south to north – Judah / Levi / Benjamin.

Later, Judges 1:8 says, "Now the children of Judah fought against Jerusalem and took it; they struck it with the edge of the sword and set the city on fire." And yet, in the same chapter, it says, "But the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who inhabited Jerusalem; so the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day" (Judges 1:21).

Throughout the time of the kings, Jerusalem is said to be in Judah, and yet, again and again, people both from Judah and Benjamin are noted as being in Jerusalem. Further, the geographical overlapping of the two is also noted, even after the exile, such as in Ezra 1 –

“Then the heads of the fathers’ *houses* of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, with all whose spirits God had moved, arose to go up and build the house of the LORD which *is* in Jerusalem.” Ezra 1:5

But more, I would argue that the entire set of blessings upon the tribes – from Reuben to Asher – form an interesting pattern, a sort of circle around the temple in Jerusalem, in the order in which they are pronounced.

So far, Reuben is east of Jerusalem and outside of Canaan proper. Then it went south to Judah, which is inclusive of Simeon. This would explain why Simeon had no blessing. If the blessings are based upon situation in relation to the temple, and because Simeon is within the boundaries of Judah, then there was no need to give a separate blessing to them.

After Judah, it then went to Levi, emblematic of the temple, then it will next go to Benjamin, the land bordering the north of where the temple is. As such, the next blessing, the blessing of Benjamin, begins with...

## <sup>12</sup> **Of Benjamin he said:**

*l'binyamin amar* – “To Benjamin he said.” Benjamin is the younger of the two sons of Rachel and the twelfth son born to Jacob. Upon him, Moses pronounces that he is...

<sup>12</sup> (con't) **“The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by Him,**

*yedid Yehovah yishkon lavetakh alav* – “Beloved Yehovah shall dwell to security upon Him.” The blessing of Benjamin speaks of his geographical situation. The words are difficult and highly debated, but it appears that this is, in fact, referring to Benjamin’s future placement in relation to the House of God. He thus dwells “upon” the Lord.

Lange says it cannot be speaking of this because the words Moses pronounces speak of the state (how) he lives rather than the location (where) he lives. But both can be true at the same time. The where, meaning in relation to the temple, leads to the how, meaning its safety and continuance.

The layout of the tribes provided a sort of buffer around where the temple is located, both in physical geography and in spiritual affiliation.

In his words now, Moses introduces the word *yadid*. It is an adjective that will be seen nine times, always in poetry. It is from the same root as *dod*, the noun meaning “beloved.” Benjamin is the beloved of Yehovah.

Benjamin means, “Son of the Right Hand.” As such, there is a definite hint of Jesus who is the Son at the right hand of the Father and who is the Beloved of the Lord. It is He who rests securely upon Him. Next, Moses says of him...

12 (con't) **Who shelters him all the day long;**

*khopheph alav kal ha'yom* – “Covering him all the day.” This is a most rare word, found only here, *khaphaph*. It is related to *yakheph*, or barefoot. The foot is uncovered. Here, however, the word is speaking of being covered.

The word itself is closely connected to the word *khuppah*, which is a canopy for protection and a bridal chamber. Benjamin would be covered at all times in his dwelling. The sentiment of these words appears to be reflected extending into the future of Jerusalem where the word *khuppah*, or covering is explicitly used when referring to it –

<sup>2</sup>“In that day the Branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious;  
And the fruit of the earth *shall be* excellent and appealing  
For those of Israel who have escaped.

<sup>3</sup>And it shall come to pass that *he who is* left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy—everyone who is recorded among the living in Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup>When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purged the blood of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning, <sup>5</sup>then the LORD will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory there *will be* a covering [khuppah]. <sup>6</sup>And there will be a tabernacle for shade in the daytime from the heat, for a place of refuge, and for a shelter from storm and rain.” Isaiah 4:2-6

With this understood, Moses speaks on...

12 (con't) **And he shall dwell between His shoulders.”**

*u-ben kethepha shaken* – “And between His shoulders dwells.” Between the shoulders would signify to ride upon the back, and thus to be carried along. Metaphorically, the shoulders are referring to mountain slopes.

As this is speaking of Benjamin, this is taken by many scholars to refer to the two mountain peaks, Zion belonging to Judah, and Moriah in the land of Benjamin. However, that seems to be coopting that which is intended for Judah.

As such, I would think it just as likely, or more so, to be referring to Mount Moriah on the south and Bethel on the north. Mount Moriah is where the temple, the house of God, was erected –

“Now Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where *the LORD* had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. <sup>2</sup> And he began to build on the second *day* of the second month in the fourth year of his reign.”

-2 Chronicles 3:1, 2

Bethel, on the north, means “House of God.” Thus, the “shoulders” of Benjamin would then be referring to these two locations which include, or which are called, the “House of God.” When looked at on a map, the two locations literally look like the two shoulders of the land. Thus, the blessing is that of a realtor’s dream: location, location, location –

To Benjamin he said.  
Beloved Yehovah shall dwell to security upon Him.  
Covering him all the day.  
And between His shoulder dwells.

The entire prophecy of Benjamin looks to the future concerning Jesus, the Son at God’s right hand, the beloved of the Lord who rests safely upon the Lord, covered by Him, and dwelling in the House of God. Next, Moses turns to Benjamin’s older brother...

*I will bless you with a blessing  
And you shall be blessed as My words convey  
There will be no doubt; there will be no guessing  
Things will come to pass just as I say*

*The future is known because I am already there*

*If you could understand this, things would go well  
I tell in advance because I care  
If My words you dismiss, you will pave a path to hell*

*But if you listen to My words, including this blessing  
You will find the way to heaven is opened to you  
There will be no doubt and there will be no guessing  
Listen to My words which are faithful and true*

## **II. The Blessing to Joseph (verses 13-17)**

If you set the blessing of Jacob upon Joseph side by side with the one now from Moses, you will see how closely they parallel one another. I won't highlight that for you, but if you have the time and motivation, it would be a short and fun project for you to do. With that, we now turn to Moses' words to this son of Israel...

**<sup>13</sup> And of Joseph he said:**

*u-l'yoseph amar* – “And to Joseph he said.” Joseph is the older of the two sons of Rachel and the eleventh son born to Jacob. Joseph is actually divided into the tribes of his sons Ephraim and Manasseh.

Ephraim is next north of Benjamin, and Manasseh is both north and then northeast of Ephraim, being divided into two sections that rest on both sides of the Jordan. Thus, the pattern of the order of the tribes surrounding Jerusalem in a somewhat discernible fashion continues with this tribe divided into two tribes. For now, upon Joseph, Moses pronounces that...

**<sup>13</sup> (con't) “Blessed of the LORD is his land,**

*meboreket Yehovah artso* – “Blessed Yehovah his land.” The blessing of Joseph pertains predominantly to the land. It is a land that would abound in productivity, and this has been noted as true concerning the areas where Ephraim and Manasseh, the two sons of Joseph who were adopted by Jacob, settled. The land is promised to be blessed...

**<sup>13</sup> (con't) With the precious things of heaven, with the dew,**

*mi'meged shemayim mital* – “From preciousness heavens, from dew.” Another new word, *meged*, is used. It is a noun that will be seen five times in the blessing upon Joseph, and then only three more times, all in the Song of Solomon.

The meaning of it is obscure, but James Strong places it as coming from a root probably meaning “eminent.” As such it is a distinguished thing or something valuable. That which is precious from heaven would be the rains, favorable climate, and so on.

The next word, *mital*, means “from dew.” However, some manuscripts have one letter changed, making it to say *meal*, or “from above.” Thus, some translations say this instead.

Either way, the thought is similar, but I would go with “from *the* dew.” As such, it would then be a separate category. One can see this when the two are placed side by side –

Blessed Yehovah his land.

From preciousness heavens, from dew. (separate category)

Blessed Yehovah his land.

From preciousness heavens, from above. (second explains first)

Dew comes less from heaven than from the interaction between the immediate ground and the surrounding air as moisture condenses. When taken with the next clause, it being a separate category would then follow through more logically...

<sup>13</sup> (con't) **And the deep lying beneath,**

*u'mi'tehom rovetseth takhath* – “And from deep crouching underneath.” The *tehom* is a void or an abyss. As such, it is where water flows up from underground. Here Moses poetically portrays it as a recumbent animal that crouches below. Combining this with the previous clauses, one can see why I feel “from dew” is the correct meaning –

Blessed Yehovah his land.

From preciousness heavens (water from above), from dew (water from ground level).

And from deep crouching underneath (water from below).

Without water, life dries up and dies. But with water, everything is fruitful and abundant. That is what Moses will confirm concerning the land of Joseph in the next beautifully painted words...

**14 With the precious fruits of the sun,**

*u-mi'meged tevuoth shamesh* – “And from preciousness increases sun.” The sun is that which rises from day to day. Throughout the Bible, it is reflective of that state. Thus, it speaks of life being lived one day at a time as each day is “the day.” There is tomorrow, but when it comes, it becomes “the day.”

Each day, the sun will bless Joseph where he will receive abundance in the increases (produce, fruits, crops, etc.) of the day. The words speak of abundance arising from the events of the day...

**14 (con't) With the precious produce of the months,**

*u-mi'meged geresh yerakhim* – “And from preciousness [the] casting moons.” Here is a word found only once in Scripture, *geresh*. It is a noun coming from the common verb *garash* which refers to casting out or driving out (such as an enemy), divorcing, and so on. Hence, one can think of expatriating.

The moon here speaks of the months. Each moon is one month, and thus, it speaks of the cycle of the year as it passes. As the various crops produce their fruit, they are said to cast them off. The contrasting parallelism between the clauses is evident –

And from preciousness increases sun. (daily cycle)

And from preciousness [the] casting moons. (monthly cycle)

One can see the workings of the Lord in this where Jesus speaks of each day being sufficient for its own trouble, meaning relying on the produce of the day as each day produces. And yet, He also speaks of the fields being white for harvest, which is a cyclical thing that comes as the months pass.

And more, Jesus is the fulfillment of both the daily sacrifices at the temple as well as each sacrifice that occurs during the months of the year. Now, with the marvelous words of this verse complete, Moses speaks on...

**15 With the best things of the ancient mountains,**

*u-me'rosh har<sub>e</sub>rei qedem* – “And from excellency mountains ancient.” Translations will vary widely on this because the words can have several meanings. The word *rosh* means “head.” As such, it can signify the first, the top, the best, and so on.



The word “ancient” is *qedem*, which literally means “east,” but east in Scripture also signifies that which is before. The sun rises there. And because it comes from seemingly nowhere, it then speaks of the unknown past – that which is in antiquity, is ancient, is eternal.

I translate it as “excellency” because it is a singular noun, but the word “mountains” is plural. Also, I say “ancient” rather than “east,” otherwise, one might say “top of the mountains of the east,” signifying the mountains of Gilead and Bashan where some of Joseph settled. But more, using excellency will also maintain parallelism with the next clause.

The words now speak of what is derived from these higher areas, be it grasslands for flocks and herds, trees, vines, olives, minerals, and so on. Whatever these elevations uniquely provide, that is the excellency derived from them. Also...

<sup>15</sup> (con’t) **With the precious things of the everlasting hills,**

*u-mi’meged givoth olam* – “And from preciousness hills antiquity.” It is the same word used three times already in the past two verses, *meged*, or preciousness. The word *givah* is a hill, and here it is plural, *givoth*. And the word *olam* signifies “to the vanishing point.” Thus, it is an indeterminate amount of time.

In other words, the clause is perfectly parallel to the previous clause –

And from excellency mountains ancient.

And from preciousness hills antiquity.

As for typology, I would say these words look beyond the hills and mountains, here termed Ancient and Antiquity. Though they are old, they didn’t create themselves. Rather, they came from the wisdom of God in creation. If there is an ancient hill, there is One more ancient that created it, meaning He was there before the hill.

As such, it is reflective of the words of James concerning God –

“Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. <sup>17</sup> Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.” James 1:16, 17

It is Christ who came from God and who is described with both the word *qedem* and *olam* in Micah –

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
Though you are little among the thousands of Judah,  
Yet out of you shall come forth to Me  
The One to be Ruler in Israel,  
Whose goings forth *are from of old*,  
From **everlasting**.” Micah 5:2

As for Joseph, the high places – the mountains and hills that were founded in the primeval past – will yield that which is excellent and precious for Joseph. And more...

**16 With the precious things of the earth and its fullness,**

*u-mi'meged erets u-meloah* – “And from preciousness land and its fullness.” This speaks of the overall favor of the land, whether on mountain, hill, valley, or plain. Where Joseph would settle, in its fullness, there would be abundance. But more...

**16 (con't) And the favor of Him who dwelt in the bush.**

*u-retson shokeni seneh* – “And favor Him dwells bush.” Moses returns to his time of calling on Mount Sinai where he met the Lord God who called to him from the bush. It was there that Moses was told that the promise to the fathers – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – would be realized from Him through Moses.

Just as Israel had received His favor, and just as Moses has been bestowed the good pleasure of the Lord, so this same Source of blessing is now pronounced to come upon Joseph. The clauses are parallel –

And from preciousness land and its fullness.  
And favor Him dwells bush.

The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, and the Lord dwells in the bush that is on the earth. Moses pronounces that the blessing would come up from the land possessed by the Lord, and out from the Lord of the bush...

**16 (con't) Let the blessing come 'on the head of Joseph,**

*tabothah l'rosh Yoseph* – “Let come to head Joseph.” The verb is cohortative. Thus, it is like saying, “Let everything come upon the head of Joseph that has just been pronounced.” To have it come upon the head is its own blessing. An example of this is found in the 133<sup>rd</sup> Psalm –

<sup>1</sup>“Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is*  
For brethren to dwell together in unity!  
<sup>2</sup>*It is* like the precious oil upon the head,  
Running down on the beard,  
The beard of Aaron,  
Running down on the edge of his garments.  
<sup>3</sup>*It is* like the dew of Hermon,  
Descending upon the mountains of Zion;  
For there the LORD commanded the blessing—  
Life forevermore.” Psalm 133

A blessing upon the head is one that will then continue down the whole body and even to the feet. The clause is then set parallel to the next one...

<sup>16</sup> (con't) **And on the crown of the head of him *who was* separate from his brothers.'**

*u-l'qadeqod nezir ekhav* – “And to crown of head Nazirite his brothers.” The *nazir* signifies someone consecrated, devoted, and so on.

What this seems to be saying is that his brothers devoted him or consecrated him to taking on the bonds of a slave. As such, he was set apart to that. Despite this state, however, Moses asks for all of the blessings pronounced to come upon the very crown of his head.

The clauses form somewhat of a pun and a contrasting parallel. Joseph, or *Yoseph*, means “He shall add.” And yet, the brothers separated him from themselves –

Let come to head Joseph.  
And to crown head Nazirite his brothers.

The four clauses anticipate Christ who is the One to receive the ultimate blessing of the inheritance of the earth from the Lord who dwells in the bush. Further, Joseph anticipates Christ in the meaning of his name.

Yoseph, or “He shall Add” speaks of the One who adds (*yasaph*) to the people of God through His ministry. But the name is also based on the word *asaph*, to take away. He is the One who takes away the reproach of His people.

At the same time, He was separated from His brothers being set apart to the bondage of the law in order to free His brothers from it. The totality of Moses’ words speaks of Joseph, but they anticipate Christ. Moses next says...

**17 His glory is like a firstborn bull,**

*bekor shoro hadar lo* – “Firstborn his bull magnificence to him.” The object of the words is his (Joseph’s) seed, not Joseph. Some say that this is referring to Ephraim as his firstborn bull.

This is because though not the firstborn, Jacob blessed Ephraim as such, placing him above his brother, Manasseh. When Joseph told Jacob he was blessing the wrong son, Jacob corrected him –

“I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations.” Genesis 49:19

Ephraim was the one who grew into the most powerful of the sons and who was called *melo ha’goyim*, or “fullness the nations,” by Jacob. However, I would argue that this bull is referring to both sons – Manasseh, the firstborn, and Ephraim, the second, the one placed as firstborn.

I think this will be evident as we go on. It is the collective, Ephraim and Manasseh, that Moses is saying would be magnificence to Joseph. He next says...

**17 (con’t) And his horns like the horns of the wild ox;**

*v’qarne ra’em qarna* – “And horns [wild] ox His horns.” The horn is a symbol of power. It is saying that this bull’s power would be like the horns of the *reem*, or wild ox. The symbolism is both majestic and terrible.

As a side note for all KJV-only readers, the words here show a mistranslation and a contradiction in that translation. They say, “and his horns are like the horns of unicorns.”

The word “unicorns” is decidedly incorrect. First, there are no such things. But even if the old English word speaks of a rhino or something else with one horn, the Hebrew word is singular – “unicorn.”

And so, no matter what, the translation is wrong because a unicorn has only one horn. Therefore, this is another of the innumerable errors found in that translation. It is just a ridiculously funny one.

As for the words, the two clauses are parallel –

Firstborn his bull magnificence to him.  
And horns [wild] ox His horns.

The bull is magnificent, and the horns stand out prominently, further revealing his magnificence. But a bull with two horns is a two-horned bull. The horns then represent the tribes of the two sons...

17 (con't) **Together with them**

*bahem* – “In them.” Despite the division by the NKJV, this word should be a part of the next words. As such...

17 (con't) **He shall push the peoples**

*bahem amim yenagakh* – “In them peoples he butts.” It is referring to the horns of the wild ox. In these two horns, Joseph’s seed would butt the peoples. It is a butting bull, pushing and goring as he goes, constantly moving the peoples back as he progresses, even...

17 (con't) **To the ends of the earth;**

*yakhdav aphse arets* – “Together ends land.” The word “together” is referring to both horns working as one, pushing and thrusting the people to the ends of the land of Canaan. Again, the clauses are parallel –

In them peoples he butts.  
Together ends land.

The horn pushes the people, and the horns work together to do so. The bull is the seed of Jacob, the horns represent the divisions, Ephraim and Manasseh working as one to clear the land. From there, the blessing now speaks of the two horns, naming them individually...

17 (con't) **They are the ten thousands of Ephraim,**

*v'hem rivoth Ephraim* – “And they myriads Ephraim.” It refers to the immense size of the tribe. He has grown into a family of giant proportions, filling the land. Next, the second horn is named...

17 (con't) **And they are the thousands of Manasseh.”**

*v'hem alphe menasheh* – “And they thousands Manasseh.” Though smaller by a factor of maybe ten or more, the tribe will be large and strong. Together, the two tribes form from one bull which is the magnificence to Joseph.

Ephraim means, “twice fruitful,” but it also means “ashes.” He pictures Jesus. He is twice fruitful in the land of His affliction, prevailing over the law and thus becoming the Savior of Jew and Gentile, but his work also meant that sin was judged in Him; thus the ashes, a sign of judgment.

Both names have a dual meaning, just as for Joseph. Manasseh means “to forget” but it also means “from a debt.” He pictures Christ who replaces Adam the man who owes a debt but whose debt is forgotten in Christ.

The two together then anticipate the explosive growth of the gospel as it pushes out further and further, even to the ends of the earth. There is both a literal and a symbolic meaning to the blessings of Moses. Each can be seen to anticipate what Christ would do—

Firstborn his bull magnificence to him.  
And horns [wild] ox His horns.  
In them peoples he butts.  
Together ends land.  
And they myriads Ephraim.  
And they thousands Manasseh.  
And to Joseph he said.  
Blessed Yehovah his land.

From preciousness heavens, from dew.  
And from deep crouching underneath.  
And from preciousness increases sun.  
And from preciousness casting moons.  
And from excellency mountains ancient.  
And from preciousness hills antiquity.  
And from preciousness land and its fullness.”  
And favor Him dwells bush.  
Let come to head Joseph.  
And to crown of head Nazirite his brothers.  
Firstborn his bull magnificence to him.  
And horns [wild] ox His horns.  
In them peoples he butts.  
Together ends land.  
And they myriads Ephraim.  
And they thousands Manasseh.

Typology is the kind of thing that one must be careful with, and it can be stretched too far if we aren't careful. In the evaluation of these blessings, I have tried to be conservative in what is presented in this regard.

The literal is obvious. Moses is blessing these tribes in prophetic utterances that will literally take place. He is also doing it in a manner that makes a rather interesting pattern of the tribes around where the temple in Jerusalem is.

But more, the words are certainly anticipating the coming of Christ. Some of the typology is rather obvious. Some of it is a bit more difficult. But in the end, Moses is setting the tribes in their locations and in their circumstances which will continue on for well over a thousand years before Christ comes.

The land will continue to be occupied by Israel until He comes, even if it is ruled by outsiders. And when He came, it was to these twelve tribes. Paul makes this obvious when he spoke to King Agrippa in Acts –

“To this *promise* our twelve tribes, earnestly serving *God* night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. <sup>8</sup> Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?” Acts 26:7, 8

His words are in the present tense. Twelve tribes were serving God in hopes of attaining the promise. Though they had been jumbled around, dispersed among the nations, and bullied by those around them, the tribes remained, and the hope remained as well.

Christ, the fulfillment of that hope, came, and yet they missed Him. But the promise remains for them, and it will come to its fulfillment when they call out to Him. Until that day, the message – this wonderful message of hope – continues on in the world.

Let us be wise and check out whether it is true. I honestly believe that if you are willing to put in the effort and check, you will come to the conclusion that countless souls around the world have also come to. The hope of Israel, and the blessings they are promised are realized in Christ.

And for any who will come to Him, he too will share in the commonwealth of Israel. Come to Christ and share in this wonderful state of blessing that the Lord has pronounced in His precious and sacred word.

**Closing Verse:** *“Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,  
You who lead Joseph like a flock;  
You who dwell between the cherubim, shine forth!  
<sup>2</sup> Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,  
Stir up Your strength,  
And come and save us!” Psalm 80:1, 2*

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 33:18-22 *Moses continues to bless, as you will see...* (Moses Blesses Israel, Part III) (102<sup>nd</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

## **Moses Blesses Israel, Part II**

Of Benjamin he said:  
The beloved of the LORD  
Shall dwell in safety by Him as well  
Who shelters him all the day long  
And he shall between His shoulders dwell



And of Joseph he said:  
"Blessed of the LORD is his land  
With the precious things of heaven, with the dew  
And the deep lying beneath too

With the precious fruits of the sun  
With the precious produce of the months, as the Lord wills  
With the best things of the ancient mountains  
With the precious things of the everlasting hills

With the precious things of the earth and its fullness  
And the favor of Him who dwelt in the bush  
-----according to His druthers  
Let the blessing come on the head of Joseph  
And on the crown of the head of him who was  
-----separate from his brothers

His glory is like a firstborn bull  
And his horns like the horns of the wild ox, such their worth  
Together with them  
He shall push the peoples  
To the ends of the earth

They are the ten thousands of Ephraim  
And they are the thousands of Manasseh, what a team!

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## **Deuteronomy 33:18-22** **(Moses Blesses Israel, Part III)**

The blessings of the individual tribes continue now with four more short blessings. The first two finish up the tribes of Jacob's wives, Leah and Rachel. They then move to the sons of the handmaids, two of which will be seen today, and the other two will be in the final sermon of the chapter.

Other than falling into the order of the sons of the wives and then the handmaids, the order seems rather obscure. The actual birth order goes Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph (Manasseh, Ephraim), Benjamin.

The order of blessing now lists the sons in order of wives and then handmaids, but not necessarily in birth order.

Wives:

- Reuben (1)
- Judah (4) (inclusive of Simeon (2))
- Levi (3)
- Benjamin (12)
- Joseph (11) (Ephraim and Manasseh are reversed)
- Zebulun (10)

Handmaids:

- Gad (7)
- Dan (5)
- Naphtali (6)
- Asher (8)

As such, the order doesn't really make much numerical sense. But as I have said, the layout closely matches a somewhat circular pattern around Jerusalem where the temple is located. The progression is generally from east to west and south to north, but it also considers which tribe is of the wives and which are of the handmaids.

The order goes first to land outside of Canaan with the son of the wives (namely Leah). Then it essentially goes from south to north with the sons of the wives. Manasseh (a son of Joseph whose mother is Rachel), however, has land on both sides of the Jordan River which is dealt with together. When the sons of the wives are completed, it then goes east of the Jordan again to pick up the first of the sons of the handmaids.

From there, Dan is named, but Dan is said by Moses to “leap from Bashan.” That is all the way to the very north of Israel, and so one might wonder why he is mentioned next. It is because he was first allocated land to the west of Canaan, midway up the land near Benjamin and Ephraim.

However, the land he acquires in the north is situated where the Jordan issues from. As such, naming him before the other two tribes who descend from the handmaids makes complete sense. From there, the final two sons of the handmaids are the furthest north and west.

And so, the pattern essentially follows both a geographic surrounding of Jerusalem while also accounting for who was born to a wife of Jacob and who was born to a handmaid. It really is a unique and interesting pattern to consider, which only came to me while typing these sermons.

Other than being interesting and definitely a pattern in how it comes about, if you accept predictive prophecy, it shows that Moses’ blessing is inspired by the Lord. This is because Moses only knew where the division of land for the three tribes east of the Jordan would be.

Nothing else was known to him because the other divisions would only come after the land was occupied by Israel.

**Text Verse:** *“And He brought them to His holy border,  
This mountain which His right hand had acquired.  
<sup>55</sup> He also drove out the nations before them,  
Allotted them an inheritance by survey,  
And made the tribes of Israel dwell in their tents.” Psalm 78:54, 54*

Other than being a definite pattern, and that it was laid out by Moses before it came about, I’m not personally sure what to make of it. But the fact that the tribes are laid out in this way based on the blessing of Moses inspires me, as do so many other curiosities in Scripture.

There may be a deeper meaning. For example, the directions in the Bible each have meaning. The east is that which is before in time, like the rising of the sun which comes first. The west is that which is after, as in the place where the setting of the sun is.

The east is also the place of exile. Man was cast out of the garden with cherubim placed at the east. That matches the layout of the temple which is laid out east to west and which must be accessed from the east. Outside of the most holy place, cherubim were woven into the veil, on the east and facing east.

The west is where the Lord dwells. It is that which is arrived at last. As such, the tabernacle is a picture of the way one goes – from east, outside of God’s favor (before), to west, union with the Lord (after). It is a journey where one returns to the presence of the Lord. It is the consummation of the trek man has been on since the fall, and it is one that is realized in the coming of Christ.

Because Jerusalem is north of the equator, the south – which is the right hand and that which is greater – is more illuminated. The left is that which is north, and which is increasingly dark and obscure. As such, one can see that Judah (Praise), which encompasses the land to the south (right) of the temple, is at the prominent position, the right hand.

This is the tribe Jesus came from. He who is the Praise of God now sits at the right hand, the position of prominence and authority of God. And yet, Benjamin, whose name means “Son of the Right Hand,” is to the north side of the temple area.

Thus, the idea of the right hand – that which is prominent and possesses authority – literally encompasses the area of the temple. These things are all a part of how God laid out the tribes through the blessing of Moses upon them.

To fully flesh out all the meaning that could be derived from these individual placements would be an immense and hugely rewarding study. There is just too much evidence for these things to be coincidence. There is marvelous beauty in everything seen, and it was all prophesied to be as it is even before Israel entered the land.

Many great things such as these are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. The Blessings to Zebulun and Issachar (verses 18 & 19)**

**<sup>18</sup> And of Zebulun he said:**

*v'lizvulun amar* – “And to Zebulun he said.” Zebulun is the sixth and final son born to Jacob’s wife Leah and the tenth born to Jacob. He has another brother, Issachar, who was born to Leah before he was. And yet, both Jacob and Moses first bless Zebulun before Issachar.

The record of Zebulun’s birth is found in Genesis 30 –

“Then Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son. And Leah said, ‘God has endowed me *with* a good endowment; now my husband will dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons.’ So she called his name Zebulun.”

-Genesis 30:19, 20

Zebulun means Glorious Dwelling Place, and so Leah’s words at his birth, and the words of Jacob when he blessed him in Genesis 49, both make a play on his name. Using the thought of dwelling, Jacob said, “Zebulun shall dwell by the haven of the sea.”

Zebulun’s inheritance is located north of the tribe of those of Manasseh who are situated within the borders of Canaan. As such, the pattern of the order of the tribes surrounding Jerusalem in a somewhat discernible manner continues.

However, as noted in the introduction, because of Manasseh and Dan occupying more than one plot of land, this is not a hard and fast pattern, but it is surprising that the order of blessing continues, so far, to come as the tribes are further from the location of Jerusalem. To Zebulun Moses proclaims...

<sup>18</sup> (con’t) **“Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out,**

It is exactly translated: *semakh zevulun b’tsetekha* – “Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out.” The meaning of this is a blessing of trade and commerce and of skill and ability in war, both of which are used concerning the word *yatsa*, or “going out,” elsewhere.

The original borders of Zebulun, according to the division of land recorded in Joshua 19, does not include any sea borders. And yet, when Jacob blessed him, he said –

“Zebulun shall dwell by the haven of the sea;  
He *shall become* a haven for ships,  
And his border shall adjoin Sidon.” Genesis 49:13

In those words, the word “sea” is plural. Literally, it says *zebulun lekhoph yammim yishkon* – “Zebulun at the shore of the seas shall dwell.” What it implies is that this tribe would fill the land between the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean Sea, or at least they would have access to them.

In the next clause, the Hebrew literally says, “And he to a shore of ships.” Even if he had no direct access to a shore, his inheritance included access to a shore where ships are unloaded. Actually, this is twofold in nature. The first is seen in Issachar’s coming blessing.

Because Zebulun is blessed before his older brother Issachar, it implies that the land of Issachar is jointly used by Zebulun who has been given priority over Issachar. This is the case in both the blessing of Jacob and of Moses.

This explains the reason for the blessing of both Jacob and Moses upon Zebulun before Issachar, even though Issachar was born first. Zebulun could gain access to the Sea of Galilee by traveling through the inheritance of Issachar.

However, he not only had access there, but also through Sidon, the land to the north, outside of Canaan. Sidon was the firstborn of Canaan. His territory was at the northerly end of the land of Canaan and is known for its prominent cities of Tyre and Sidon, cities still known and occupied at Jesus’ time. The city of Sidon was at the extreme northern border between Canaan and Lebanon, quite a long way from Zebulun.

But the larger territory was known for the city. This is just like the city of Tokyo in the prefecture of Tokyo. Tokyo city is just a small place, but the prefecture is large. The use of the name of the city for the larger territory is seen in the gospel of Luke –

“But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; <sup>26</sup> but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, *in the region* of Sidon, to a woman *who was* a widow.” Luke 4:25, 26

The name Sidon means “catching fish” or “plenty of fish.” Because the name Sidon was also given in Jacob’s prophecy, the Bible confirms that Zebulun will have a portion of coastal territory for its use. But, as noted a minute ago, the term “goings out” is also used in referring to warfare.

Zebulun is noted for its skill in warfare in Judges 4 and 5, especially as is recorded in the Song of Deborah. As such, Moses prophesies over Zebulun and blesses him in this manner. Next...

<sup>18</sup> (con't) **And Issachar in your tents!**

Again, the translation is correct: *v'yisakar b'ohalekha* – “And Issachar in your tents!” Issachar is the fifth son born to Leah and the ninth born to Jacob.

Issachar's land is just to the east of Zebulun and a little closer to Jerusalem, but that doesn't really harm the pattern of the tribes encircling the temple. Rather, it actually highlights it because of their situation in relation to Gad who will next be named. The record of Issachar's birth is found in Genesis 30 –

“Now Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, ‘Please give me *some* of your son's mandrakes.’

<sup>15</sup> But she said to her, ‘*Is it* a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son's mandrakes also?’

And Rachel said, ‘Therefore he will lie with you tonight for your son's mandrakes.’

<sup>16</sup> When Jacob came out of the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, ‘You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son's mandrakes.’ And he lay with her that night.

<sup>17</sup> And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. <sup>18</sup> Leah said, ‘God has given me my wages, because I have given my maid to my husband.’ So she called his name Issachar.” Genesis 30:14-18

His name means “He is Wages.” As for Moses' blessing, dwelling in one's tent gives the sense of peace, quietude, and contentment. The sentiment of Moses is not unlike portions of the blessing of Jacob upon this fifth son of Leah –

“Issachar is a strong donkey,  
Lying down between two burdens;

<sup>15</sup> He saw that rest *was* good,  
And that the land *was* pleasant;  
He bowed his shoulder to bear *a burden*,  
And became a band of slaves.” Genesis 49:14, 15

In the blessing of these two sons, one can see the contrasting parallel –

Rejoice:

- (a) \*+Zebulun, in your going out,
- (a) \*And -Issachar in your tents!

The rejoicing applies to both. For Zebulun, it is the bustle of commercial life, trade, shipping, warfare, and so on. For Issachar, it is the quiet pursuit of agriculture and home life. For both, Moses continues...

**<sup>19</sup> They shall call the peoples to the mountain;**

*amim har yiqrau*— “Peoples mountain they call.” The idea of these words is that from this area, there shall be a call to the sacred mountain, the mountain of the Lord. This is literally fulfilled in the words of Isaiah concerning the ministry of Christ –

“Nevertheless the gloom *will not be* upon her who *is* distressed,  
As when at first He lightly esteemed  
The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,  
And afterward more heavily oppressed *her*,  
By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,  
In Galilee of the Gentiles.  
<sup>2</sup>The people who walked in darkness  
Have seen a great light;  
Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,  
Upon them a light has shined.” Isaiah 9:1, 2

This is cited in Matthew 4 as a direct reference to the ministry of the gospel going forth in this area. Because Issachar is blessed with Zebulun, they are, therefore, implicitly included in what is said by Isaiah.

Even though Jesus’ earthly ministry was specifically only to the people of Israel, it extended to Gentiles at times, and eventually, the New Covenant went out to all peoples. This is certainly the reference here. As such...

**<sup>19</sup> (con’t) There they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness;**

*sham yizbekhu zivkhe tsedeq* – “There they offer sacrifices righteous.” The sacrifices of the righteous are not simply sacrifices upon the altar. David, Isaiah, and others confirm this –



“Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,  
The God of my salvation,  
And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.

<sup>15</sup> O Lord, open my lips,  
And my mouth shall show forth Your praise.

<sup>16</sup> For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give *it*;  
You do not delight in burnt offering.

<sup>17</sup> The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit,  
A broken and a contrite heart—  
These, O God, You will not despise.

<sup>18</sup> Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion;  
Build the walls of Jerusalem.

<sup>19</sup> Then You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness,  
With burnt offering and whole burnt offering;  
Then they shall offer bulls on Your altar.” Psalm 51:14-19

Only when the heart is right are sacrifices considered righteous. If the previous clause is referring to the ministry of Christ, this one – which is set in parallel – must as well. It is what Paul refers to in several ways, such as –

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service.” Romans 12:1

The “great light” of Isaiah 9, the spreading of the gospel in Galilee of the Gentiles, leads to the righteous sacrifices being acceptable to God as they are sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Next, Moses notes...

<sup>19</sup> (con’t) **For they shall partake of the abundance of the seas**

*ki shepha yamim yinaqu* – “For abundance seas they suck.” The word *shepha*, or abundance, is found only here in Scripture. It is from an unused root meaning to abound. It is referring to the two seas which lay on either side, Galilee and the Mediterranean.

Due to their closeness, they would benefit from that which is derived from them. The word *yanaq* means “to suck,” but it is consistently used of nursing a child, as when babes are suckled.

Because the seas in both directions lead to interaction with Gentiles, I would say this continues to refer to the ministry of Christ expanding to them, something that occurred in the gospels, and which has continued for millennia. Further...

<sup>19</sup> (con't) **And of treasures hidden in the sand."**

It is a very complicated clause, maybe the most complicated. The first two words are plural verbs forming a play on words: *u-sephune temune khol* – "And concealed hidden sand." Another unique word is seen here, *saphan*. It comes from a root meaning to conceal, and so it refers to hiding.

Next, the word "and" is tied to the thought, "For they suck." Thus, it is saying that they will partake of that thing which is hidden and concealed in the sand. But even the word "sand" is to be taken in connection with the words hidden and concealed.

As such, the whole thought reads something like: "And they will suck of the most hidden things." And so, this is a direct reference to the words of Jesus, and of the continued words of the apostles –

"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, 'I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. <sup>22</sup> All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*.'" Luke 10:21, 22

"For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." Colossians 3:3

- (a) Peoples mountain they call.
- (a) There they offer sacrifices righteous.
- (b) For \*abundance seas they suck.
- (b) And \*concealed hidden sand.

Apart from the teachings of the Lord, including the gospel, the words have such a dubious meaning that they could mean almost anything. But in light of the gospel, they make complete sense. Especially when Jesus compares those who receive His words to babes. Next, we will see Gad and Dan...

*When I bless you, you shall be blessed  
And upon you shall come the blessings I state  
When it is for comfort, you shall not be hard pressed  
And when it is for love, there shall be no hate*

*With My blessing you will be blessed  
You shall abound in the good things I proclaim  
You need do nothing to receive it, you need take no test  
My blessing is grace that stems from My name*

*Listen to My blessing and know it is true  
It shall come pass, the words that I proclaim  
The blessings I state shall come upon you  
Because My blessing is grace that stems from My name*

## **II. The Blessings to Gad and Dan (verses 20-22)**

**<sup>20</sup> And of Gad he said:**

*u-l'gad amar* – “And to Gad he said.” Gad is the first son born to Leah’s handmaid Zilpah and the seventh born to Jacob. Gad is east of Issachar and also east of the Jordan. The land extends from the Sea of Galilee almost to the Dead Sea, across from Benjamin. As such, it provides a buffer to the east for Jerusalem.

The record of his birth is noted in Genesis 30 –

“When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, she took Zilpah her maid and gave her to Jacob as wife. <sup>10</sup> And Leah’s maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son. <sup>11</sup> Then Leah said, ‘A troop comes!’ So she called his name Gad.” Genesis 30:9-11

Gad can mean “A Troop,” but it also means “Good Fortune.” Of him, Moses says...

<sup>20</sup> (con’t) **“Blessed is he who enlarges Gad;**

*barukh markhiv gad* – “Blessed he enlarges Gad.” Gad settled east of the Jordan and in a very large parcel. The thought of saying, “Blessed is he who enlarges Gad,” is referring to what has already happened, even though it is stated as if it is ongoing. The Lord provided a great expanse for Gad, and so Gad is enlarged into the future as he fills that expanse, continuing to subdue it.

<sup>20</sup> (con't) **He dwells as a lion,**

*kelaviy shaken* – “As lion he dwells.” This is referring to his residence in the land given to him. Despite it being already apportioned out to him by the Lord, it still had inhabitants in it from the nations who had settled it long before.

Therefore, to dwell as a lion means that he is ready to pounce, taking dominion over that which belongs to him. That then leads to the next thought...

<sup>20</sup> (con't) **And tears the arm and the crown of his head.**

*v'taraph zeroa aph qadeqod* – “And has torn arm, yea, crown of head.” The arm is the symbol of strength. The crown of the head symbolizes leadership and command. The symbolism, then, is that of Gad dwelling in his land, ever ready to enlarge his dominion over the area that he has already been provided.

Blessed he enlarges Gad. (The ultimate Force behind Gad's enlargement. He is the Enlarger)

(a) \*As lion +he dwells.

(a) \*And +he has torn arm, yea, crown of head.

Though this speaks of Gad and his dominion, it ultimately surely anticipates Christ who is equated to a lion (even if from Judah) who destroyed the strength and the authority of the devil.

<sup>21</sup> **He provided the first *part* for himself,**

*v'yar reshit lo* – “And he saw first to himself.” To “see” signifies to attend to, as in “See to it yourself.” Hence, this is referring to the land that was subdued east of the Jordan, even before entering Canaan.

When it was seen, Gad wanted it and determined to have it for his possession. This is what is being referred to. Next...

<sup>21</sup> (con't) **Because a lawgiver's portion was reserved there.**

*khelqat mekhoqeq saphun* – “Portion lawgiver covered.” Here is a new word, *saphan*. It signifies to cover, such as in paneling a house. It is the root of the unique word *saphan* just introduced in verse 19. It is assumed here that the lawgiver is Moses. As such, it

would then mean that the portion of land granted by Moses to Gad is preserved for Gad.

<sup>21</sup> (con't) **He came *with* the heads of the people;**

*v'yete rashe am* – “And he comes heads people.” This is referring to the agreement made allowing Gad and the other tribes to remain in the land east of the Jordan –

“So Moses gave command concerning them to Eleazar the priest, to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel. <sup>29</sup> And Moses said to them: ‘If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben cross over the Jordan with you, every man armed for battle before the LORD, and the land is subdued before you, then you shall give them the land of Gilead as a possession. <sup>30</sup> But if they do not cross over armed with you, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan.’” Numbers 32:28-30

The conditions were agreed upon, and thus Gad, named first in regard to these tribes, was to lead the people in the conquest of Canaan.

<sup>21</sup> (con't) **He administered the justice of the LORD,**

*sidqat Yehovah asah* – “Justice Yehovah he has done.” The thought is to be considered with the next clause...

<sup>21</sup> (con't) **And His judgments with Israel.”**

*u-mishpata im Yisrael* – “And His judgments with Israel.” This and the previous clause could mean one of two things. Either he executed the justice and judgments of the Lord upon Canaan, or he complied with the justice and judgments of the Lord that were set in the conditions for him to return to his land.

Either way, the two clauses are referring to Gad’s obedience in going forth with Israel in order to secure their own possession in the land east of the Jordan.

(a) And he saw first to himself  
(a) Portion lawgiver covered

(a) And he comes heads people  
(b) +Justice Yehovah \*he has done

(b) \*And +His judgments with Israel

<sup>22</sup> **And of Dan he said:**

*u-l'dan amar* – “And to Dan he said.” Dan is the first son born to Rachel’s handmaid Bilhah and the fifth born to Jacob. Dan’s allotment was originally West of Ephraim, and so it would seem that the pattern of the tribes encircling the area of Jerusalem is disturbed in his placement, but that would be incorrect.

Rather, Dan fills in the area westward, even to the Mediterranean Sea, but Dan eventually moved to the extreme north of the land in an area where the Jordan River begins, just below Mount Hermon. It straddles that, and so it meets together with the half-tribe of Manasseh to the east and Naphtali to the west.

As such, it is fitting that Dan is now mentioned, rather than where it was originally allocated land as noted in Joshua.

The record of his birth is found in Genesis 30 –

“Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister, and said to Jacob, ‘Give me children, or else I die!’

<sup>2</sup> And Jacob’s anger was aroused against Rachel, and he said, ‘Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?’

<sup>3</sup> So she said, ‘Here is my maid Bilhah; go in to her, and she will bear *a child* on my knees, that I also may have children by her.’ <sup>4</sup> Then she gave him Bilhah her maid as wife, and Jacob went in to her. <sup>5</sup> And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. <sup>6</sup> Then Rachel said, ‘God has judged my case; and He has also heard my voice and given me a son.’ Therefore she called his name Dan.” Genesis 30:1-6

Dan means “Judge.” Of him, Moses says...

<sup>22</sup> (con’t) **“Dan is a lion’s whelp;**

*dan gur aryeh* – “Dan whelp lion.” There is a play on words in this that is not yet evident. Moses is equating Dan with a lion, prophetically indicating both where and how he would settle. And this, despite the allocation for land originally given in Joshua. That is next seen with the words...

<sup>22</sup> (con’t) **He shall leap from Bashan.”**

*yezaneq min ha'bashan* – “He leaps from the Bashan.” Here is a word found only this once in the Bible, *zanaq*. It comes from a root meaning to draw together the feet as an animal would when it is about to dart upon prey. Hence, it means to spring forward.

Moses identifies Dan with the Bashan, the area to the extreme north of the land, and – as I noted – it straddles the area that leads into the Jordan River. But more, when Moses goes to view the land before he dies, this is recorded there –

“And the LORD showed him all the land of Gilead as far as Dan.”

-Deuteronomy 34:1

Despite the lot for Dan being drawn in a completely different area, it was already known that Dan would settle to the far north, even beyond the land of Gilead. The lengthy record of the events of them moving to this area is found in Judges 18. Toward the end of the chapter, it says –

“So they took *the things* Micah had made, and the priest who had belonged to him, and went to Laish, to a people quiet and secure; and they struck them with the edge of the sword and burned the city with fire. <sup>28</sup> *There was* no deliverer, because it *was* far from Sidon, and they had no ties with anyone. It was in the valley that belongs to Beth Rehob. So they rebuilt the city and dwelt there. <sup>29</sup> And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born to Israel. However, the name of the city formerly *was* Laish.” Judges 18:27-29

The name *Laish* means “Lion.” Dan sprang forth upon Laish (Lion), just as a lion springs forth. Hence, Moses is making a prophetic pun upon what would occur in the future as Dan took its place to the far north.

With the short blessing complete, one can see the simple a/b structure of it –

(a) Dan whelp lion.

(b) He leaps from the Bashan.

Because of the obvious fulfillment of the words of Moses, liberal scholars take this – along with many other words of the blessings – as having been written many generations later. That is completely dismissive of the idea that God could inspire his prophets to proclaim the future.

As such, it is dismissive of the fact that this is God's word. If these things were written later, then they would be the writings of man without God's inspiration. And if this is so, then the Bible is simply a collection of man's writings without any spiritual value at all, because man is – after all – a corrupt, fallen being.

But the writings here in Deuteronomy are God's inspired words. I have personally never seen any study on the layout of these tribes as I mentioned them to you at the beginning of the sermon, and yet they form a definite and distinct pattern.

Therefore, it is its own confirmation that these are the words of Moses as inspired by the Lord. They were not written later in order to fulfill some sort of pre-set, or man-determined pattern. If they were, the pattern would have been noted and everyone would know about it.

And this is the same with dozens of other patterns that we have drawn out from the text as we have proceeded through the books of Moses. Whether they are geographical, ancestral, numerical, word-based (such as chiasms), or other types of patterns, we have come across so many that have never been seen before that it is beyond credulity that they came about by mere chance.

And yet, as far as I know, there is no historical record of them having been noted by anyone else. This means that they were probably never seen before by anyone. And yet, they are there, and they are unmistakable.

And because many of them overlap with other things that also form patterns, they could not have been inserted later. They had to be there all along. Chiasms, for example, may overlap many verses that are prophetic in nature. If those prophetic verses were inserted later, as scholars who deny prophecy claim, then the chiasm would not exist.

Understanding these things, we have to either accept that this is truly the word of God, telling in advance what will come to pass before it happens, or this book is the greatest aberration in the history of the universe, because things that could not otherwise exist in it do, in fact, exist.

Where will you place your faith? If this book is not the word of God, then everything it says about Jesus – everything – is false. This is because Jesus Himself clearly stated that this is, in fact, the word of God and that it testifies to who He is.



One cannot logically say, "I accept the premise of the New Testament and I believe in Jesus and yet I do not accept as inspired the words of the Old Testament." The thinking is confused, erratic, and clearly unclear.

It is no different than someone saying, I believe in Jesus and yet I do not believe that He is the only way to be reconciled to God. That is a logical contradiction because Jesus Himself said that He is the only way to be reconciled to God.

If you don't believe what He says, then you don't believe Him. And if He is a liar, then why – tell me why! – you would want to believe *in* Him. If you want to follow a god who lies to you, I can direct you to lots of other gods. You can pick any of them and you will get exactly what you are looking for.

But if you want to follow the God who is truthful because He is the Truth, I can only direct you to one God. He is the God of the Bible, and He is the embodiment of truth. And because Scripture is given by Him and tells us about Him, you can be fully confident that Scripture is absolute truth.

Be sound in your thinking, be confident in your theology, and be right in your doctrine. Come to the Source of all wisdom and truth. Come to Jesus, the Word of God.

**Closing Verse:** *"Then He said to them, 'These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.'<sup>45</sup> And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures."* Luke 24:44, 45

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 33:23-29 *Moses is almost through blessing, but there is still a little more...* (Moses Blesses Israel, Part IV) (103<sup>rd</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **Moses Blesses Israel, Part III**

And of Zebulun he said:  
Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out  
And Issachar in your tents! Give a shout!

They shall call the peoples to the mountain  
There they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness in the land  
For they shall partake of the abundance of the seas  
And of treasures hidden in the sand

And of Gad he said:  
"Blessed is he who enlarges Gad  
He dwells as a lion in his spread  
And tears the arm  
And the crown of his head

He provided the first part for himself  
Because a lawgiver's portion was reserved there  
He came with the heads of the people, so to you I tell  
He administered the justice of the LORD  
And His judgments with Israel

And of Dan he said:  
"Dan is a lion's whelp going on and on  
He shall leap from Bashan

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## **Deuteronomy 33:23-29** **(Moses Blesses Israel, Part IV)**

For many years of my life, I would go to Massachusetts during the summer for a vacation with the family. I haven't been in several years because there just isn't time for me to tend to the church and take the time off that I used to take.

In fact, I'm in what I would call a "comfortable rut." Every Monday is pretty much exactly like every other Monday. The same is true with Tuesday and so on. The less change I have, the happier I am. And the more I am doing things for the church, the more content I am.

But I remember one year while in Massachusetts, I was reading and found a newspaper commentary from the 1800s. In it, there was a survey of all of the favorite verses from the Bible as submitted to the paper by vote that year.

I was curious which verse it would be... John 3:16? Something from the psalms? Philippians 4:5-7? John 16:33? Romans 8:28. I could have sat there and thought up 100 verses that might have been the favorite verse to get people through their day and ground them in their spiritual lives. My first 100 guesses would have been wrong. So would my next hundred guesses.

**Text Verse:** *"The eternal God is your refuge,  
And underneath are the everlasting arms."* Deuteronomy 33:27

Well, there you go. The most cherished verse from the Bible in the mid-1800s. Who would have thought? It is not a verse that I have ever heard on any list of favorite verses at any time. In fact, I don't think I've ever heard anyone quote it, ever, until Berk did in a Bible study a week ago.

But after that day in Massachusetts, I have always cherished it as a favorite. It is a wonderful set of words in the English, which more or less paraphrase the Hebrew. In fact, I put the verse on one of my favorite sunrise photos and have it hanging in the back kitchen.

It is a verse I have patiently waited to include in a sermon for over ten years now. It carries the weight in my mind of knowing it has impacted so many lives in our history. That means a lot to me.

The Bible is simply filled with beauty and with verses that cause us to dig deeply to mine out precious treasure. What a treasure we have been given in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. The Blessing to Naphtali and Asher (verses 23-25)**

**<sup>23</sup> And of Naphtali he said:**

*u-l'naphtali amar* – “And to Naphtali he said.” Naphtali is the second son born to Rachel’s handmaid Bilhah and sixth son born to Jacob. His older brother born to Bilhah, Dan, has already received his blessing, and his land is at the headwaters of the Jordan River, just north of Naphtali.

The record of Naphtali’s birth is found in Genesis 30 –

“And Rachel’s maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. <sup>8</sup> Then Rachel said, “With great wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, *and* indeed I have prevailed.” So she called his name Naphtali.” Genesis 30:7, 8

Naphtali means “My Wrestling.” Naphtali’s inheritance is located on the west side of the Jordan including all of the Sea of Galilee. It extends all the way to the northern border of Canaan, and it is to the east of the inheritance of Asher the final son to be named in these blessings. He is bordered on the south by Issachar and Zebulun.

As such, the continued pattern from the east to the west and from the south to the north of Jerusalem continues in the blessing upon Naphtali.

It cannot be that this pattern was known to Moses at the time because the division of the land will not be completed until Joshua 19, and so either these blessings were written long after it is claimed they were, by someone other than Moses, or they are divinely inspired by God and through Moses to reflect this carefully revealed order. To Naphtali, Moses next says...

**<sup>23</sup> (con’t) “O Naphtali, satisfied with favor,**

*Naphtali seva ratson* – “Naphtali sated favor.” It is as if he sits down to an enormous meal of God’s favor and becomes plump, filled with the goodness bestowed upon him. The hand of the Lord will bless the land, even to overflowing, with goodness. Of this

land, and before Israel had resettled it, Robinson said that it is “an undulating tableland arable and everywhere tilled, with swelling hills ... covered with shrubs and trees.”

The words of Moses continue with a parallel thought to increase the wonder of what he will receive...

<sup>23</sup> (con't) **And full of the blessing of the LORD,**

*u-male birkat Yehovah*– “And full blessing Yehovah.” The words turn the previous clause into a superlative. Not only is Naphtali to be sated with favor, but that sating will be because of the blessing of the Lord.

One could not imagine a more pleasant and jam-packed description of the abundance of goodness that will come upon him. And more, he shall...

<sup>23</sup> (con't) **Possess the west and the south.”**

*yam v'darom yerasha* – “West and south he shall inherit.” The word *yam* has two specific meanings. First, it means “sea,” as in the Sea of Galilee or the Mediterranean Sea. Secondly, it means “west” because the west of Canaan is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea.

The layout of the land itself provides the secondary meanings of the directions of the compass. And this is because of the layout of the temple which is from east to west. As the Most Holy Place is to the west, it is the direction of the sea in relation to Canaan.

And so, the translation of *yam* as either “sea” or “west” must be determined based on the designation of the inheritance. As noted, the eastern border of Naphtali rests upon the west bank of the Jordan River, including the entire western bank of the Sea of Galilee.

Thus, this could be speaking of the “west” in reference to the sea itself. Or it could be speaking of the “sea” because the word *yam*, or sea is used elsewhere to describe the Sea of Galilee, and they shall possess the western side of it. As such, it is hard to tell which meaning is being referred to.

The next word, *darom*, or south, is now introduced into Scripture. It is seen four times in poetic verses and then 13 times in Ezekiel, especially in relation to the future temple he

envisions. It is from the same root as *deror*, which signifies release or liberty. The root means “to move rapidly.”

I don't want to press the meaning too much, but it could be that this then refers to the north end of the inheritance which is the south end of Dan's which was the previous blessing given by Moses. That is where the Jordan River issues forth from.

And more, it could mean the south end of Naphtali's inheritance that borders the Jordan, which is where the river continues to move south, as the waters release from the Sea of Galilee. As such, inheriting the “south” would speak of both – the south of Dan and the south of the Sea of Galilee.

As the Jordan is the border of Canaan proper, it appears that the word *yam* may be a pun to convey both “sea” and “west,” meaning the “west” bank of the Sea of Galilee and the west bank of the Jordan River. Hence, it is not speaking of the western border of Naphtali, but the eastern border of it, which is the western bank of the sea and river.

The reason for all the detail is because it is in this area that Jesus accomplished a large part of His ministry. It would then explain the ultimate meaning for the words “sated” and “full.” It may have been true that the land provided many material blessings which filled the tribe, but ultimately, the inheritance of this tribe received the greatest of all blessings when Christ came and ministered in this region –

“Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. <sup>13</sup> And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, <sup>14</sup> that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

<sup>15</sup> ‘The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,

By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,

Galilee of the Gentiles:

<sup>16</sup> The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light,

And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death

Light has dawned.” Matthew 4:12-16

As it is assumed that many of the apostles found their home in Naphtali, possessing the west and the south takes on an entirely different connotation. They went throughout the land of Israel, generally to the west and the south sharing the gospel and bringing those who heeded to be a part of the possession of the Lord.

And to Naphtali he said:

(a) Naphtali \*sated favor

(a) And \*full blessing Yehovah

(b) West and south he shall inherit

With this blessing complete, we come to the final blessing of Moses upon the tribes of Israel, that of Asher...

**24 And of Asher he said:**

*u-l'asher amar* – “And to Asher he said.” Asher is the second son born to Leah’s handmaid Zilpah and the eighth son born to Jacob. His older brother born to Bilhah, Gad, has already received his blessing, and his land is east of the Jordan River.

The record of Asher’s birth is found in Genesis 30 –

“And Leah’s maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. <sup>13</sup> Then Leah said, “I am happy, for the daughters will call me blessed.” So she called his name Asher.”

-Genesis 30:12, 13

Asher means Happy (Blessed). Asher’s inheritance is located to the very northeast border of the land of Canaan. His eastern border is along the side of Naphtali and extends down to the border of Zebulun. His southern border merges with Zebulun and the western tribe of Manasseh. His northern border is the northern border of Canaan. His western border is the Mediterranean Sea. To Asher, Moses next says...

**24 (con’t) “Asher is most blessed of sons;**

*barukh mibanim Asher* – “Blessed from sons Asher.” The meaning is either “Asher is blessed with children,” “Asher is blessed by the sons (of Israel),” or “Asher is blessed above the sons (of Israel).” The only other time that the term *mibanim*, or “from sons,” is seen in Scripture in Isaiah –

“Even to them I will give in My house  
And within My walls a place and a name  
Better than that of sons and daughters;  
I will give them an everlasting name  
That shall not be cut off.” Isaiah 56:5

That is a comparative statement, and so, I would conclude that Moses is saying he will be blessed above the other sons of Israel. Next...

<sup>24</sup> (con't) **Let him be favored by his brothers,**

Apart from the words to Reuben, the only jussive in the entire chapter is seen in these words: *yehi retsui ekhav* – “May he be accepted his brothers.” Being a jussive, it is an indirect command – “MAY he be...”

It is hard to imagine why he would say this as a type of command unless it is because Asher's allotment will be so far north and west from where the temple will ultimately be located that he could otherwise be ignored by the other tribes. For this, or some other reason, Moses directs the other sons in showing favor to him.

<sup>24</sup> (con't) **And let him dip his foot in oil.**

*v'tovel ba'shemem raglo* – “And let him dip in the oil his foot.” The oil being referred to is that of the olive. The area where Asher settled would have a remarkable abundance of olives.

When olive oil is abundant, it would be used to anoint oneself, especially upon the head. But Moses calls for such a blessing upon Asher that he would have enough oil to even anoint his foot. It is a way of saying, “Let him be blessed with such abundance, even from head to toe.”

Having said this, it is because of this verse that Zion Oil and Gas is not only drilling elsewhere in Israel, but also in the area of Asher. The owner believes that this could be a prophetic picture of immense reserves of oil under the foot of Asher's land.

<sup>25</sup> **Your sandals *shall be* iron and bronze;**

There are two vying translations of these words: *barzel u-nekhoshet minalekha* – “Iron and bronze your sandals,” or “Iron and bronze your bars.” The word *minal* is found only here in Scripture. It comes from *naal*, to bar, bolt, or lock.

However, it is not that simple because the word is also translated as “shoe” (implying a sandal). That is found, for example, in 2 Chronicles 28 –



“Then the men who were designated by name rose up and took the captives, and from the spoil they clothed all who were naked among them, dressed them and gave them sandals, gave them food and drink, and anointed them; and they let all the feeble ones ride on donkeys. So they brought them to their brethren at Jericho, the city of palm trees. Then they returned to Samaria.” 2 Chronicles 28:15

One might originally think that “bars” would make more sense. It would imply security to have bars of iron and bronze. However, the verse is probably parallel to the previous clause. He set his foot in oil and he has sandals of iron and bronze.

Of these metals, iron represents strength, be it in binding together, in government, in hard service, or in bondage. Bronze represents judgment. Thus, this is a way of saying that he will walk with strength and in a circumspect manner.

<sup>25</sup> (con’t) **As your days, so shall your strength be.**

This is one tough set of words: *u-keyamekha dabeekha* – “And according to your days, your saunter.” Here is a word found only once in the Bible, *dove*. It is from an unused root, but it is akin *davav*, to glide or to move gently. From that word comes the word *dov*, or bear, because when he walks, he glides easily over the terrain.

Because of the difficulty of the word, almost all translations go with the Greek translation and say “strength.” My guess is the Greek translators had no idea what to say and just said strength. The NASB departed from strength and said, “your leisurely walk.” That is probably closer to the intent, but it is somewhat of a paraphrase. To match the thought, but also the simplicity of the Hebrew, I say “saunter.”

In other words, the entire verse is one united thought –

Iron and bronze your sandals.  
And according to your days, your saunter.

Asher will saunter through life (his days) with strength and in a circumspect manner. I am convinced enough of this to tell you that you can pen it into the margin of your Bible with a note that this is probably the true intent of Moses’ words.

And to Asher he said:

- (a) Blessed from sons Asher.
- (a) May he be accepted his brothers.

(b) And let him dip in the oil +his foot.

(a) Iron and bronze +your sandals.

(b) And according to your days, your saunter.

With that now complete, so are the blessings upon the tribes. From there Moses will next complete his words to Israel. The next four verses are the last words recorded from him...

*There is none like the God, our God  
He rides upon the heavens to help us  
He protects us in every place that we trod  
He is our Lord, the Christ, Jesus*

*Who is like Him with the everlasting arms?  
And who causes us to in safety dwell?  
He keeps us from troubles, and He saves us from harms  
He has rescued us from the pit of eternal hell*

*There is none like the God, our God  
A place of trust and hope He is for us  
To His excellent majesty we shout and applaud  
He is our Lord, our Savior, our Joy – He is Jesus!*

## **II. Underneath Are the Everlasting Arms (verses 26-29)**

<sup>26</sup> ***“There is no one like the God of Jeshurun,***

This is not simply a statement of fact about the Lord, but a statement about “the God” which is directed to Israel: *aiyn ka’el Yeshurun* – “None according to the God, O Yeshurun.” Moses is telling Israel that Yehovah is THE GOD and that there is none like (according to) Him.

His nature and His being are completely unique. Moses is appealing for them to hear this, to grasp it, and to accept it for their own gaining of understanding and wisdom. It is He alone...

<sup>26</sup> (con’t) ***Who rides the heavens to help you,***

*rokev shamayim b'ezrekha* – “Rides heavens in your help.” It is an expression that has been seen, such as in the pillar of cloud and fire, and it is an expression that will continue to be seen, such as in the chariots of the Lord that are mentioned repeatedly in various ways and contexts in the Old Testament.

It is also an expression of the comings and goings of the Lord as He ascends and descends in both testaments of Scripture, culminating in the greatest expression of this on Israel's behalf –

“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. <sup>12</sup> His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. <sup>13</sup> He *was* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. <sup>14</sup> And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.”

-Revelation 19:11-14

<sup>26</sup> (con't) **And in His excellency on the clouds.**

*u-b'gaavato sekhaqim* – “And in His exaltation clouds.” Here are two new words. The first is *gaavah*. It is from *gaah*, to rise up. Hence, it speaks of His state of majesty or grandeur.

The next word is *shakhaq*, meaning dust or cloud. It comes from a verb of the same spelling which means to pulverize. As such, it is more than just the skies, but billowing of particles in them, as clouds. Probably the best mental image of these words now would be John's words which describe the coming of Christ –

“Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.” Revelation 1:7

In His riding through the heavens, it is as if clouds billow around His splendor and majesty. What Moses has done with the speaking of this verse is to unite it with the opening words of the chapter –

(v5) And He was in Jeshurun King.  
In gathering leaders people together.  
Tribes Israel.

(v26) None according to the God, O Yeshurun.  
Rides heavens in your help.  
And in His exaltation clouds.

The blessing upon the individual tribes has to be considered in relation to what leads into them and what follows them. Without the Lord, there would be no blessing. But because He is the Lord, and because Israel is His people, He will never utterly forsake them. Rather...

**27 The eternal God is your refuge,**

*meonah elohe qedem* – “Dwelling God ancient.” It is a phrase filled with mental images. There is another new word, *meonah* – it is the feminine form of *maon*, or “habitation,” and it carries the same meaning. A habitation is a place of dwelling, rest, refuge, and so on.

Along with that, Moses describes the Lord with the word *qedem*. It means “east,” and it signifies aforetime because the sun rises in the east, coming from seemingly nowhere. Hence, it refers to that which is out of sight and unknowable – eternity past.

It is similar to the term Daniel uses when he calls Him the Ancient of Days. What Moses is saying is that the Lord, the God of Old, is a habitation. He has always been there, and He is a place of safety, security, and rest. To complement that, he next says...

**27 (con't) And underneath are the everlasting arms;**

*u-mi'takhat zeroth olam* – “And from under arms everlasting.” To our minds, the Lord is seen to have come from seemingly nowhere. He has always been there, even to the most ancient time, and in this indescribable existence, there is support with arms that continue on until a point that cannot be mentally grasped.

The word *olam* does not necessarily mean everlasting, but to a point which is concealed and unknowable. In the case of God, it thus must mean “everlasting.” There is no beginning to the support and there is no end to it. The arms are there, never failing to provide security to His people. And with those arms...

**27 (con't) He will thrust out the enemy from before you,**

*v'garesh mi'panekha oyev* – “And He casts out from your face enemy.” The arm symbolizes power and exertion, but also reach. The Lord has the power to support His people, but He also extends that power to remove the enemies of His people, casting those enemies out of their presence.

Everything about what is said anticipates total assurance for His people, Israel. He will protect them, but against His enemies, there will be no hope...

<sup>27</sup> (con't) **And will say, 'Destroy!'**

*vayomer hashmed* – “And says, ‘Destroy!’” Both the word of the previous clause, “enemy,” and the verb here are singular. It may be that this is referring to any enemy at any time. But it could be what Paul refers to in 1 Corinthians.

I would think that this must ultimately be referring to death, the enemy that has been here since the beginning, and who will continue until the time of the end. He is the final enemy to be destroyed –

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. <sup>23</sup> But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those *who are* Christ’s at His coming. <sup>24</sup> Then *comes* the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. <sup>25</sup> For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. <sup>26</sup> The last enemy *that* will be destroyed *is* death.” 1 Corinthians 15:22-26

<sup>28</sup> **Then Israel shall dwell in safety,**

*vayishkon Yisrael betakh* – “And shall dwell Israel security.” The conjunction is “and” not “then.” There is no reason to assume that what is said here is a consequence of the previous verse, although that would certainly be the case.

Rather, Moses is stating what will be for the tribes of Israel. They will dwell in safety. But it can only be referring to when they are right with Him. There is a state of confidence and safety that will exist because of their relationship with Him. It is an ideal set forth.

It is a goal that was attained at the time of Solomon, and it is one that will be realized in the millennium. When they are in a right standing with the Lord, this is the anticipated result. They will be in the land in safety...

28 (con't) **The fountain of Jacob alone,**

*badad en yaaqov* – “Alone fountain Jacob.” The word *badad*, or “alone,” is placed by some with the preceding clause and by some with this one –

And Israel shall dwell in security alone  
The fountain of Jacob / In a land of...

And Israel shall dwell in security  
Alone the fountain of Jacob / In a land of...

I would think the latter is correct. Thus, the two clauses would be in parallel –

(a) And \*Israel shall dwell ^in security  
(a) ^Alone \*the fountain of Jacob / In a land of...

Either way, the thought is that of Jacob not being pestered by those who would do him harm. The term, “the fountain of Jacob,” is a reference to those who issue from him.

As such, it is saying that he will be as a spring that goes forth, unmixed with, and without the taint of, other people groups. Israel the people is the fountain of Jacob. They will live alone...

28 (con't) **In a land of grain and new wine;**

*el erets dagan v'tirosh* – “Unto land grain and new wine.” The words speak of both abundance and consistency. There must be rain for these things to come, and so there is consistency of rain. But new wine speaks to that which is constant as well.

If it is a land being described as one of new wine, then there must always be wine that is new. Hence, there is a continuous stream of it coming forth. It would then be considered a place of constant blessing.

28 (con't) **His heavens shall also drop dew.**

*aph shama yaarphu tal* – “Yea, his heavens shall drop dew.” The word “heavens” is third person masculine singular – “his heavens.” But who is this referring to? The entire verse has been about Israel. As such, it is speaking of Israel, not the Lord.

The meaning is that the heavens above his land are his heavens. The heavens above Israel are destined to drop dew upon him, even if the heavens elsewhere do not drop dew upon those inhabitants. That is actually anticipated in the book of Zechariah when referring to the millennial reign of Christ –

“And it shall come to pass *that* everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. <sup>17</sup> And it shall be *that* whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. <sup>18</sup> If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they *shall have no rain*; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. <sup>19</sup> This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.”

-Zechariah 14:16-19

Israel’s heavens will never fail to provide that which brings abundance and constant newness to the land, meaning the drop of the dew. Moses introduced the word *araph*, or drop, in verse 32:2. He now retires the word as well, this being the second and last time it is found in the Bible.

With the many promised blessings noted upon both the individual tribes and the nation as a whole, Moses now begins the last verse containing his words in Scripture...

<sup>29</sup> **Happy are you, O Israel!**

*ashrekha Yisrael* – “Happy you, Israel.” It is a new word in Scripture, *esher*. It is from the same root as the name Asher. It signifies both “happy,” and “blessed.”

If it were in another form, I would say that “blessed” would convey the idea better. However, Moses is using it as an interjection.

As such, it is as if he is speaking in elation rather than merely as a statement of fact. You can almost see the joy exuding from him as he raises his hands and says, “HAPPY you, Israel!” With that exclamation, he then asks a question that begs a negative response...

<sup>29</sup> (con’t) **Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD,**

*mi kamokha am novosha b'Yehovah* – “Who like you, people saved in Yehovah?” Moses calls forth the words and was probably hoping to hear every voice around him say, “NOBODY!”

There is none like the God of Israel, and because Israel is His people, there is also none like him. With that understood, Moses notes that he is a people saved not merely by the Lord, but *in* Him. This signifies a salvation that is both intimate and eternal.

It is the term Paul uses again and again to describe the position of those “in Christ.” They are saved by Him so that they are saved in Him. Christ did the work, bringing us into Himself. It is both an intimate and an eternal salvation.

<sup>29</sup> (con't) **The shield of your help**

*magen ezrekha* – “Shield your help.” The shield is a defensive weapon. The meaning, then, is that the Lord is there to defend Israel.

As all of the words are in the second person, this does not mean that the Lord is a shield to everyone of Israel, but He is a shield for Israel. The people, as a collective, will never be overrun and destroyed because the Lord is there to defend them. Also...

<sup>29</sup> (con't) **And the sword of your majesty!**

*v'asher kherev gaavatekha* – “And who sword your exultation.” It is the same word introduced in verse 26. There it spoke of the exaltation of the Lord. Now the same word refers to the Lord as the sword of Israel’s exultation. He is to be Israel’s place of boasting, his Source of pride, and his place of highest rejoicing because the Lord is the sword of Israel’s exultation.

Because of this shield and sword...

<sup>29</sup> (con't) **Your enemies shall submit to you,**

*v'yikhashu oyevekha lak* – “And shall yield your enemies to you.” Whether through death or subservience, the enemies of Israel will be unable to stand against him because the Lord is with him. There will be a complete yielding of themselves before the rushing onslaught. Moses says that it shall be so, and then he utters his final words of the Torah...



\*29 (fin) **And you shall tread down their high places.”**

*v’atah al bamotemo tidrok* – “And you upon their high places shall tread.” The high places speak of the commanding positions, the strongholds, and the temples. It signifies the complete ruin of the enemy, including their high places of idolatry and false worship.

Ultimately, this then speaks not only of Israel who will occupy Canaan, but of the true Israel, Jesus. What they will failingly do in Canaan is what Christ will do entirely. He will bring to an end all authority, all power, and all dissent against God, even to the master of all those things, Satan. As Paul says in Romans, “And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly” (Romans 16:20).

These words complete all spoken utterances from Moses. Chapter 34 will detail his end, but there will be no words from him. His first words came in Exodus 2 when he was forty years old. After another forty years, he was called by the Lord to lead Israel out of bondage and into the land of promise.

However, that will not come to pass. Instead, his successor, Joshua, will be the one to bring them in. There is a lesson in that for Israel, and there is a lesson in that for us as well. **The law, pictured by Moses, cannot enter the inheritance, nor can it lead anyone into it.**

It was given as a stepping-stone to Israel and as a lesson for us. What we need is something greater than the law can give to fallen, fallible man. We need the perfection of God. The law cannot provide that. It can only show us that we do not possess it, nor can we attain it through our own effort.

But the perfection of the law can be bestowed upon us if we accept what the giving of the law was intended for us to learn. Moses will be taken to the top of a mountain, and he will see the land of promise before him, but he will not go in.

We have a choice: will we follow in the example of Moses, trust in our own efforts, and die outside of the promise, or will we trust in God who alone can bring us in? He sent Jesus from Himself. Christ came, He lived under the law, He fulfilled the law, and He entered into His glory.

And He offers us Himself so that we can also enter into His glory. Moses accomplished his duties, and he will receive his reward, but as a typological representation of the law, he provides us with the warning – “Don’t trust in me. Trust in the Lord! He can bring you

in, and He will bring you in, if you just have faith.” The words of Moses are ended. The word of the Lord and the Word of God are eternal.

**Closing Verse:** *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. <sup>4</sup> In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” John 1:1-5*

The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth come through Jesus Christ. Let us be sure to get our theological boxes straight. It’s important.

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 34:1-12 *Moses will die in Moab and be buried without any fanfare. As for Canaan, Moses...* (You Shall Not Cross Over There) (104<sup>th</sup> and final Deuteronomy sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

#### **Moses Blesses Israel, Part IV**

And of Naphtali he said:

“O Naphtali, satisfied with favor, delights in your mouth  
And full of the blessing of the Lord  
Possess the west and the south

And of Asher he said:

Asher is most blessed of sons  
Happy is he with his spoil  
Let him be favored by his brothers  
And let him dip his foot in oil

Your sandals shall be iron and bronze, strong and mighty  
As your days, so shall your strength be

“There is no one like the God of Jeshurun  
Who rides the heavens to help you

And in His excellency on the clouds  
He is faithful and He is true

The eternal God is your refuge  
And underneath are the everlasting arms  
He will thrust out the enemy from before you  
And will say, 'Destroy! To them shall come many harms

Then Israel shall dwell in safety  
The fountain of Jacob alone, it is true  
In a land of grain and new wine  
His heavens shall also drop dew

Happy are you, O Israel!  
Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord?  
The shield of your help  
And of your majesty the sword!

Your enemies shall submit to you, when they see your faces  
And you shall tread down their high places

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

## **Deuteronomy 34:1-12** **(You Shall Not Cross Over There)**

When I worked at Florida Cities Water Company, a company no longer in existence, I was the Lead Operator of the Gulf Gate Wastewater Treatment Plant, just a couple of miles from here – also no longer in existence. The company handled all the water and wastewater for the entire Gulf Gate area.

Included in this was the big blue water tower just behind the church on Mall Drive, between us and the shopping center where Publix is. On the top of this tower and others like it are lights encased in thick red glass which gives them (and airport towers and the like) their distinctive appearance and which serve as a warning to aircraft.

I took care of those lights and always enjoyed climbing up the tower to scan pretty much everything from north of Tampa, all the way to south of Fort Myers, to way out in the Gulf of Mexico, and to the middle of the state. Trips up the tower were my own version of spying out the land.

Today, Moses will get his last view from the tower, so to speak, though his will be from a mountaintop. He will look over the land of promise, but alas, he will not make it there himself. He, typological of the law, cannot attain to the inheritance of the promise. He can only see it from a distance, but the law has no part or share in it.

**Text Verse:** *“For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. <sup>4</sup> For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. <sup>5</sup> And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, <sup>6</sup> but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.” Hebrews 3:3-6*

Moses was introduced into the biblical narrative in Exodus 2:1. He has steadily been with us ever since. But he has actually been with us since Genesis 1:1. This is because it is he who received the five books of the Torah from the Lord, also known as the Pentateuch.

The amount of information that is contained in this law is far beyond anything that we could ever remember or even imagine. Unfortunately, we hardly touched the surface of what is contained in these books. And yet, Moses was only a servant in God’s house.

Jesus, on the other hand, is a Son over His own house. Everything that Moses penned was inspired by the Word of God, Jesus. It is an amazing and glorious thing to consider. It is all about Him. Moses looked at the inheritance from the eastern side of the Jordan. Jesus did, too. Moses died outside of the inheritance. Jesus did too. There is a difference, however. Jesus resurrected and entered into His glory. And because He did, Moses could too. Despite being the servant of the Lord, he was not the Servant of the Lord.

Thank God for Jesus Christ who fulfills that which Moses only hinted at as a mere shadow and type. Yes, Moses penned these books, but they ultimately have come from the mind of God and through the Word of God. Amazing, wonderfully amazing things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. You Shall Not Cross Over There (verses 1-4)**

Chapter 32 contained the Song of Moses and the admonition for it to be adhered to. After that, the Lord said this to Moses –

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses that very same day, saying: <sup>49</sup> ‘Go up this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which *is* in the land of Moab, across from Jericho; view the land of Canaan, which I give to the children of Israel as a possession; <sup>50</sup> and die on the mountain which you ascend, and be gathered to your people, just as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people; <sup>51</sup> because you trespassed against Me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah Kadesh, in the Wilderness of Zin, because you did not hallow Me in the midst of the children of Israel. <sup>52</sup> Yet you shall see the land before *you*, though you shall not go there, into the land which I am giving to the children of Israel.’” Deuteronomy 32:48-52

With that stated, Chapter 33 gave us the blessings of Moses upon the tribes. From there, and in compliance with the word of the Lord, Moses now obediently adheres to what the Lord had said...

#### **<sup>1</sup> Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab**

*v'yaal Mosheh mearvot moav* – “and ascended Moses from plains Moab.” The word “plain” in Hebrew is *aravah*. It comes from the word *arav*, meaning to become evening

or grow dark. This is identical to *arav*, meaning to take or give on pledge. The name Moab means “From Father.” It is from this place, where Moses has carefully instructed Israel, that he ascends...

**1 (con’t) to Mount Nebo,**

As we saw in Chapter 32, the name Nebo is most likely derived from *navi*, or prophet. Thus, it means something like Prophet, Interpreter, Spokesperson, or Foreteller.

However, another word it is connected to is *navah*, meaning high or prominent. It is to the high places that people would go in order to get “nearer” to God and to receive a word from Him or sacrifice to Him. A secondary name is Height.

Therefore, it would be a high place where someone would go to receive a word, a vision, a prophecy, and so on. That is most certainly fitting for this occasion. The account next says...

**1 (con’t) to the top of Pisgah,**

*Rosh ha’pisgah* – “top the Pisgah.” Pisgah signifies a cleft. Thus, it is The Cleft. It comes from the word *pasag*, meaning to pass between. That, in turn, comes from a root signifying to cut up. Thus, *pasag* figuratively means, “to consider” or “to contemplate.”

**1 (con’t) which is across from Jericho.**

*asher al pene Yerekho* – “which upon face Jericho.” The meaning is “facing Jericho.” When on the mountain, the immediate sight would be the city. Jericho, or *Yerekho*, (with various spellings) has a dual significance. It means City of the Moon, and it also means Place of Fragrance. Of Moses standing in this place, it next says...

**1 (con’t) And the LORD showed him all the land of Gilead as far as Dan,**

*vayarehu Yehovah eth kal ha’arets eth ha’gilad ad dan* – “And showed him Yehovah all the land, the Gilead as far as Dan.” Gilead means “Perpetual Fountain.” Dan means “Judge.” It is to be noted again that the land to the extreme north is known as Dan. It does not say that Dan is a part of Gilead (which it is not) but that Moses sees the land of Gilead and his view extends as far as Dan which borders Gilead on its north.

And yet, the allotment for their land in Joshua will be to the west of Canaan, along the sea. Despite this, Dan will eventually settle in this extreme northern portion of Canaan, and it will become known as the territory of Dan. This is already predetermined by Lord.

But the name Dan has already been noted as early as Genesis 14 –

“Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained *servants* who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.” Genesis 14:14

Obviously, it is claimed by some that these words must have been written much later, or that this is a different place named Dan, but why should it be so? First, the land is described by tribes in the next verse, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Judah. But these allocations will not be decided until the book of Joshua. Secondly, the Lord told Abraham that the land would be possessed by his descendants, and here it is coming to pass.

The Lord also tells us in the word that the Messiah would come, through what tribe He would come, where He would be born, and so on. And it came to pass. The Lord is telling us a pictorial story as the words are given to and through Moses. There is no reason to not assume that “Dan” here is the tribal land of the future. After looking north, the eyes of Moses will scan southward leading to the middle section of the land...

## **<sup>2</sup> all Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh,**

Naphtali (My Wrestling) reaches north to the southern border of Dan. Ephraim (Twice Fruitful) is south of Manasseh (Forgetting). From there, Moses’ eyes continue south and west...

## **<sup>2 (con’t)</sup> all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea,**

Judah means Praise. They are the southernmost tribe, and their western border is the Mediterranean Sea, here called *ha’yam ha’akheron*, or literally, “the sea, the after,” but meaning “west.” East is considered “before,” while west is considered “after.”

It is based on the rising and setting of the sun, but more especially, the alignment of the temple which is in an east/west manner. From there, Moses’ eyes look to...

## **<sup>3</sup> the South,**

*v'eth ha'negev* – “And the Negev.” The word comes from a root meaning “parched.” This is the most southern area of Canaan that was included within the tribe of Judah. However, it was then given as the possession of Simeon because, as it says –

“The inheritance of the children of Simeon *was included* in the share of the children of Judah, for the share of the children of Judah was too much for them. Therefore the children of Simeon had *their* inheritance within the inheritance of that people.” Joshua 19:10

Being parched does not mean without life. It means life that must be obtained by bringing it up, as in a well, such as Beer Sheba. After this, Moses looks closer to his own position again...

<sup>3 (con't)</sup> **and the plain of the Valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees,**

*v'eth ha'kikar biqat yerekho ir ha'temarim* – “and the circuit valley Jericho, city the palms.” The word *kikar*, or “circuit,” comes from *karar*, to dance. The word translated as “valley” signifies a split, as between mountains. Thus, this is an area in which is a valley forming a circuit. Jericho means “Place of Fragrance.” Palms are a symbol of uprightness. This extends...

<sup>3 (con't)</sup> **as far as Zoar.**

It is debated if Zoar is at the north or south end of the Dead Sea. This verse reveals that it is at the north end. The valley of Jericho extends down to that area, and Jericho is just west of where Moses now stands. The only way Zoar could be at the south end of the Dead Sea would be if the description of the “circuit of the valley of Jericho” included all of the Dead Sea, which seems unlikely. The name Zoar means Small and signifies insignificance.

<sup>4</sup> **Then the LORD said to him, “This is the land of which I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,**

The question is, “Did Moses actually see all of what is described, or did he merely look over that which is described?” In other words, was he given a vision that extends beyond normal perception? We can't be dogmatic, but just as I could see very far into the distance from the top of a tower that is only about 130 feet tall, Moses – on a very clear day – could have seen a long, long way into the distance.



No matter what, he was given a bird's eye view of the land of promise that was sworn to Abraham –

“And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: ‘Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; <sup>15</sup> for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. <sup>16</sup> And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, *then* your descendants also could be numbered. <sup>17</sup> Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you.’” Genesis 13:14-17

To Isaac –

“Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. <sup>4</sup> And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; <sup>5</sup> because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.” Genesis 26:3-5

And to Jacob –

“And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: “*I am* the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. <sup>14</sup> Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

-Genesis 28:13-14

This is important because it excludes any claim to the land for anyone outside of this line. One must be of this line to receive the inheritance. This is seen again in the next words...

<sup>4</sup> (con't) **saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’**

*l'mor l'zarakha etenenah* – “to say to your seed I will give it.” There is the promise of the land, and there is the promise of what the land signifies. Either way, it is through the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that this promise is made – none other.

<sup>4</sup> (con't) **I have caused you to see *it* with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there."**

Moses will not enter the promise. But both Moses and the land are typical of something else. The object lesson for Israel is now being made perfectly clear.

The description of the land has been in a sweeping panorama, starting in the east of Canaan as Moses looked north, the east to his right side (Gilead to Dan), it then spanned across the north as his eyes moved to the left (over Naphtali), eventually reaching the middle area (Ephraim and Manasseh), then further to the left spanning over Judah with the Mediterranean Sea straight ahead of him. Further left, he saw the Negev (south), and then he came all the way left where the western border of Canaan would be at his left side, circling back up to Jericho, just across the Jordan from where he was. Hence, he viewed all of the land.

Before we continue on with the passage, a quick study on the typology of what is presented here would be in line. Moses, or He Who Draws Out, is about to die. Jesus is the One who draws out the will of the Father, as is recorded in the law.

Moses ascended from the plains of Moab. The word plains, *aravoth*, is derived from the same root as *arav*, pledge. Moab means "From Father." The plains of Moab typologically mean "the pledge from Father." It refers to the Spirit, the pledge (*arrabon* – from the Hebrew *eravon*) of Ephesians 1:13, 14 –

"In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, <sup>14</sup> who is the **guarantee** of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory." Ephesians 1:13, 14

There he goes to Pisgah, the Cleft – a place to contemplate – across from Jericho, the Place of Fragrance – a type of Eden Restored, heaven. There the Lord showed him the land. It includes:

Gilead, the Perpetual Fountain – the unceasing flow of the Spirit.

Dan, the Judge of man who had judged him innocent.

Naphtali, My Wrestlings, which made access possible.

Ephraim, Twice Fruitful, having brought in both Jew and Gentile.

Manasseh, Forgetting, where sadness and pains shall be forgotten.

Judah, Praise. Christ is the Praise of God and the Praise of His people.

The Western Sea, The place of "After," even for eternal days.

The Negev. The Parched from which comes life by effort; Christ's effort.

The Plain of the Valley of Jericho, The dance of the breach of the Place of Fragrance.  
Joyful entrance through the gates into heaven.

The City of Palms, The city of the righteous.

Zoar, Insignificant. Explained by 1 Corinthians 1:27-29. Your study for today.

The area described by what Moses saw is a typological anticipation of the glory of Christ and what He offers to those who come to Him. For Moses, despite this, the Jordan before Him was like an impassible wall. He would never enter through its life-giving waters, but would die outside of the inheritance...

*Our guide has died; nailed to a cross  
And now we have a new direction to go  
We cannot count what happened as loss  
Something new has come – astonishingly so*

*In that act, the divine erasure came out  
It wiped out the handwriting that directed us  
Requirements we could not meet, strong and stout  
Have been annulled through the death of Jesus!*

*Moses served his role, and his law did too  
Together they led us to knowledge sublime  
They were a tutor to show what God would do  
When had come the fullness of time*

*Jesus! Jesus! Thank God for Jesus!  
Praise God for what He has done for us!*

## **II. And the Children of Israel Wept (verses 5-8)**

**<sup>5</sup>So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab,**

Moses died no later than the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month of the 40<sup>th</sup> year (possibly earlier) in the year 2554 Anno Mundi, or from the creation of the world.

The words now are stated as a matter of fact, but they give high regard to the man, calling him *eved Yehovah* – “servant of Yehovah.” As our text verse noted, Moses was faithful as a servant in the Lord's house, but he still died because of sin.

The law said that the man who did the things of the law would live. Moses, the Lord's lawgiver, failed to live up to the standard of the law that he gave. Moses had to wait for Someone more perfect than he before he could finally enter into the true inheritance.

<sup>5</sup> (con't) **according to the word of the LORD.**

*al pi Yehovah* – “upon mouth Yehovah.” This is a common statement, used again and again in Scripture, meaning just as it is translated – “according to the word of the Lord.” However, Jewish commentators have spiced it up to mean, “At the kiss of the Lord.” There is nothing to suggest this and everything to argue against it.

The Lord spoke of the circumstances concerning this in advance and now the words have come to pass. For all we know, Moses may have seen the stunning beauty of the land and keeled over from a heart attack, knowing he would never enter into such marvelous beauty. And this would not be an improbable guess.

According to Joshua 4:19, Israel will enter into the land on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the first month. Moses died about 35 days earlier. This would be at the time when Israel is at its most beautiful – filled with green grass and cool temperatures.

February through April is the greenest time of the year in Israel. It is the time when the rains have fallen during their season, and everything is vibrant and alive. No matter what actually brought his life to an end, it did end. The beauty of Canaan was just out of his reach.

<sup>6</sup> **And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab,**

There are all kinds of aberrant teachings that people hold onto. One of them is that Moses never actually died. Moses died, and Moses was buried. It is inexcusable to say otherwise. But there is typology here as well.

Moses died and was buried in Moab. Jesus, the fulfillment of the law died and was buried. Thus, the law is gone in His death and burial. Deuteronomy says it is in the land of Moab, or “From Father.” The symbolism is clear. God the Father sent Jesus to die in order to end the law.

Israel will not enter into the promise until after Moses dies. And Israel will not enter into the true inheritance until after they have buried the law –

“In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, <sup>12</sup> buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. <sup>13</sup> And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, <sup>14</sup> having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”

-Colossians 2:11-14

In this clause, a different word is translated as “valley,” *gai*. It comes from the word *gevah*, meaning pride. That comes from *gaah*, meaning exalted. The idea is that the surrounding areas are lofty and exalted above the land within. One can almost sense the reason for Moses’ death through the choice of location.

Moses and Aaron pridefully claimed they would draw water from the rock. They struck it twice with a rod instead of speaking to it as they were instructed. Hence, instead of being lifted up, or exalted, as his last moments of life on the top of the mountain would have one expect, he is laid low in this valley.

One can either live by faith in what Christ has done, or he can live by personal pride in attempting to merit God’s favor through the law. Moses himself shows us the difference between the two. The law cannot enter into the inheritance. It can only lead to abasement. If we think of the typology, it all becomes clear –

\* Yehovah, sinless and pure, buried Moses (the law), whereas sinful men buried Jesus (the Lord).

\* The Lord Jesus (Yehovah incarnate), sinless and pure, buried the law when the sinful men buried Jesus (the embodiment of the law).

And Moses was buried...

<sup>6</sup> (con’t) **opposite Beth Peor;**

Beth Peor means “House of Peor.” Peor comes from the verb *paar*, meaning “to open.” Thus, it is the House of the Opening. It was a place known for a temple to the Moabite god known as Peor.

This word, *paar*, is used in Isaiah 5 when speaking of Sheol, the pit of death, opening its mouth beyond measure to receive those who reject the Lord. When under law – whether trusting in the law for righteousness, or in rejecting the law and satisfying one’s own desires – the inevitable outcome is death.

No matter which way one goes, man under law is condemned and will die outside of the promise. It is only through coming to Christ who fulfilled the law, and who embodies it on our behalf, that we can be made right before God. Moses is being used as an object lesson concerning this fact. As for the location itself...

<sup>6</sup> (con’t) **but no one knows his grave to this day.**

The reason for these words now is certainly that Moses’ grave would never be used as a place of idolatry. The attention is to be on the Lord, not on Moses. However, again, there is typology in what we are seeing.

Moses (the law) can no longer be found. It is perfectly described by Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:18, 19–

“Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, <sup>19</sup> that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”

The words, “not imputing their trespasses,” mean “not under law.” It is by law that sin is imputed. For those who are in Christ, not only is the law gone, but it is gone forever. Not only does the law die in Christ, but it can never be found again.

<sup>7</sup> **Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died.**

The Hebrew is beautifully expressive: *u-mosheh ben meah v’esrim shanah b’moto* – “And Moses was a son of one hundred and twenty years in his dying.” Moses’ life was divided up into three periods of forty years.

He was in Egypt until he was forty. He went to Midian and was there forty years until his calling. He then led Israel forty years (Acts 7:22, 30 & 36). Bullinger notes that the number one hundred and twenty “is made up of three forties (3x40=120). Applied to time therefore it signifies a divinely appointed period of probation.”

As Moses is typical of the law, the record of his years is given to show that the law is a time of probation. Until one is no longer under law (coming to Jesus), he remains under that set probation. Israel remains in that state to this day. Of Moses, it next says...

<sup>7</sup> (con't) **His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished.**

*lo kahatah eno v'lo nas lekhhoh* – “No dim his eyes and no abated his vigor.” This is a noun found only here in Scripture, *leakh*. It signifies moisture or freshness, and it comes from the same root as the adjective *lakh*, or moist. It speaks of his inner force, including his virility. This is saying that Moses was functioning perfectly until the moment he died. When he did, only then, did this cease.

Again, the typology is flawlessly clear and can be understood easily by what is stated in Ezekiel 22, where the adjective form, *lakh*, is used when referring to the coming Messiah—

“Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘I will take also *one* of the highest branches of the high cedar and set *it* out. I will crop off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and will plant *it* on a high and prominent mountain. <sup>23</sup> On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it; and it will bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a majestic cedar. Under it will dwell birds of every sort; in the shadow of its branches they will dwell. <sup>24</sup> And all the trees of the field shall know that I, the LORD, have brought down the high tree and exalted the low tree, dried up **the green tree** and made the dry tree flourish; I, the LORD, have spoken and have done *it*.’” Ezekiel 17:22-24

Moses maintained his ability to perceive (his undimmed eyes) and his power to continue producing (his natural vigor) until the moment he died. Likewise, the power of the law allows that no transgressors go unnoticed, and it has the power to continue producing on its own until it is ended. Only in the ending of the law will those things also end.

With the death of Moses, it next says...

<sup>8</sup> **And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days.**

Bullinger defines the number thirty, saying, “Thirty being 3 x 10, denotes in a higher degree the perfection of Divine order, as marking the right moment.” The right moment has come.

The record of what occurs is spiritually what pertains to any who come to Christ, but the story refers specifically to Israel. From their departure from the Lord in Numbers 14, to their sentence to wander for forty years, to them finally leaving the law behind, it has been a prophetic look into their future.

As we noted earlier, the words “the plains of Moab” typologically mean “the pledge from Father.” It refers to the Spirit, the pledge noted in Ephesians 1:13, 14. The weeping of Israel at the death of the law (meaning the death of Christ who fulfilled the law) and the giving of the Spirit is seen in Zechariah 12:10-14 –

“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only *son*, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. <sup>11</sup> In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. <sup>12</sup> And the land shall mourn, every family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; <sup>13</sup> the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; <sup>14</sup> all the families that remain, every family by itself, and their wives by themselves.”

The law will die in Israel when Israel comes to Christ...

<sup>8</sup> (con't) **So the days of weeping *and* mourning for Moses ended.**

As Solomon says, there is a time to weep and a time to laugh. There is a time to mourn and a time to dance. The time of Israel’s mourning will end, and it will be replaced with joy.

*This is truly the Prophet of whom Moses foretold  
He is the Prophet to come into the world  
His words are purer than the finest gold  
Through them, the mysteries are unfurled*

*This is He of whom Moses spoke  
It is He who has lifted the burden from us  
No more is the pall dark like smoke  
Since the coming of this Man, Jesus*



*A Prophet is He like none other  
One who even is greater than Moses, so we see  
This One rose among us, He is our Brother  
And yet He is higher than Moses – even infinitely*

### **\*III. In the Sight of All Israel (verses 9-12)**

**<sup>9</sup> Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him;**

Joshua was inaugurated as is recorded in Numbers 27 and as is also recorded in Deuteronomy 31. The laying of hands on him is specifically referred to in Numbers 27:23. He, as we have seen before, is typical of Christ.

Joshua means “The Lord is Salvation.” His father’s name being included anticipates Christ also. Nun is from the verb *nun*, to propagate, or increase. This is what Christ would do, increasing the family of God through His completed work.

He is said to be filled with the spirit of wisdom, something explicitly said of the Messiah – using the same words *ruakh khakmah*, spirit of wisdom – in Isaiah 11:2. The law confirmed Jesus’ ministry because it spoke of Him, anticipated Him, was fulfilled by Him, and was ended through Him. As such...

**<sup>9 (con’t)</sup> so the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses.**

Israel’s obedience to Joshua by obeying the law is what this speaks of. However, it also anticipates obedience by Israel to Moses by heeding Jesus. But it is something that must be considered carefully.

Of this, Charles Ellicott asks, “Is it not true that when the Israel of God hearken to the true Joshua, they must needs do as the Lord commanded Moses?” The answer is, “Yes.” But it is not, “Yes, you must observe the Law of Moses.” Rather, it is to do as Christ Jesus Himself said –

“But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. <sup>39</sup> You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. <sup>40</sup> But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.” John 5:38-40

This is what is being pictured right now in this verse concerning Joshua. It is the final anticipation of the time of the law. Israel will come to Christ, heed Him, and be saved by Him. In heeding Jesus, the people will then, and only then, be obedient to Moses in the truest sense. With this understood, it next says...

**<sup>10</sup> But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,**

The words now speak of the greatness of Moses in all of his house, meaning the time of the law. Moses acted as priest in the establishment of the law. He acted as the first prophet of the law. He served as the ruler of the people during the time of the law. And so on. He served in each of these capacities – something no other person had done.

But the specific point of note is that he was a prophet *asher yadao Yehovah panim el panim* – “whom knew him, Yehovah, face to face.”

It is assumed that this must have been written much later to include these words. If they were written at the time of Moses, it supposedly would have no meaning.

However, the word of the Lord is eternal. If He said this through Moses’ hand, and the law continues until the ending of the law – whenever that may be – then it is a true statement during all of that time. As such, there is no need to read this in any other light.

If it was written later, that might be fine to someone. But if it wasn’t written by Moses, and it was actually penned, say at the time of Jeremiah, then it could mean that after the time of Jeremiah, someone may arise to make the statement null and void.

Rather, only in the coming of Christ, and in the ending of the law, can this statement no longer be considered true. As such, I would argue that even this statement is from the Lord, through Moses. The account next explains what the ministry of Moses encompassed...

**<sup>11</sup> in all the signs and wonders which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, before Pharaoh, before all his servants, and in all his land,**

The prepositions read “to” – “To all the signs and the wonders which sent him, Yehovah, to do in *the land of* Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land” (CG).

The preposition can mean “before,” but these things were not just done before them. Instead, they were done to them.

And Jesus didn’t just perform before Satan, before his demons, and before their domain. Rather, He directly attacked them. He did this through the law, not around it. Satan used the law to destroy man’s fellowship with God (and thus destroy man). Jesus used the law to destroy the power of Satan and to restore man’s fellowship with God.

As for Moses, the narrative, the chapter, and the book of Deuteronomy conclude with the words...

**\*12 (fin) and by all that mighty power and all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.**

The words are really superlative: *u-l’kol ha’yad ha’khazaqah u-l’kol ha’mora ha’gadol asher asah mosheh l’ene kal Yisrael* – “And to all the hand the mighty, and to all the terror, the great, which did Moses to eyes all Israel!”

This is literally true of the work of Moses, as the record of Exodus testifies. However, it is also true of the work of Jesus, both in His work under the law and of His coming work on behalf of Israel before they come to Him. The book of Revelation details those things, but they are spoken of by Peter in Acts –

“I will show wonders in heaven above  
And signs in the earth beneath:  
Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.  
<sup>20</sup>The sun shall be turned into darkness,  
And the moon into blood,  
Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.  
<sup>21</sup>And it shall come to pass  
*That* whoever calls on the name of the LORD  
Shall be saved.” Acts 2:19-21

In the end, what is recorded about Moses is given specifically to reveal Christ to us. If you had told me on 23 October 2011 that we would still be plugging along in the books of Moses in 2022, I would not have believed it.

But more, I never considered – in my wildest imagination – the enormity of the task that was begun on that day, or the magnitude of the detail that we would uncover as we progressed through these five books.

I rushed far too fast through Genesis, and I have made many errors in the analysis as we have progressed – each of which overwhelmed me with grief. And yet, I can say that I have done my very best to present to you an accurate and faithful examination of what the Lord has intended for us to see in the most marvelous masterpiece of literature.

I have made many new friends. For those of you who have been here a while, you have as well, and we have also lost some friends along the way. And yet, the word of God continues, and it shall continue until the time of the end.

We have much more to search out until that day, whenever it may be, and so I will press on, hoping you will come along as well. With Moses ended, a new section of literature – the historical writings, also known as the former prophets – will enter into the ongoing narrative and the unfolding story of redemptive history.

Just like almost eleven years ago, I cannot even imagine what treasures lie ahead. With each new sermon, a new Monday of wonder and delight will open up, and hopefully, a new Sunday of anticipation and blessing will follow for you.

For those who have been with us, and for those who are willing to stay as Scripture continues to unfold, I say, “Thank you.” And I would be remiss if I didn’t exhort you to take upon yourselves your own daily study of this word.

If there is no other lesson, outside of direct teaching to you, that I could impart, it would be for you to keep this word near, read it daily, think on it always, and cherish it with all your heart. It is the word of God, it is the revelation of Jesus Christ, and it is the basis of our knowledge of Him. As He is the basis of our faith, I can do no less than implore you to read this word.

Above all, I thank the Lord, Jesus, for having found something suitable in me – no matter how small it is – to allow me the honor of presenting this word to you each week. This alone, if nothing else, tells me of the immensity of our God. If he can use someone as unworthy as me for this highest of honors, it truly demonstrates the magnitude of his greatness.

All I want to do for You, Lord  
is because I love You,  
not as a tithe, not as a chore,  
but because of Your love,

All I want to do for You, Lord,  
is to serve You,  
not because I must,  
but because I trust You, Lord.

All I want to do for You, Lord  
is to adore You,  
because I'm free to worship You,  
my Kings of Kings!

You broke my chains,  
You saved my soul,  
You broke my bonds  
that drowned me, Lord.  
You fished me out  
from the pool of sins,  
and raised me up  
that I could live.

So I was freed  
when I chose Your Grace  
to abound in me,  
when You took my place.

And I want to Love,  
I want to serve,  
because of the Cross,  
because of Your Grace!

I want to serve You,  
not because of guilt,  
not because it's a chore,  
or a quota I must fill.

Not as a deposit  
on blessings from You,  
but because I want to, Lord,  
to love You!

My peace and joy  
comes not from what I do,  
but from the love  
that comes from You!

~Izabela Bednara 5 April 2022

**Closing Verse:** *“Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. <sup>46</sup> For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. <sup>47</sup> But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?” John 5:45-47*

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **You Shall Not Cross Over There**

Then Moses went up  
From the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo  
To the top of Pisgah  
Which is across from Jericho

And the Lord showed him  
All the land of Gilead as far as Dan, so far north he could see  
All Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh  
All the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea

The South, and the plain  
Of the Valley of Jericho  
The city of palm trees  
As far as Zoar, the Lord to him did show

Then the Lord said to him  
“This is the land of which I swore  
To give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying  
‘I will give it to your descendants –  
-----a land of blessing and so much more

I have caused you to see it with your eyes  
But you shall not cross over there, so to you I apprise

So Moses the servant of the Lord  
Died there to await his reward  
In the land of Moab  
According to the word of the Lord

And He buried him in a valley  
In the land of Moab, hiding his body away  
There opposite Beth Peor  
But no one knows his grave to this day

Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died  
So his days were finished  
His eyes were not dim  
Nor his natural vigor diminished

And the children of Israel  
Wept for Moses until those days were expended  
In the plains of Moab thirty days  
So the days of weeping and mourning for Moses ended

Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom  
For Moses had laid his hands on him when the situation demanded  
So the children of Israel heeded him  
And did as the LORD had Moses commanded

But since then there has not arisen  
A prophet like Moses in Israel  
Whom the LORD knew face to face  
In all the signs, and in all the wonders as well

Which the Lord sent him to do  
In the land of Egypt, by the Lord's hand  
Before Pharaoh, before all his servants  
And in all his land

And by all that mighty power  
And all the great terror as well  
Which Moses performed  
In the sight of all Israel

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

And Lord God, thank you for this wonderful book  
Deuteronomy! What a marvel to have studied it  
Into every detail possible we took a look  
And to You our thanks and praise we now submit!

Hallelujah to Christ our Lord!  
Hallelujah for Deuteronomy, a marvelous part of Your superior word!

Hallelujah and Amen!  
Indeed, Hallelujah and Amen...