

EVANGELICAL BIBLE COLLEGE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Life of Moses – Volume 6

**(TO ADVANCE – WE MUST
LEARN FROM HISTORY)**

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INTRODUCTION

We are in Deuteronomy on the plains of Moab with the people ready to cross the river Jordan, and the children of Israel are there for a considerable time. As we have seen, the events of the last chapters of Numbers (from chapter 22 onwards) all occur during this time of encampment, and the teaching of this book is all given through this period. The teaching of Deuteronomy also reflects the content of what Moses had been teaching through the wilderness years, and so this book acts as a summary of all the principles that he wants recorded as a second reading of the Mosaic Law.

This book is in effect Moses "last will and testament". It is compiled just before he is going to die and in it he indicates the importance of the Word of God for the people from this point onwards. In this book Moses summarizes all that matters to him in his relationship with the Lord, and what he wants for them as they walk forward with the Lord.

I want to introduce this book by looking at the end of it first, to see the last speech Moses gives. Turn and look at Deuteronomy 32:1. Notice Moses addresses the angels and then the earth. He reminds us of the reality of the Angelic Conflict; that angels are spectators in the affairs of men. They love it when people are growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and they applaud our spiritual successes. The fallen angels however try to thwart the believer's walk.

The world is a stage as Shakespeare put it. We are on the stage being observed and the seats are in the heavens, and there are many players trying to put us off the grand plan and distract us onto Satan's strategies. Hebrews 12:1-3. These principles about our brief time upon the earth are appropriately the first of many doctrines covered in this book. We will have more doctrines referred to in each chapter here than most other books of the Bible. Moses is seriously summing up all he has taught the people through the years.

Moses is speaking to all the people here. It is clear that this is a written down address, and is carefully given, and he likely read from a manuscript all these words, as it is a long and full message. It is carefully prepared and would have been carefully delivered, for he reminds his audience and himself, that he is being overheard by the angels. He speaks these words and then lays up this book as a permanent record of his warning to all the people for all time. Everything that happens on earth has an eternal dimension and Moses' desire in this book is to underline this fact and encourage all his hearers to really attend to the Lord's will and do it, for the stakes are high and the enemy is active.

This stage, upon which we live, is no place for arrogance and ignorance, but for careful and prayerful advancing in the filling of the Holy Spirit. Hebrews 11:32-12:3, James 4:6-10, 1 Peter 5:5-11. We are being watched and every significant action has eternal consequences. We are in the angelic conflict. There are demonic forces against us, but if we walk close to the Lord we need not fear them. 1 John 4:4.

We must realise that we are involved in very real warfare from the beginning of our Christian life or we will quickly become casualties. Young believers need to know early the extent of Satan's hatred of us and learn the vital truth about walking in the Holy Spirit, fully armed at all times, and this is a book that assists us greatly to understand this. Ephesians 6:10-14.

Moses reminds his people and ourselves that reality is a lot bigger than just what we see in front of us; there is a larger sphere of activity that we are walking in the midst of and we are to walk carefully. That area of operations is the "Angelic Conflict" and if we fail to realise the malice of the demonic enemy we will become casualties. We are also to walk without fear, for we walk with the Lord and the Holy Spirit is within us! "Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world". 1 John 4:4.

The context for our spiritual service upon the earth is actually eternity, for it is then that we receive rewards for what is done in time. It is not important what is said about us here on earth, by other fallen men, but it is vital what the Lord says about us in eternity. It is important that you are greeted with the words of the Lord, "Well done good and faithful servant". Matthew 25:21-30.

As a believer you need to understand, that everything you do is an act of war as far as Satan is concerned. Satan hates you, because you are going to heaven and he is going to the Lake of Fire. Revelation 20:10ff. He knows his time is short to do mischief, and he will take any opportunity to give you hell on earth, because he knows he cannot give you any grief after you leave the earth. We must have on the armour that the Lord God has provided for us, or we can get wounded easily in this world.

Moses asks for the people to open their ears and listen to all that he will say to them. These words remind us, that even though people are listening they need to really concentrate on the message to get full benefit from it. Note he says, "Hear you people and obey". It is very strong. What he is telling them is very important and demands their total commitment to the truth. They are to hear and obey, and in this place only will they find what the Lord is able to give them.

We must be prepared to be under the discipline of the Holy Spirit and actually work out in life all we hear in the Word. Faith without application is a nonsense! Bible truth believed, but not applied is not genuinely believed! James 2:14-26, Matthew 7:13-27. Moses calls, as the Lord and James will later also do, for all who are believers, to be doers of the Word also.

BIBLE STUDY IS AT THE HEART OF A GROWING AND POWERFUL CHURCH

In Deuteronomy 32 verse 2 there are the metaphorical examples of three types of Bible study; the morning dew, which is a morning devotion, the small rain, which is individual or small group Bible study, and then the powerful rain, which is systematic concentrated study/teaching.

It is important to start the day with prayer and devotion. You wet your lips on God's Word at the start of the day. The small rain is the private study of half an hour to an hour which is enough to get things moving each day, but not enough for sustained life fruit production, nor will it be enough to keep you safe in the midst of serious battle. The image of the heavy shower is the image of the depth of Biblical study required to really achieve victory in the Angelic Conflict.

It is a systematic teaching session of God's Word where you get down to depth and apply the principles into the fabric of each day. You need all three forms of Biblical study and application; we cannot survive on devotional studies alone. It is this insight of Moses that the modern church needs to hear and be challenged by. Don't worry about making lessons "practical", for all doctrinal bible study will be practically applied into life within days by the Holy Spirit!

This means that if you are a Bible teacher in the church, you should be teaching deep things of the Word four to five times a week. Systematic Bible study will always be practical because the Holy Spirit will take it and apply it into the heart and life of each believer present in the days following. Psychologists tell us that if we want people to learn from us, then it is essential that we teach the truth we desire them to grasp, at least every alternate day.

The way the human memory curve operates, unless we hear things often, we forget them, and unless they are applied into the fabric of our daily life, they will certainly be forgotten. John 14:16-26, 15:26-27, 16:7-15, James 1:16-27. To fail to be a "doer" of the Word is to be a Pharisee and a hypocrite! This is not a category to desire to enter into! Matthew 23:13-33.

Another reason for teaching the Word of God is given in Deuteronomy 32, verses 3-4; it is to uphold God's name. His work is perfect, all His ways are just, and unless we know the Lord's Word we cannot understand these things to the level we need to, in order to deal with satanic deception. The mental stability of every believer is rooted and grounded in a solid understanding of the glory of the character of God.

When you start teaching God's Word to a new believer you would be advised to start off with the doctrines of the Character of God and Confession of Sin. These are your guide wires and strengtheners for daily battles in this world. If you have got these two doctrines clear you can walk with confidence in the Lord's presence. Moses reminds us that God is perfect, stable, righteous; He is a rock to those who rest upon His perfection. He will urge his people, and ourselves, to rest upon that stability.

EMOTIONS RATHER THAN FAITH

In Deuteronomy 32, verses 5-7, we have Moses putting his finger on the problems of the children of Israel, and upon the thing that today also debilitates the children of God. The people who came out of the Exodus failed and only two of that generation are still alive at the point in time when Moses gives this message. They were wicked, they were perverse, they rejected God's path for them, and got away from fellowship with their Saviour-God.

They lacked common sense in matters of faith. Having been delivered by the Lord from Egypt, they failed to believe that God could keep them through the wilderness years and they rebelled again and again. In Numbers we counted fourteen points of rebellion against the clear plan and purpose of God! Having said all these negative things about the Exodus Generation, they did teach their children and encouraged them to hear the words of Moses, and they did.

If you lack wisdom in decision making, and rebel against the one who has the plan that will keep you safe, it is because you either lack knowledge of the truth (doctrine), or application-faith in it. These people were foolish, but mostly they recovered and taught their children. Moses fears a repeat performance of disobedience, and all pastors do well to warn strongly against such things. Moses is strongly criticising the Exodus generation because of their lack of faith in and application of Bible doctrine.

He tells their children bluntly, "Your parents did not do what God wanted". They were foolish, and they lacked faith in the truth and instead trusted in lies. At Kadesh – Barnea they left the truth of God's revelation and they trusted in their emotions. Moses great concern in his speech on the plains of Moab is that this second generation will be as foolish as their fathers were.

Of the twelve spies that went into the land only Joshua and Caleb said that they were confident in the Lord, and were with God, and would follow His plan, whilst the others became emotional cowards. Joshua and Caleb had Bible doctrine in their hearts and minds and believed it, whereas the others did not. They had faith through their trust in the Word of God, whereas the others had fear and emotionalism. Numbers 13.

The New Testament writer to the Hebrew believers reminds us that they did not, "mix the words of God with faith". Hebrews 13:14 – 4:2. Moses was like the apostle Paul, one of the greatest Bible teachers that ever lived, and yet he had people who did not apply the Bible doctrine he taught them into their lives. Moses taught these people for forty years but they ignored most of what they were told. Deuteronomy is the last words of Moses to try to get this second generation to follow God, not their disobedient parents.

As a minister you are going to get discouraged at times that the people are not hearing the Word of God, and are certainly not obeying it. Be encouraged as you look at Moses here, and know for sure that you are not wasting your time. Just follow Moses example and keep teaching the truth, and let the Holy Spirit do His job upon the Word, and so, you encourage, you exhort, teach, and instruct. Ministers certainly need to be patient and long suffering. 1 Timothy 4:11, 6:2, 2 Timothy 2:24, 4:2, James 1:21.

KNOW THAT GOD CARES FOR YOU

In Deuteronomy 32, verses 11-12, the eagle's care and training of its young is compared to God's care. The eagles make their nests with the thorns of the desert on the top of great cliffs. Then they pluck their own breast feathers and cover over the thorns so that the thorns do not hurt the young chicks. However when the chicks are ready to fly the parents "stir up their nest", allowing the thorns to come through and make the chicks leave the nest and fly.

This is the way that God deals with His people. The Lord will train you and then move you out into service. He is always there carrying you along and caring for you but He wants you to fly.

Isaiah 40:28-31. *"28. Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.
29. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.
30. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:
31. But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."*

Keep remembering the promises of God. Nothing can separate you from His love. Romans 8:28. No testing situation will ever occur that He has not already prepared a way right through it. 1 Corinthians 10:13. Keep remembering, that greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. 1 John 4:4. Moses message is, grow in the Lord and walk through every open door of service and advance in God's mighty power into the work He has set before you. 2 Peter 3:17-18.

When the Lord stirs the nest up, you will need to fly. Make sure however that it is the Lord guiding you and not some immature chicks in the nest alongside you. Be guided by the Word of the Lord. Our call is to walk in the filling of the Holy Spirit, in the light of God's Word. Ephesians 5:18, 6:10-18.

THE RESPONSE OF ISRAEL

Moses seriously criticizes the people for their materialism. Some of the children of Israel got fat and lazy and did not always consider the things of God with the respect that they should. Many people will handle the rough things of life and trust the Lord in the tough times, but when they get prosperous their focus goes from the eternal to the external. They become materialistic and their focus is upon toys and pleasure, rather than the path of God for them. Moses says that some of the people are too wealthy and they have clung to their wealth, rather than clinging to the Lord.

They left Egypt laden down with gold, and while much had been given to the tabernacle, much more had apparently been kept for themselves. Exodus 12:35-36. They had grown complacent in their prosperity, and needed to refocus upon the battles ahead and not be thinking of pleasant retirement in the land of plenty, for they had to fight to gain it and fight to maintain it! They needed to be "lean, mean fighting machines", not "fat cats". We live in a time when the so called "prosperity gospel" is preached by many, yet God's Word is against the acquisition of wealth for self centred pleasure. If we have great wealth we have it to be used up for the Lord's work. Let us be challenged by Moses words here.

The Exodus generation went into apostasy, and sadly this second one will not fully follow through, believe Moses words, and seize all the land the Lord gave them. This chapter introduces a subject we met first in Leviticus 26; the terrible discipline of the Lord upon His people when they do not obey His Word. There is a repeated list beginning in Deuteronomy 32 of the terrible catalogue of things that would happen to Israel if they fail to obey the Lord and honour His gift of the land to them.

These words are given fifteen hundred years before the Cross, and we will read details here of exactly what is going to happen to Israel at the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC and 70 AD. These people will learn that to ignore and insult the one who has given you everything, means you lose everything. They experience in their history, "the sword without and the terror within". Here we will read of history in advance; of all the pogroms and the holocaust itself.

After the fall of Israel, Moses warns them that they will be scattered throughout the World [Deuteronomy 32:16]. There were more Jews in New York and the Eastern USA than there were in Israel until recently. There are Jews in every corner of the earth. They rejected the plan of God, and so they were rejected for a time as a people; all because they rejected Bible doctrine.

If God did this to Israel because of their rejection of the Lord what will He do to the Church if we fail to follow the truth? Paul really turns up the pressure on all believers in Romans 11. Moses words here will find their echo in Romans 11 and the message is simple; if we fail to apply the Word of God then we will suffer the discipline of the Lord. Hebrews 12:4-12.

The Lord will judge His people now, just as He did in Moses day. Deuteronomy 32:36-39. You are not dealing with some limited deity who can't see your thoughts and actions; you are dealing with Almighty God. Our God is in control and we need to bring our lives into line with His holy demands on us. He knows what is going on. We do not know how long we are going to live here, but we know that we will live forever with Him, and so let us live worthy of our high calling. When you see the death of friends you realise your mortality, and so live each day to glorify the Lord who gave it to you. Blessed is the believer who finds their Creator in the days of their youth that they might use their time wisely. Psalms 90:12.

Moses in verses 45-47 says that Bible doctrine matters; it should be the centre point of our life. What do you lose at death as a believer? You lose nothing in Christ Jesus, but you lose everything if your life is tied up in the details of this world. Paul says, "For me to live is Christ, but to die is gain". Philippians 1:21. This is not the dominant attitude of Christians today, and this is the reason that those Christians are powerless. If it became a choice of being a martyr for the Lord or turning pagan most churches would become pagan overnight. Very few are close enough to the Lord to be prepared to die for Him. Let us heed Moses warnings in this book and draw close to the Word of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 32, Verse 47, is a good motto for us as we enter the book, and an incentive to be a Bible saturated, Holy Spirit controlled Christian. Where are we now in our Christian life? It is very important that we stand with Moses. Let us join him, and enter the realm of a Bible saturated and Holy Spirit empowered life. If we love the Lord, we must love His Holy Word – for it is his loving instruction to us.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK (After Dr J Vernon McGee – Thru The Bible Radio Commentary)

PART 1 The Historical Framework for the Mosaic Law

Chapters 1 – 4 Reviewing the Journey to the Plains of Moab

PART 2 The Mosaic Law – Love and Obedience

Chapters 5 – 7 Repetition and Re-interpretation of the Ten Commandments

Chapters 8 – 11 Egypt and the land of Canaan

- Chapter 8 God's past dealings give assurance of his future dealings.
- Chapter 9 God knew Israel and inspite of their sins remains their God.
- Chapter 10 God sent them into Egypt and has brought them out
- Chapter 11 God has principles for their successful occupancy of the land.

Chapters 12 – 21 Regulations to ensure the land remains their own

- Chapter 12 One place only to worship in the land – no "high places".
- Chapter 13 Warning against false prophets and false gods.
- Chapter 14 Dietary regulations.
- Chapter 15 God's poverty program.
- Chapter 16 The three main feasts that all males are to attend.
- Chapter 17 Various Laws.
- Chapter 18 Tests for the true Prophet of the Lord.
- Chapter 19 Cities of refuge and the extent of the land and legal jurisdiction.
- Chapter 20 Laws regarding Warfare.
- Chapter 21 Laws regarding Murder, Marriage and juvenile delinquents.

Chapters 22 – 26 Rules for domestic and personal relationships

- Chapter 22 Various laws relating to all aspects of life.
- Chapter 23 The world, the flesh and the devil.
- Chapter 24 Divorce
- Chapter 25 Punishment and protection issues.
- Chapter 26 Firstfruits and thanksgiving.

PART 3 Blessing and Curses for obedience or disobedience

Chapters 27-30 The future blessing and judgment of the nation foretold.

PART 4 Moses farewell and death.

Chapters 31 – 34 Moses last will and testament.

NOTES

CHAPTER 1**DEUTERONOMY 1: 1-46**

1:1 These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain over against the Red sea, between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab. 2 (There are eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir unto Kadeshbarnea.) 3 And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spake unto the children of Israel, according unto all that the LORD had given him in commandment unto them; 4 After he had slain Sihon the king of the Amorites, which dwelt in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, which dwelt at Astaroth in Edrei: 5 On this side Jordan, in the land of Moab, began Moses to declare this law, saying, 6 The LORD our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount: 7 Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all the places nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river Euphrates. 8 Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them. 9 And I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone: 10 The LORD your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude. 11 (The LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you, as he hath promised you!) 12 How can I myself alone bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife? 13 Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you. 14 And ye answered me, and said, The thing which thou hast spoken is good for us to do. 15 So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known, and made them heads over you, captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among your tribes. 16 And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. 17 Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it. 18 And I commanded you at that time all the things which ye should do. 19 And when we departed from Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible wilderness, which ye saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites, as the LORD our God commanded us; and we came to Kadeshbarnea. 20 And I said unto you, Ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the LORD our God doth give unto us. 21 Behold, the LORD thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged. 22 And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come. 23 And the saying pleased me well: and I took twelve men of you, one of a tribe: 24 And they turned and went up into the mountain, and came unto the valley of Eshcol, and searched it out. 25 And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought it down unto us, and brought us word again, and said, It is a good land which the LORD our God doth give us. 26 Notwithstanding ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God: 27 And ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the LORD hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. 28 Whither shall we go up? Our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we; the cities are great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there. 29 Then I said unto you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them. 30 The LORD your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes; 31 And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the LORD thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place. 32 Yet in this thing ye did not believe the LORD your God, 33 Who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night, to shew you by what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day. 34 And the LORD heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware, saying, 35 Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers. 36 Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD. 37 Also the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither. 38 But Joshua the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither: encourage him: for he shall cause Israel to inherit it. 39 Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it. 40 But as for you, turn you, and take your journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea. 41 Then ye answered and said unto me, We have sinned against the LORD, we will go up and fight, according to all that the LORD our God commanded us. And when ye had girded on every man his weapons of war, ye were ready to go up into the hill. 42 And the LORD said unto me, Say unto them. Go not up, neither fight; for I am not among you; lest ye be smitten before your enemies. 43 So I spake unto you; and ye would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD, and went presumptuously up into the hill. 44 And the Amorites, which dwelt in that mountain, came out against you, and chased you, as bees do, and destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormah. 45 And ye returned and wept before the LORD; but the LORD would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear unto you. 46 So ye abode in Kadesh many days, according unto the days that ye abode there.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1- 5.

This reads as if this is written by another person, recording, or editing Moses words at a later time. My suspicion is that these words are those of Joshua, as are the words of chapter 34. I suspect that Joshua was with Moses when he went up the mountain that final time and that he followed the Lord's instructions and buried Moses secretly by Beth-peor. We will return to this when we study chapter 34.

The entire book takes its meaning from that last chapter, for Moses death is what drives this entire book. He has been busy with last minute decisions to be made through the last chapters of Numbers and has I believe been frantic in his writing of the content of this book as his final summation of the Law. It may be that one of the reasons Joshua did not lead the punitive expedition against the Midianites, Numbers 31:6, is that Joshua has been fully occupied with preparations for these final speeches and has been Moses editor and secretary through these weeks and months.

The editor introduces the entire book by stating in a formal manner that what will follow will be the words of Moses on the plains of Moab. He states that there was a gathering place where the entire population stood to hear these words. He then refers to five places that cover the entire journey they have taken to get to this place. He mentions Paran, which is referred to in Numbers 10:12, 12:16. He then mentions Tophel and Laban, which are both mysterious, and although some attempts have been made to identify them, they remain problematic. They are obviously places known to Joshua first hand, but unknown to later generations.

These places are the clue that it is indeed Joshua who writes this, for had it been a man from later days he would have picked well known places that his audience could have identified, and that would have helped us! Hazeroth is known, for it was here that Miriam and Aaron fell into rebellion. Numbers 12. The last named place, Dizahub, is also of no help to us at all. Why start with such places, where nothing in Numbers gives us a clue? Because, at the time of writing the people did understand and would have gotten the message.

These were clearly places where the people tested the Lord and rebelled, and where the truth was taught by Moses, and what Joshua is emphasizing here, is that these speeches that follow this introduction are the last teaching sessions of the man who never stopped teaching the truth of God to the rebellious people of Israel.

Why then mention that it takes eleven days to travel from Horeb to Kadesh Barnea? He is introducing the speeches on the plains of Moab, so why go back and give us a geographical fact about any earlier place? I have only a suggestion, certainly no certainty here.

It has taken them much more than eleven days to make this journey back to the Jordan from Kadesh Barnea. It was eleven days of hard marching from Arabia back to Kadesh Barnea (at 10-20 km per day this could mean Horeb is 110-220 kms from Kadesh). It was however many weeks of fighting and hard marching to travel from Kadesh back down to Elat and then up the Arabian route to Moab.

They have got to this place the hard way, and it has been a road travelled with many rebellions and lots of consistent teaching by the great pastor Moses. I suspect it is Joshua's way of underlining the patience and dignity of Moses. He has failed at one point, and he will not enter the land, but he is blessed for his loyalty to these people, and Joshua is trying to get them to see that they owe him a great debt of gratitude for all he has done, and so these last words are really precious. Moses mentors tenacity and dependability in leadership – for he kept his focus on their blessing.

We now have the date and time given. It is the fortieth year since they left Egypt, the first day of the eleventh month. If we go back to get a rough time line of events, the first place we turn back to is Numbers 20:1, where we discover that they were at Kadesh (The Wilderness of Zin) for the second time in the first month of that fortieth year. It is at that point that Miriam dies.

The next time marker is on Numbers 33:39, where we find Aaron dies. They are now close by the Arabah, by Mt Hor, and it is the fifth month when this occurs. They are possibly camped there in mourning for Aaron for thirty days, during which time they are attacked by Arad the Canaanite. Numbers 21.

It is the first day of the eleventh month when Moses begins to give the speeches that are recorded here in Deuteronomy. So the events of the march from Elat to Moab and then the invasion of the East bank of Jordan, subduing the Amonites, and then the cursing of Balaam, and the subsequent punitive expedition against the Midianites all may occur in this period of four to five months. It is possible that the speeches recorded here were given shortly after arriving on the plains, and so occur in the same time frame to the cursing of Balaam in the hills around them.

Verses 6-8.

Moses begins the story at the time point when they were ordered to leave their years of wandering and return to the mission they had been given when they left Egypt; to enter and seize the land of Canaan. Note the boundaries of the land. It was to stretch from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates River, from the land of the Amorites to the Mediterranean Sea. Numbers 34.

The way that the order is given it would seem that the children of Israel lived close to the Mount Horeb for much of their time in Arabia, and that the Arabian places named in Numbers 33 are all places in a radius around the mountain of God. The actual site of the biblical Mt Horeb is not known with certainty. The so called Mt Sinai on the Sinai Peninsula is certainly not that mountain, as it is within the sphere of operations of the Egyptian Army of the time and the people would not have been safe there.

The mountain presently known as "Sinai" was only identified as "Mt Sinai" in the fourth century of our era, and four hundred years before this time Paul makes it clear that he believed the real mountain to be "in Arabia". Galatians 4:25. This indicates that it was believed to be in the land of Midian proper, which the Romans called Arabia, which is now called Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi Authorities have wired off a great mountain (J'Bal Al Mus = Mount of Moses) in their land that may be the one around which the children of Israel lived for these forty years. Their moves were no more than one every twelve to eighteen months, and this would be for pastoral reasons for their flocks and herds, and would be moves of twenty to a hundred miles only to ensure fresh pastures for their animals. Keep remembering that this area was **NOT** desert at this time but fertile, well watered pastoral land.

Verses 9 – 14. Moses now goes back to the beginning of their wanderings, to the first time they arrived at Mt Horeb, the Mount of God. Exodus 18:5. At this time Jethro, Moses Midianite father-in-law arrived at the camp by the great mountain and advised Moses to take the burden off his shoulders of sole judge and arbiter for the people. Exodus 18:13-26. As a result of this advice, and the subsequent consultation with the people, judges and judicial officers were appointed for each of the tribes.

The numbers of the people had grown in their time of slavery from seventy people, Genesis 46:26-27, and were now over thirty thousand. (Remember, this is my estimate, and only that!) Moses blessing is given for their growth here, and his full blessing will be repeated later more formally. He prays that they might be a thousand times bigger than they are before him. This would give us a figure of thirty million. It may be that this will be the final population of Israel in the Millennial Kingdom, for this is a prophetic word of Moses, and I believe it is one that the Lord gave him and so will honour.

The Jewish people have never numbered that many at any time in their history to date. Given the blessing here given of their growth, it would be interesting to know if these speeches were being given while Balaam is in the hills around then trying to curse them, for that would really emphasize the humour of the Lord. Genesis 15:5-6, Numbers 23:10, 24:3-9, Nehemiah 9.

Verses 15 – 18. The authority structure went down to groups of ten men and this remains the minimum number for a synagogue meeting to be conducted.

The judges were instructed in their duty of impartial and righteous judgment. Power, social position, or strength was not to influence judgment; but the judges were to fear the Lord and judge righteously. They were to judge righteously and act honourably, even if the person benefited by it was an enemy. Exodus 23:1-9. If they had any concerns about a case, and the tribal judges were unable to come to a decision, then it was to be referred to the "Supreme Court", which was Moses himself.

Verses 19 – 22. The departure from Mt Horeb to arrive back at Kadesh was by way of "great and terrible wilderness" with the great mountains in the distance to the north, and these are referred to as the mountains of the Amorites. This is further, and I would argue solid proof that Horeb is in Arabia, for the only way the great mountains of the Amorites are seen is when the march is from Arabia through to what we know as the Sinai Peninsula; these mountains cannot be seen from Sinai at all. If Mt Horeb is in the Sinai Peninsula then nothing of the area now known as Jordan (where the bulk of the Amorites lived) is seen at all.

Now the order then given in verse 20 relates to the southern mountains of the land of Canaan, and this is also referred to as the "mountains of the Amorites". Numbers 13:29 does mention that the Amorites were living in mountains of this southern region as one of the Canaanite confederacy, but the "mountains" there are certainly not "great and terrible" nor very imposing.

Moses then records that he was very happy with the suggestion for spies to be sent into the land to bring back accurate reports about it. Numbers 13:1ff. He was happy to do this only because God had ordered it, or rather, given permission for it. Moses makes clear in verse 22 that the people had asked for the spies to be sent and the Lord had agreed to their request. It was not the directive will of the Lord, for that is given in verses 20-21, but it was the permissive will of God.

Verses 23 – 26. The spies brought the fruits of the land and proved that this was indeed a very fruitful place, and the season was the right one for invasion, as the fruit was on the vine and the crops in the fields. All they had to do was advance into and seize the land as the Lord had intended them to. The issue was they refused to obey the Lord. Their disobedience was deliberate and active. They rejected the truth and clung to the ten spies lie. They stood in open rebellion against a command of God. They felt that God was unable to deliver them, even though He had delivered them again and again on their way out of Egypt.

Verses 27 – 28. The place at Kadesh Barnea, that should have been the gateway into the place of blessing, became the place of "meribah", or moaning and complaint against the Lord. Numbers 14:1ff, Hebrews 3:7 – 4:8. This rebellion became a watch word for Israel through all their history, a place that reminded them that their God could deliver, and that to doubt that fact was to enter into judgment and divine discipline.

The two ways for the believer to live was graphically portrayed by the choice here; they could walk in faith through the mountain road, or they could walk the rolling plains of judgment. Matthew 7:13-14, James 1:5-8, 12-15. God had brought

them out of Egypt and destroyed the best of the Egyptian Army to deliver them its weapons, and yet they now feared a few giants and the Amorites in their hill forts. They needed to walk forward in faith, but they shrank back in fear.

Verses 29 – 32. Moses puts his finger on the problem of the people; they lacked faith in the Lord's power, person, and plan. Remember the reality of the Character of God and the Plan of God, or you end up in failure, as these people had done again and again. This is at the heart of the power of every believer's walk in every generation. If we love the Lord we trust Him, because we know His heart for us, but if we do not know Him then we will not trust Him! The power and obedience of our walk is all about the power and passion of our knowledge of, trust in, and love towards our Lord. Moses message to these people was clear; the same God who led you out in power from the Egyptian Army will deliver you here!

God's power and plan has not changed for them, and He will lead them into battle and deliver the enemy to them through the battle, but they must fight the battle before them in His strength, and trust in Him, in the midst of it. This remains our challenge today and every day of our walk through this world. God carries us as a man carries his young son, with tender loving care and protection. The challenge to us remains; will we believe in the Lord our God? Nehemiah 9:12-23, Psalms 78:7-41, 43-51, 105:37-45, 106:24-25, Isaiah 40:11-41, 46:8-13.

Verses 33 – 36. The pillar of cloud and fire went before them every step of the way, and they had this visual reminder every day that the Lord was with them, and yet they still feared defeat. Exodus 13:20-21, Numbers 10:33ff.

As we move forward in our daily life we have the indwelling Holy Spirit as the "earnest" (or down payment of our inheritance) to give evidence within to the ground of our faith. Let us advance, as they were meant to, in fellowship with the Lord our God. God's Word is the lamp to our feet and the light to our path today, but like all lights, it must be switched on and applied into our daily life. Psalms 119:105, Proverbs 6:23.

God heard these people and their moaning made Him very angry. God is not pleased with us when we moan, for to do so is to insult His love, His plan and His provision. Isaiah 30:18. "And therefore will the Lord wait, that he might be gracious to you, and he will be exulted that he might have mercy upon you. For the Lord is a God of judgment. Blessed are all they that wait upon Him." "The just shall live by faith." Habakkuk 2:4.

The Lord and His Plan are always perfect and so to doubt God's provision is the greatest insult man can give His creator, Lord and Saviour. Those who expressed and clung to their doubts, and persisted in their disbelief, were to die in the time of wandering around Mount Horeb. Numbers 14:26-38, Hebrews 3:7 – 4:7.

Verses 37 – 40. Moses now mentions his own judgment because of the anger of the Lord upon the people. Now Moses leaves out the full reasons here, but he does still tell the truth. It was what he felt to be the "righteous anger" that he felt towards the people that led to his own sin that then led to his judgment. The people certainly pushed him over the edge, but he is held responsible and culpable for this outburst. Numbers 20:1-13.

Now Moses was judged because anger expressed in any situation other than threat to life, is nearly always sinful and evil. In Moses case at Meribah he forgot his ambassadorship and acted out of personal anger. He stood before the people representing the Lord and had no business expressing his personal feelings, for he had a job to do and it had to be done without personal emotion. Emotions are no guide to spiritual truth and are always to be either enjoyed or eliminated.

The basic message of scripture regarding emotion is that unless it can be enjoyed safely with others it is probably wrong and hurtful, and to be eliminated. Emotion is no sure guide to anything except the emotion. Moses took upon himself the insults of the people, when they were actually directed to the Lord, and so he didn't get angry or upset when he saw things this way. Like Moses, we are to audit and control our emotional responses to things, for we are ambassadors of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 5:20.

We are not to take any insults personally, but act in calm focus upon the Lord's Will in each situation we find ourselves. Our role is to represent the Lord Jesus Christ to all we meet and anything that gets in the way of that is to be dealt with. Personal emotional responses to situations are in the category of the things to be seen, labelled and mostly eliminated.

The majority of the adult generation of the Exodus were emotional cripples, and the Lord judges them for staying in that paralysed state. They lived in their fears and anxieties, and never rested in the faith they could have had in the Lord through the early months of the Exodus. God gave them many instances of deliverance, yet they failed to fully appreciate them or learn of the one who demonstrated His power again and again. There are opportunities we receive in this life and we cannot blame the Lord if we are disciplined when we waste too much time.

Fourteen times they rebelled, and fourteen times God showed grace to them, and yet they feared the Lord would kill their children in the wilderness. Numbers 14:3, 31. They had no need to fear that the Lord would kill them or their children, for He had made it clear that His purpose was to bring them through to the Promised Land to bless them. Sadly, once they had fully and finally rejected the Lord's path of blessing for them, there was no option left but for the Lord to kill them all, and so they all died, except for Joshua and Caleb. They all died because that is what they chose. They would not walk in faith and choose life, so they received death in the wilderness.

This generation found it hard to accept the promises of God from the beginning and they were not moved by the miraculous signs and wonders that the Lord did to deliver them. Exodus 6:1-9. Once people are determined to live in their emotional patterns rather than follow the logic of faith, there are no miracles that will convince them. Sadly the generation that saw the Lord's miracles fell into this category also. Matthew 10:11-31, 11:20-26, Luke 10:12-16, 16:19-31.

We have today a "signs and wonders movement" that preaches that if people will only see the power of God then they will bow their knees before Him. The verses just listed above make it clear that this belief is false. It is the Cross that must move men to bow their knee, and the truth of the resurrection that must lead them to faith, not any so called "power confrontation" with a demon. 1 Corinthians 1:22-31, 15:42-44, 2 Corinthians 13:3-8, Hebrews 11:34. The fate of the Exodus generation is a strong warning to all generations, that the Lord's challenge to us is to live by faith, not stumble by emotion.

Verses 41 – 46. These people suddenly get the message, but they still believe in their own power, they do not rest in God's path and power. They tried to win the land by their own strength and they are beaten by the Canaanites, for the Lord is not with them. Numbers 14:39-45. Having been beaten up and with many killed, they returned to their camp and wept there in their tents.

Moses reminds them that the Lord did not hear their prayers for vengeance upon the Amorites, nor deliver their enemies to them, for they were not seeking God's will but their own. Their emotions were still driving them, not any desire to honour and obey the Lord their God.

God is not interested in our emotions; He is interested in our obedience. Emotion is given to us to enjoy and appreciate things, but it is empty of spiritual significance and does not assist the necessary thing that is obedience! Unless we fully appreciate this truth we will have the same frustrations and troubles that the Exodus Generation had, and share their total failure.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. It is not emotionalism that we need to foster in our churches, but holiness before the Lord, faith in His plan and purposes for us, and obedience to His holy Word. Let us be sure to keep emotion in its right place and walk in faith upon the secure foundation of the promises of the Word of God.
2. To deal with present fear we need to rest in past certainties about the person and plan of God. Moses reminds the people of the past to encourage their present faith and secure their spiritual and national future blessing. This is the pattern for good biblical preaching; it draws upon God's actions in the past to encourage the faith-rest life in the present, and so position the believer for future blessing.
3. The place of "Meribah" remains a place of temptation to us today. We can all be tempted to moan and complain about our lot, and how hard our life is. In nearly all situations our moaning is not about being killed, but just a temporal loss of some sort! We ought to be ashamed of ourselves as they were! Hebrews 12:4. We are people who love to moan all too often, and such moaning is sinful, for the Lord gives us blessing, and in His plan we have a future and a confidence that should not be shaken. Hebrews 6:11-20, 11:1. Let us not moan, but rather put on the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Isaiah 60:3.
4. Our Ambassadorship is at the heart of our present earthly ministry. We are to take all things "as unto the Lord" and remember at all times that we represent the Lord God of all. We are never to take any insult to ministry personally, but lay all things before the Lord and do only what the Lord orders.
5. Signs and Wonders are given when they are needed as a sovereign prerogative of the Lord himself. They will neither compel faith, nor silence the enemies of the Lord, but simply provide evidence of the Lord's dealings with men. Neither the Exodus Generation, nor the Egyptians they faced were transformed by miracles, and few today are lastingly changed by miracles they witness.

Remember miracles stand as "evidence for the prosecution" in most situations. By this I mean, they are there as evidence before the Lord's throne so that the unbelievers are without excuse before the Lord for their unbelief. Do not follow after the signs and wonders movement, for they are on a foolish side track. If God needs a miracle He will produce one, we do not need to ask for it. If the Lord sends many miracles, as He did in Egypt, they may still not change their hearts.

There is no changing those determined to oppose Him and reject His claims upon their lives. Let us advance in faith in His Word and leave the miraculous in the Lord's hands. If miracles are needed for our part in the great plan of God, then they will follow! Relax and do the work you are called to do and if there are "signs following" rejoice, but do not be distracted by them. Feed the sheep and convict the goats that they are indeed goats!

CHAPTER 2**INTRODUCTION**

Moses continues the story of their advance into the land from the first and their more recent second failure at Kadesh Barnea. Now he is speaking to the children of the people who began the journey. All who are under fifty will have no memories, or very few, of the early days of their journey, but they have all been there for this last year, and it is the last year that is the main subject of this chapter.

It is vital that we have a reflective account of the journey our spiritual ancestors took, lest we make their errors through our ignorance of their weaknesses, which we will have inherited! Moses will apply the pressure to this new generation in order that they might not fall as their fathers and mothers fell. We must reflect upon our own and our parents past in order that we might be strong in the Lord, not weak in our earthly parentage. We must reflect upon and rejoice in the providence of God, and be warned and guard ourselves from the weaknesses of our too human flesh.

Moses will deliberately emphasize certain aspects of the journey and let us identify the differences to the story as he has already recorded it in Exodus and Numbers. What we will note is that the forty years of wilderness wandering is skipped over with no comment at all. The reason is an interesting one; for they were wandering there to die, and until the last member of the rebellious generation that stood against God at Kadesh that first time was dead, then the story would not advance. They were "on the shelf" spiritually through this time, and the new generation had to wait until the last rebel died. They learned a great deal each and every day, but were "on the shelf" and the movement forward began as the last ones died.

As we will see as we advance into this chapter and the next, there are many lessons for us today here. At times the Lord has to put us "on the shelf" until we wait out the consequences of our stupid decision making, and only then are we able to re-enter the main stream of the plan of God for our life. Let us read these chapters with reflective thought and godly fear. Hebrews 4:1-2, 12:1-3.

DEUTERONOMY 2:1-37

2:1 Then we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea, as the LORD spake unto me: and we compassed mount Seir many days. **2** And the LORD spake unto me, saying, **3** Ye have compassed this mountain long enough: turn you northward. **4** And command thou the people, saying, Ye are to pass through the coast of your brethren the children of Esau, which dwell in Seir; and they shall be afraid of you: take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore: **5** Meddle not with them; for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as a foot breadth; because I have given mount Seir unto Esau for a possession. **6** Ye shall buy meat of them for money, that ye may eat; and ye shall also buy water of them for money, that ye may drink. **7** For the LORD thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the LORD thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing. **8** And when we passed by from our brethren the children of Esau, which dwelt in Seir, through the way of the plain from Elath, and from Eziongaber, we turned and passed by the way of the wilderness of Moab. **9** And the LORD said unto me, Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle: for I will not give thee of their land for a possession; because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession. **10** The Emims dwelt therein in times past, a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakims; **11** Which also were accounted giants, as the Anakims; but the Moabites called them Emims. **12** The Horims also dwelt in Seir beforetime; but the children of Esau succeeded them, when they had destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead; as Israel did unto the land of his possession, which the LORD gave unto them. **13** Now rise up, said I, and get you over the brook Zered. And we went over the brook Zered. **14** And the space in which we came from Kadeshbarnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, was thirty and eight years; until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host, as the LORD sware unto them. **15** For indeed the hand of the LORD was against them, to destroy them from among the host, until they were consumed. **16** So it came to pass, when all the men of war were consumed and dead from among the people, **17** That the LORD spake unto me, saying, **18** Thou art to pass over through Ar, the coast of Moab, this day: **19** And when thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon, distress them not, nor meddle with them: for I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon any possession; because I have given it unto the children of Lot for a possession. **20** (That also was accounted a land of giants: giants dwelt therein in old time; and the Ammonites call them Zamzummins; **21** A people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakims; but the LORD destroyed them before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead: **22** As he did to the children of Esau, which dwelt in Seir, when he destroyed the Horims from before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead even unto this day: **23** And the Avims which dwelt in Hazerim, even unto Azzah, the Capthorims, which came forth out of Capthor, destroyed them, and dwelt in their stead.) **24** Rise ye up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon: behold, I have given into thine hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land: begin to possess it, and contend with him in battle. **25** This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee. **26** And I sent messengers out of the wilderness of Kedemoth unto Sihon king of Heshbon with words of peace, saying, **27** Let me pass through thy land: I will go along by the high way, I will neither turn unto the right hand nor to the left. **28** Thou shalt sell me meat for money, that I may eat; and give me water for money, that I

may drink: only I will pass through on my feet; 29 (As the children of Esau which dwell in Seir, and the Moabites which dwell in Ar, did unto me;) until I shall pass over Jordan into the land which the LORD our God giveth us. 30 But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him: for the LORD thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as appeareth this day. 31 And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have begun to give Sihon and his land before thee: begin to possess, that thou mayest inherit his land. 32 Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his people, to fight at Jahaz. 33 And the LORD our God delivered him before us; and we smote him, and his sons, and all his people. 34 And we took all his cities at that time, and utterly destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones, of every city, we left none to remain: 35 Only the cattle we took for a prey unto ourselves, and the spoil of the cities which we took. 36 From Aroer, which is by the brink of the river of Arnon, and from the city that is by the river, even unto Gilead, there was not one city too strong for us: the LORD our God delivered all unto us: 37 Only unto the land of the children of Ammon thou camest not, nor unto any place of the river Jabbok, nor unto the cities in the mountains, nor unto whatsoever the LORD our God forbad us.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 6. The people moved away from Kadesh Barnea that first time only after they had waited there for some weeks. They waited there until they had learned all that they had to learn before leaving on their long wanderings. God kept them in this place of danger after their abortive attempted invasion of the land just to underline the fact that He could protect them there.

They were in danger of a follow up attack by the Canaanites who had beaten them and driven them back, yet God held them there until they learned He could protect them where they were supposed to be, but would allow them to be beaten when they were out of His will. This is our message today; the Lord keeps us safe in the path of His will, but disciplines us when we wander away. Matthew 7:13-14, Romans 8:28, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 12:5-13.

At that place they were taught about the offerings that would be required once they indeed received the land, and they endured the shock and horror of the rebellion of Korah and its aftermath. Numbers 15-16. The people even moaned and groaned about the death of the rebels. Numbers 16:41-50. All of this is glossed over, and not even commented upon by Moses in this speech, for the rebellion and its ring leaders were all dead quickly and the rest moved forward with Moses and Aaron. Moses will highlight only the things that apply to their advance.

Having learned from the mistakes of those people who rebelled, their lives are now an irrelevancy to the survivors as they face the land. Rebellion against God's plan makes the now dead rebels an irrelevancy! Let us take this message on board strongly today, for failure to advance in faith makes our lives irrelevant to the plan of God!

God's command was to pass around the land of Edom and into Arabia without interfering with the Edomites, (or Moabites) at any time. This command applied going out the first time, coming back from Arabia, and then when they went back past them again to enter the land opposite Jericho.

They spent forty years amongst the Midianites and Moses doesn't even mention this time in his summary, except as a side reference in verse seven. It is as if he joins the two Kadesh Barnea times and then moves directly from one to the other ignoring the forty years between them. He reminds the people that the Lord gave them no rights over the Edomites or the Moabites, and that if they sought anything from either group, then it was to be paid for as a business transaction. No warfare was to be entered into, whatever the provocation given by these people.

Re-read these verses and notice again that we have the forty silent years in here, but a quick reading would give the impression that they were in Kadesh only once and there was no gap at all between the events described, yet forty years have passed. We have moved from the events of Numbers 14-15 directly to those of Numbers 20-21. Just as Numbers 20:1 sees the children of Israel, "arrive again in Kadesh", and the story begins from there, Moses moves on from there in the next verses here in Deuteronomy.

As I reflect upon these verses before us I can only think that they are further evidence that they are the words of a very old man. These are the words of an old man who sees only what he needs to see in the past, and speaks of only the things that matter to him as he looks back. Moses is focused upon the learning issues and doctrinal principles only, and if an event or time (even a period of forty years!) does not add to his story he leaves it out.

Verses 7 – 12. Moses now spends time speaking of people who the Edomites and Moabites have displaced, and these are people we have absolutely no interest in at all. These people left the pages of history. Why does he spend a sentence on these past people and not a word on the forty years of wandering? It can only be two things. The first is, there is nothing to learn about, or from, the wandering years, for they were years "on the shelf", so he moves straight on. The second is that in both Edom and Moab's case they displaced earlier people who were great in their day, but lost tenure of the land to God's choice as their replacement. Israel is being given the land to replace the Canaanites, and the message is that they also will be replaced like all the other people groups if they walk away from God's path for them.

Verses 13 – 16. Now Moses makes a reference to the thirty eight years that separated the first time they were in Kadesh and the time they crossed the brook Zered. Now consult your Bible maps at the back of your Bible and notice where the brook Zered is. It is located entering the Dead Sea at the south eastern end of it. It flows from the Jordanian hill country through the hills that separated southern Moab from northern Edom and it formed their boundary line. In this

day it was a river, but today it is a brook, and may be dry in parts for much of the year. In this day of regular rains and greater fertility it was a significant boundary line. Where did the Israelites cross the river? We do not know exactly where they crossed the river, but the instruction is to “cross over” it.

On a modern map the likely crossing place is around the train station of Hasa in modern Jordan. Now pause here and also look at the suggested maps of the Exodus route march in your Bible maps, for most show the route march going up the brook Zered, from the Dead Sea, between the two nations of Edom and Moab, and yet the Israelites were told to march around both nations. Moses does not say march “up the river bank”, but cross over the river. To march up this river was to be in either one country or the other, and to be at war with them. The only place they could “cross over” this brook/river was in modern Jordan, well to the east of both countries areas of influence, and in the land of the Midianites, which stretched from there right into the area now known as Saudi Arabia.

From Ezion Geber (Elat), Numbers 21:4, they probably headed north-east up the line taken by the modern railway, skirting both Edom and Moab. The river Zered was the marker for them that they were leaving the eastern borders of the lands of Edom, and crossing into the next area of influence of the Moabites, with their land on their left as they pushed up through the Midianite border lands to the River Arnon, down which they marched to attack the Amorites.

The river Zered is not significant in the Numbers account, so once again we are confronted with the issue as to why Moses notes it specifically and not just the Arnon, where the battles apparently began against the Amorites and the invasion proper starts. In Numbers 21:12-15, we have a reference to the “Book of the Wars of the Lord”. This is a tantalizing reference to a now lost book that apparently recorded many battles fought through this last march up the eastern boundaries of Edom and Moab, and maybe others during the full forty years against the Midianites and others.

The later hatred of the Midianites for the Israelites, and God's order then to destroy the local Midianite tribes may relate to the legacy of the battles recorded in this lost book, that Moses does not even mention here in Deuteronomy. Numbers 25:1-18, 31:1-18. A lot has happened through the thirty eight years until they cross the brook Zered and much more occurs as they keep heading north to finally invade the land of promise.

The significance of the brook Zered is likely tied to two facts. Firstly it was the marker between Edom and Moab, and crossing it was a milestone for the Israelites. It identifies the fact that the children of Israel have always, until this day, stayed to the south of it in the land of Midian for all their previous wanderings. This day they cross over and head north with purpose. They turn away from their old home for forty years in the pastoral lands of Jordan-Arabia and head into battle for the land of promise.

The second significance of the brook Zered was that by the day they crossed that river every warrior who had rebelled against the Lord at Kadesh that first time was now dead. The last man died before they crossed that river and he was buried on the Edomite side of the river, likely at Hasa. Numbers 14:26-35. It marked the end of their official time of judgment. Their days on the shelf were over. They were now marching on the road back to their destiny; they were no longer marking time.

Verses 17 – 23. They were to march up the eastern borderlands of Moab, not interfering with the Moabites, and if they required anything they were to buy it from them. The Moabites would later join with the Midianites and hire Balaam to curse them, Numbers 22-25, but they were to be treated with courtesy as they were descendents of Lot. They would come around about the Arnon River to the land of the Ammonites with their capital to the north east at Rabbath-Ammon (modern Amman). They were not to interfere with these descendents of Lot either, for the land there was given to them, not to Israel.

The Lord is making it clear to them that He gives the lands of the earth to the various people groups, and they have tenure only at His pleasure. Israel is to seize no more than the Lord gives. The writer here also records the many people groups who have been displaced by the Ammonites and Moabites, noting that they were once great and mighty, but all have fallen, for all failed to hold the land in righteousness.

The Lord's point through Moses is clear; unless Israel holds to God's standards they will not hold onto the land either! The message to us is also clear; unless we live in holiness before the Lord we will not enjoy the blessings of the land in which He has placed us! Our earthly blessing and our spiritual success depends upon walking in holiness before the Lord.

Verses 24 – 27. The instruction regarding Sihon of the Amorites was clear from the Lord. Their land was given to the Israelites and they were to attack. Yet note that Moses sent an embassy to him and offered peace to him. The instruction from the Lord could not be clearer; attack this man and his nation without warning and take the land, for they have lost their tenure of it. God's promise was also clear; that the people around would be in fear of them and would shake before their army.

Why did Moses send this embassy offering peace, when the Lord had said declare war? Moses knew that the offer of peace would be rejected, just as he had been told that Pharaoh would reject the request for the Israelites to leave his land. Exodus 3:19-22, 4:21-23, 5:1-10. The offer of peace was made so that Sihon would be forced to reveal his heart and openly reject it, and so prove the justice of the Lord in His judgment. Had Moses just attacked the land of Sihon the question could have been asked about God's justice and the Israelites right to attack them. Sihon's rejection of peace made the truth clear to all, and Sihon stood without excuse before God.

Verses 28 – 29. These verses give us the clue that the Edomites and Moabites did indeed sell goods and trade with the Israelites as they passed their border lands and that the Israelites paid for everything they received from both peoples. Moses invites Sihon to check the facts about the honesty and integrity of the Israelites on their march so far, for he knows that there is no bad word that can be raised against their behaviour on their journey. Others may have abused them, but they have not abused in return. Matthew 5:43-48. The process of “hardening” of the heart is referred to here. By his request Moses puts pressure on Sihon before he invades, and forces the man to show his character and his malice towards Israel, in the same way as Pharaoh was pressured to do the same. Exodus 7:1-5.

Verses 30 – 37. Sihon hardened his heart against the Lord and the Lord’s people and so he entered into battle with the Israelites and was soundly beaten. The record of the battle and its aftermath identifies the lands that will be given to Reuben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh. Moses records the total destruction of these people; men, women and children. The gene pool of all these people who opposed them was removed from the earth. From the Arnon River right into the Gilead Moses records that no city stood against them.

In days when a siege could take months or years to complete the Israelites destroyed their enemies quickly and efficiently in days. The Lord delivered every city to them, and it was clearly the Lord that did it, for they did not have the military machinery to complete difficult sieges.

Once again Moses records that the land of Ammon was out of bounds. They went only where the Lord told them and avoided battle with the people the Lord forbade them to attack. Judgment was being visited upon these peoples and the Israelites were simply God’s instrument and so had to follow God’s instructions for their own blessing. Believers need to remember this when they pray for things that the Lord has forbidden. We are the pot, made for specific service, and so we are not to seek tasking that is not given to us, for the purpose of each pot is decided by the potter not the pot! Isaiah 64:8, Jeremiah 18:1-10, 1 Corinthians 12:7-18.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Israel was not to fight battles that they were not ordered to fight. We are under the same orders today. We are not to get distracted from the Lord’s plan for our life. We are to do the work assigned to us and not try to do the tasks of any other person, nor fight for any cause that the Lord does not direct us into, no matter how worthy the cause is! We are not to fight for any personal purpose, or to vindicate any personal point, nor revenge any personal slight/insult.

We are made by the Lord as His “pot” for His specific service, and we are to fulfil that service, and that alone. We have the Holy Spirit’s gifting to achieve exactly what the Lord wants for us to achieve and in that path we can claim His protection and power, and in no other. We are not to be resentful or jealous of other people’s paths through life, but celebrate our own path only. 1 Corinthians 12:19-27.

2. If we sin persistently we may end up being placed “on the shelf” by the Lord, and we may be put aside for some time to wait out our “suspension” until the Lord lifts us up and uses us again. If sinfulness has placed you on the shelf, confess your sin, study God’s Word daily, and humble yourself under the Lord’s mighty hand, for in His good time He will lift you up again. 1 Peter 5:6-7. If we live there is hope for us and for those we teach. Wait until the Lord orders you to advance across your brook Zered, and then advance in His power to achieve His goals for you.

3. There are people we are not to interfere with, places we are not to go, and ministries we are not to link with, no matter how humanly attractive any “linkage” may appear to be. The Israelites were forbidden from any interference or alliance with Edom, Moab and Ammon. There are times in our own lives when the Lord will forbid our linking with, or at times opposing, another ministry. At such times humbly seek the Lord’s guidance and simply advance down your path, for in time you will see why the Lord has given such an order.

There are good New Testament examples of this. Paul was denied entry into Bithynia and wondered why. Acts 16:6-12. He was to go to Europe at this time and that is where he went. Later he would preach in the Roman province, of Asia. Acts 19:1ff. Only many years later did he see why he was forbidden to enter Bithynia; Peter was assigned that area by the Lord. 1 Peter 1:1. Let us seek our path before the Lord and not get wound up or upset about why certain things are apparently “denied” us, for the Lord’s plan is perfect. Let us devote ourselves again to it today!

CHAPTER 3**INTRODUCTION**

Moses now records the conquest of the East bank of the Jordan, making the message clear, that God alone assisted them in making their conquest swift and thorough. The land here is seized in accordance with God's plan and they have it under His orders and are responsible to ensure that it is kept by obedience to His orders. This chapter covers the conquest and division of the land, and then moves on to the doctrinal principles that are to be made very clear to Joshua as the one to lead them into the land. The heart of Joshua's ministry is to be obedience to the Lord, and absolute faith in His ability to deliver the pagan nations and their land to him.

DEUTERONOMY 3:1-29

3:1 Then we turned, and went up the way to Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. **2** And the LORD said unto me, Fear him not: for I will deliver him, and all his people, and his land, into thy hand; and thou shalt do unto him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon. **3** So the LORD our God delivered into our hands Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people: and we smote him until none was left to him remaining. **4** And we took all his cities at that time, there was not a city which we took not from them, threescore cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. **5** All these cities were fenced with high walls, gates, and bars; beside unwalled towns a great many. **6** And we utterly destroyed them, as we did unto Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children, of every city. **7** But all the cattle, and the spoil of the cities, we took for a prey to ourselves. **8** And we took at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites the land that was on this side Jordan, from the river of Arnon unto mount Hermon; **9** (Which Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion; and the Amorites call it Shenir;) **10** All the cities of the plain, and all Gilead, and all Bashan, unto Salchah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan. **11** For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants; behold his bedstead was a bedstead of iron; is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? Nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man. **12** And this land, which we possessed at that time, from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, and half mount Gilead, and the cities thereof, gave I unto the Reubenites and to the Gadites. **13** And the rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, being the kingdom of Og, gave I unto the half tribe of Manasseh; all the region of Argob, with all Bashan, which was called the land of giants. **14** Jair the son of Manasseh took all the country of Argob unto the coasts of Geshuri and Maachathi; and called them after his own name, Bashanhavothjair, unto this day. **15** And I gave Gilead unto Machir. **16** And unto the Reubenites and unto the Gadites I gave from Gilead even unto the river Arnon half the valley, and the border even unto the river Jabbok, which is the border of the children of Ammon; **17** The plain also, and Jordan, and the coast thereof, from Chinnereth even unto the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, under Ashdothpisgah eastward. **18** And I commanded you at that time, saying, The LORD your God hath given you this land to possess it: ye shall pass over armed before your brethren the children of Israel, all that are meet for the war. **19** But your wives, and your little ones, and your cattle, (for I know that ye have much cattle,) shall abide in your cities which I have given you; **20** Until the LORD have given rest unto your brethren, as well as unto you, and until they also possess the land which the LORD your God hath given them beyond Jordan: and then shall ye return every man unto his possession, which I have given you. **21** And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, Thine eyes have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto these two kings: so shall the LORD do unto all the kingdoms whither thou passest. **22** Ye shall not fear them: for the LORD your God he shall fight for you. **23** And I besought the LORD at that time, saying, **24** O Lord GOD, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might? **25** I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. **26** But the LORD was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter. **27** Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan. **28** But charge 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 thou shalt see. **29** So we abode in the valley over against Bethpeor.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 7. Moses strongly made point is that the "Lord delivered this kingdom" into the hands of the Israelites. The Israelites were not to feel great and powerful, nor were they to feel they could achieve great things in their own strength, for without the Lord's mighty hand they were lost sheep ready for slaughter themselves. Their strength was to be in the Lord alone, and in His holiness alone they would stand and hold what the Lord had delivered to them.

They were not to fear the pagan king, but to advance into the land he had previously owned and take it from him, for the Lord had given this land to them now. King Og of Bashan considered himself to be powerful, but his strength had left him, and so would his land leave his control. The reason was spiritual not military, and that is the message that the Lord wants these people of His to realize with clarity and precision.

Everything is spiritual! This is the message that we need to see clearly ourselves; for in all we do the Lord must be our first thought. It is His will alone that matters eternally. In all our ways we must acknowledge Him, and then He will direct our paths! Proverbs 3:6.

The villages and walled towns will all be “destroyed” by the Israelites and they will later use the best of them for their own settlements. This tells us that the destruction was superficial, probably involving the burning out of the content of the houses, for their defences were left basically intact and were able to be repaired and strengthened for Israelite settlement later. Numbers 32:16ff.

There were sixty walled villages in the land of Bashan, with strong defences and barred gates. These were not “cities” in our terms but would contain upwards of a 100+ adults and be capable of withstanding a minor siege due to their walls and stone defences. All these fell to the Israelites on the day they were besieged, and a number must have fallen every day to ensure the time taken to pacify this land did not stretch out longer than a few weeks.

The way Moses tells it, the collapse of Og’s nation was total and catastrophic. His army was destroyed in the field and the walled “cities” all fell quickly. Their population either fled or was destroyed. None were kept alive who stayed in their cities, such as their evil.

Once again we confront head on the deaths of at least some of the children here. All children who die before the age of accountability (Numbers 14:29, 1 Samuel 12:23, Matthew 18:10), no matter what their origin, and family, are with the Lord in heaven, so their eternal fate is not at risk. For a reason known only to the Lord, these children were unable to be left alive and be saved from the evil of their parents. Possibly their gene pool was so corrupt that they were unable to be entered into any other group without contamination of that gene pool.

We cannot know the full answer to this question on this side of eternity, but we can know that the one who said, “Suffer the little children to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of God”, (Matthew 19:14), would not order the death of an entire people group without overwhelming cause. The mention of the grace, mercy and love of God continue through these books, so do not repeat the lie of the liberal, that the god of Moses is the “angry god” – God is angry only at evil.

Verses 8 – 11. The reading of this section indicates some time has passed for reflection upon the victories, and it would appear at first reading to be more than a few weeks. It may be that Joshua later modifies the words of Moses to reflect the passing of significant time since these victories, or it may be that Moses simply reflects upon the events of the capture of this part of the land and records the summary. He records the important detail of Og’s descent being from the giant race that previously held the land, as an encouragement to those who would fight these people in the land on the West Bank of Jordan. The fact that Og’s bed is mentioned as being in Rabbath-Ammon indicates that possibly a significant remnant of his people fled there carrying gifts to the Ammonites amongst whom they were forced to settle as refugees.

A wealthy refugee will always receive a better welcome for they can pay for their requirements and this bed was a marvel in the ancient world of its time. Moses records that Og’s bed was thirteen feet long and six feet wide. This doesn’t mean he was thirteen feet high, for a man will make a bed far larger than he is, but it tells us that he was a man who liked to project his power and talk up his great stature. He was clearly well over six feet tall and powerfully built, but he was no match for the will of Almighty God. That is Moses’ message! Moses wants his own people, and believers of all ages to remember the principle, that the greatness of man is nothing to the greatness of God. All men stand or fall on the basis of their relationship with the Lord God over all. 1 Samuel 1:27, Psalms 18:35-46, 36:10-12.

Verses 12 – 20. Moses now records in summary the delivery of the kingdoms of Sihon, and Og to the three tribes who requested to stay on the East Bank of Jordan. This detail is already recorded in Numbers 32:33-42. More detail is given here than in the Numbers account, and it may be that Joshua has added in further detail, or that Moses here records things with more precision because of their significance to the people as they plan to move across the Jordan after his death.

The heads of the key families are specifically assigned walled towns for their dwelling, and from where to base their farming activities. A phrase like, “until this day”, verse 14, indicates that a hand even later than Joshua’s day may have made this editorial addition, however the rest of the speech reads as the script of a speech given at the time.

As noted above, I believe that what we are reading is a carefully recorded speech, prepared by Moses and Joshua, and read by Moses to the assembled tribes on the plains of Moab. Check out the names recorded here in your Bible Maps, for some are known and others are not so well identified. These tribes will all lose their inheritance here through the centuries by forgetting the words of Moses to them, just as we can lose our spiritual path by failing to obey the Lord our God.

Verses 21 – 22. Moses records very formally his warning to Joshua, and if it is indeed Joshua writing the words on paper then he is having the message reinforced to him by being the one to write it out. Notice the instruction, for the principle here is for all generations of believers. We are to look back and remember the actions of God in our life, and the lives of others we are close to. From these actions of the Lord, we are to take strength and draw confidence in the Lord’s ability to deliver us.

However, we are to also remember, that the Lord delivers those walking in His path in holiness. We cannot claim the deliverance of the Lord if we walk in ungodliness, or in a path that is not the Lord's will for us. There is to be no fear in the believer's heart as they advance in the path the Lord has before them. They are to advance in confident assurance of deliverance and victory. Exodus 14:13-14, Numbers 21:34-35, Psalms 44:1-3. Our strength is to be in the Lord alone, not in our own power or abilities, for even they depend upon the Lord giving us breath and vision. 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.

Verses 23 – 29. Moses now prays for the Lord to allow him to enter the land and walk upon it. Now this prayer gives me a firm feeling of the heart of Moses again, and the recording of this is further evidence that he is the author of the vast majority of this book, for a latter writer would have left out this prayer. Moses has been told by the Lord that he will die before the people enter the land itself. He is forbidden to enter the land because of his great sin outside Kadesh when he struck the rock instead of speaking to it. Numbers 20:7-13.

Moses knows the word of the Lord and the matter is settled and he is wrong to raise this prayer, for the answer is foreknown. We are also in error every time we pray for something the Lord has forbidden, or request things that the Lord has said "NO" to already. The answer is clear and the Lord is angry at Moses. Moses records the Lord's displeasure at him. This is another indication of the humility and the honesty of Moses. This man is a mentor and records things that a "saint worshipper" wouldn't have done at a later time.

He records things for the value of future generations. He is focused upon the good of others not his own benefit. He is a man who failed, and yet saw in every situation something that might strengthen those following him, in order that they might do even better than he did! This is true leadership, and this is a model for us to follow. This man is human like us, and he fails and falters, but he loves the Lord, and that is the thing that allows him to withstand the Lord's anger, for it the anger of a father to his beloved son. Hebrews 12:4-12.

We are to stand like Moses and tell the truth about the Lord's dealings with us and so advance down the path He has for us. Moses is to forget his understandable and human desires now and he is to focus upon Joshua only, and he is to encourage and strengthen him as his replacement, and he is to ensure that he advances in obedience to the plan of God and does not fall short of the plan as Moses has done. Joshua likely adds the last words here reminding the reader where the people were living at this time.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Leadership focuses upon the real needs of those being led, not upon the personal desires of the leader. Moses must focus all his energies upon the final items for the training of Joshua to take over from him. The job of all leaders is to empower the next generation and ensure that they rise up to replace them. We are to set the example of Holy Spirit empowered leadership and serve the Lord alone, valuing His "well done" above all the praises of men.
2. The Lord alone delivers the enemies on the path into our hands, and He alone delivers the objectives to us in power and to His glory. To the Lord belongs victory. Let us advance down the path of our life in faith that He will and is delivering us for His glory and praise. Let us praise Him in advance for the victories He will win through us, as we praise Him for the victories already won in the past.
3. As we face difficulties let us remember Moses point to the people; "everything is spiritual!" Every challenge we face is a spiritual one and every place of difficulty is a place where the Lord desires for us to have spiritual power and see His will being worked out in His power. It is not by might, nor by the power of man, but by the Spirit of God that we have victory in this life – Halleluiah!

Notes

CHAPTER 4**INTRODUCTION**

Moses now preaches with power to the people about the vital importance of absolute obedience to the Law of the Lord. He pours his soul out passionately in the content of this chapter reminding the people that they are called out to be a special people for the Lord's name, holy to Him. In verses 1-8 Moses reminds the people that their greatness as a nation rests upon their being the people of God, and having His Holy Law. Their identity and power rests in keeping that Law.

In verses 9 – 14, they are exhorted to remember the things that happened beside the holy mountain and since. They are to remember the power and identity of the one true God and worship Him alone. Verses 15 – 24. The rest of this chapter is given over to the terrible consequences of rejection of the Law and the reality of divine discipline. Moses will expand upon these things with the very formal and even theatrical warning of dispersion in chapters 27-30. The chapter ends with a summary of their seizure of the lands of the two pagan kings, and again underlines the reality of God's right to take land from one people group and give it to another when the first becomes corrupt and their evil is unable to be stopped.

DEUTERONOMY 4:1-49

4:1 Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you. 2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. 3 Your eyes have seen what the LORD did because of Baalpeor: for all the men that followed Baalpeor, the LORD thy God hath destroyed them from among you. 4 But ye that did cleave unto the LORD your God are alive every one of you this day. 5 Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. 6 Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. 7 For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for? 8 And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? 9 Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons; 10 Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children. 11 And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. 12 And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. 13 And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone. 14 And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it. 15 Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the LORD spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: 16 Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, 17 The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, 18 The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth: 19 And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven. 20 But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day. 21 Furthermore the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, and sware that I should not go over Jordan, and that I should not go in unto that good land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance: 22 But I must die in this land, I must not go over Jordan: but ye shall go over, and possess that good land. 23 Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee. 24 For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God. 25 When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, and shall do evil in the sight of the LORD thy God, to provoke him to anger: 26 I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed. 27 And the LORD shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you. 28 And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. 29 But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. 30 When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; 31 (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them. 32 For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? 33 Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? 34

Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? 35 Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him. 36 Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire. 37 And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt; 38 To drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou art, to bring thee in, to give thee their land for an inheritance, as it is this day. 39 Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else. 40 Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, for ever. 41 Then Moses severed three cities on this side Jordan toward the sunrising; 42 That the slayer might flee thither, which should kill his neighbour unawares, and hated him not in times past; and that fleeing unto one of these cities he might live: 43 Namely, Bezer in the wilderness, in the plain country, of the Reubenites; and Ramoth in Gilead, of the Gadites; and Golan in Bashan, of the Manassites. 44 And this is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel: 45 These are the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which Moses spake unto the children of Israel, after they came forth out of Egypt. 46 On this side Jordan, in the valley over against Bethpeor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon, whom Moses and the children of Israel smote, after they were come forth out of Egypt: 47 And they possessed his land, and the land of Og king of Bashan, two kings of the Amorites, which were on this side Jordan toward the sunrising; 48 From Aroer, which is by the bank of the river Arnon, even unto mount Sion, which is Hermon, 49 And all the plain on this side Jordan eastward, even unto the sea of the plain, under the springs of Pishgah.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 8. The word “hearken” is used many times by Moses. It means to hear, understand and obey. God’s people must hear God’s Word and work it out into the fabric of their daily lives. If they fail to hear the words of the Lord their God, then they will not inherit the blessing of the land, nor be delivered from their enemies there. If we do not hear the words of God today we will not be delivered from the dangers and difficulties that besiege us. The words that the people hear must be “DONE”. It is application of truth that is evidence of belief in that truth. Unless a truth is applied into life it is not truly believed by that person! As James will point out 1500 years after Moses says this, “faith without works is dead!” James 1:19-24, 2:19-26.

God’s Word is neither to be added to nor subtracted from. The twin dangers of Satanic strategies towards believers are here identified. The first is that the truth of God’s grace and mercy is added to and produces a legalism that raises works to a religious system. It was those who did this that led the drive to kill the Lord Jesus Christ; they were the Pharisees and Sadducees.

The second danger for believers is that they overlook important elements of the revelation of God and so fall short of the standard that the Lord has for them. We must hear the whole counsel of God’s Word and correctly understand it, and fully apply its provisions in accordance with the age in which we live.

The example that Moses uses to warn the people is the carnage caused by the immorality of the men when the Midianite and Moabite women seduced them into adding paganism to their faith in the one true God. Numbers 25. This “addition” destroyed the truth of their faith, and established sexual immorality as a thing of no consequence to them, and so brought divine judgment. To add any pagan element into the truth of God’s revelation is to add in poison to the body, and it is to bring judgment upon the person foolish and disobedient enough to do such a thing.

The immorality of Baal Peor was to be the on-going danger of the land of Canaan, for the Canaanite peoples worshipped the fertility gods and goddesses and the worship of these demons always involved sexual immorality. Sexual immorality remains the most powerful tool in Satan’s arsenal to destroy foolish men and women.

God’s judgment upon the immoral was immediate and it was thorough. All who sexually compromised themselves with the evil of Baal-Peor were killed by the plague the Lord sent. Numbers 25:9. The only survivors of this plague of the Lord were those who wept at the immorality of their fellows, and kept themselves pure. Those who were saved from this evil and its judgment were those who felt the pain of God at sin.

Moses urges them to remain true to the Lord, hold to biblical morality, and reject any compromise with the world system of Satan. Moses words are the words of the Lord, and they have been faithfully transmitted to the people to ensure they are safe, but they will only be safe as they obey them in every detail. To enter the land and have victory they will need to obey the Lord, and to possess the land and hold it they will need to continue in obedience long after the drama of the conquest is over.

It will be in the daily details of busy pastoral life that the need for systematic obedience will be seen. If they get distracted by the work of the day and fall away from their obedience to the Lord then the land will “fall away” from them. Just so with us today! If we get distracted and do not make time for the fellowship of the Lord our God, and make time for the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit each day, then each day we will slip further away from the truth. If we do not draw

close to God daily in prayer and Bible study, the world will come between us and God and we will fall away from the truth that alone can keep us safe in the devil's world.

We are wise and have understanding if we draw close to God daily and make obedience to His words our life priority, but if we allow ourselves to drift away we show that we have no understanding of the truth. James 4:7-10, 1 Peter 5:5-9. Peter and James build upon the words of Moses here and remind us that every day we need to draw close to the Lord, and that if we fail to do this we will drift into very real danger.

The greatness of Israel will rest upon the foundation of the Mosaic Law, and their strength will centre around their daily obedience to that Law. Other nations will be impressed by God's Word as they see it lived out by Israel. No nation of the ancient world had the standards Israel had in the Mosaic Law. All the great legal systems in use today draw from God's Law, as given to Moses, and there is no other source for divine law other than the Torah of Moses, for there is no other true basis of law than the one God provided His people. 2 Timothy 2:14-15, 3:16-17.

Verses 9 – 14. The order here is an everlasting one for those who would serve the Lord in spirit and in truth. "Take heed to yourself!" We are to be alert to the dangers of the enemy, be ready for attacks upon our path, and actively resist all temptations to leave the path of holiness. Ephesians 6:10-18, James 4:7. We are to guard our souls with real focused energy. To "keep the soul" means to keep from letting our soul fall under the sway of our Old Sin Nature or any servant or even thought that has its origin with the enemy.

The danger for all mankind is that we forget things that we have seen clearly over time. The memory curve operates for us all, even for the most dramatically powerful memories. Over time they grow dim and lose their power to influence our behaviours, unless we pay daily heed to them and cherish them in our hearts. We remember things by constantly reinforcing them in our memories. We do this by reading of them, by writing them out again and again, by practicing the things they speak of, and by teaching them to others. Moses enjoins all these things upon the Lord's people in order that they might be safe in the hands of the Lord and secure in the only powerful place upon this earth, which is the place of standing in His truth. Psalms 105:44-45.

The people are to take personal responsibility to teach their children and grand-children the truth of God's revelation in every generation, and they are especially to speak of the days before the mountain of the Lord, at Horeb in Arabia. They are to speak of the "fear of the Lord" to their children and grand-children, reminding them that the Lord is an awesome God and to be respected and held in awe. They are to be fearful of offending the Lord their God. The reality of the fact of the divine meeting with Israel is to be explained and expounded upon. God has met His people, and God has spoken to His people. Their faith is not based upon the words of prophets alone, but upon the sure foundation of special direct revelation. That revelation is especially encapsulated in the "Ten Words", Exodus 20:1ff.

The Lord their God is a consuming fire. Deuteronomy 4:24, 9:3, Hebrews 10:30-31, 12:25-29. There is no escape for those who reject the truth of God, for man faces a choice upon which hangs his eternal destiny. All men and women face this choice; will they receive God's revelation or will they reject it? Revelation 20:11-15. We either actively choose life and obedience to the Lord, or we by our failure to decide, or our active rejection, choose death with the enemy of truth! Deuteronomy 30:19, Proverbs 1:20-33, Isaiah 56:1-8. All may come to the Lord; all it takes is a desire to serve the truth with focused energy upon what matters, and a rejection of all the distractions of the enemy.

Verses 15 – 24. Once again the order is given, "Take good heed to your selves!" Moses keeps reminding them that they must pay attention to the words of the Lord at Horeb or they will suffer the same fate as the Canaanites. Proverbs 4:20-27, Jeremiah 17:21. Sadly the people will fail to obey the words of the Lord through Moses and they will suffer exactly the fate he tries to save them from with his preaching.

The challenge of all preachers is to speak the truth at all times and at all times the truth, for only then can we face our God without guilt for the lost souls who have ignored the warning! Ezekiel 3:17-21, 33:1-11. Read these passages from Ezekiel carefully, for they sum up the heart of Moses and clearly reveal the heart of the Lord towards all pastors. We must feel the responsibility of preaching the truth with power and clarity, for the lives of others depend on their response. We must be clear and we must be serious, for the Lord holds us responsible if people hear falsehood or confusion, when they needed truth with simplicity.

As pastor-teachers we are the watchmen of the church. Let us watch for souls! 1 Corinthians 16:13, Colossians 4:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:6, 2 Timothy 4:5, Hebrews 13:7, 1 Peter 4:7. The preachers to the Lord's people have the role of making clear the policy and purposes of God, and their role is to be the "heralds of the King", and that means not changing the King's message in any way whatsoever.

This generation didn't see a picture, nor did they receive second hand accounts, for they were there and saw and heard the revelations of God. They saw the cloud and the fire and they heard the words and saw the judgment activity of the Lord amongst them.

They saw enough to know that any idol made with hands was totally inadequate for a representation of the real creator of the heavens and the earth, yet sadly many would enter into paganism shortly after entering the land. They would hanker for an image to face in prayer rather than an empty corner of their room. God wanted them to practice their faith in an empty space so they could remember the essential nature of His being; He is God and they are creatures, and so any idol they make will lower their viewpoint and lead them astray!

They were not to make God into a male or a female, nor associate the character and form of the Lord with any created thing. They were not to worship the Lord as a creature or an object, but as the creator and Saviour of all. While we speak of God as "father" we are to remember these words. God is tender like a loving father towards us, but God is neither male nor female, for these are created categories for mankind, and do not reflect the creator, who is well beyond such categories. We are to remember that we are time-space bound creatures and that God cannot be squeezed into our concepts.

They were also not to associate the Lord with the sun, moon or stars, for they too were created things, and the Lord was beyond them as the author of all that exists in time and space. They were to sit with **the uncomfortable truth** that they were limited by space and time and the Lord their God was the creator of these things, and would one day eliminate them! 2 Peter 3:10-13. This is the scariest passage of the bible – pause and reflect upon it – for all of space-time is to be "rolled up" like a tired, worn out blanket and replaced! These people are to sit with truth – no matter how difficult in a pagan sea or pathetic religious idols and nonsense! They had been delivered from the furnace of affliction in Egypt to serve the true Lord God in truth, not to return to any form of paganism that God had delivered them from.

There is a challenge here that we need to take regarding all behaviours, including our dress. Paul's words in 1 Timothy 2:9-10, and 1 Corinthians 11:4-15, draw attention to the need for believers to be "visibly different" to the pagans that surround us. No-one by our dress, appearance, or behaviours, is to think we are pagans! How well are we doing on this?

Moses reminds the people again that he is facing the judgment of God, for the Lord was angry at Moses for his disobedience, and yet Moses still calls the people to worship the Lord. Moses reminds them that even if they are being judged they are to worship the Lord. Isaiah 61:3. Even if they will not receive what they hoped for, they are to worship their God!

Moses models obedience in the hard place of judgment. He is being judged as he writes and speaks these words, and he will not enter the land, but he remains faithful to the Lord's will for his life until the end. He uses his own judgment as a warning to them all. If the Lord has not stopped short of judging Moses for disobedience, then He will certainly judge them if they enter into and persist in pagan foolishness. 1 Corinthians 10:19-22, Hebrews 12:12-15, 25-29.

Verses 25 – 31. Moses isn't being negative here; he is being realistic. Be very cautious of people/pastors who say words like, "Now we don't want to be negative about this plan/idea". Such people are dangerous, for they are afraid of the truth. Moses is realistic and speaks the truth at all times, and so must we. He knew the hearts of men and he knew that these people would eventually succumb to the temptations of the pagans amongst whom they dwelt. Jesus reminds us that the heart of men is not to be trusted. John 2:24-25, Jeremiah 17:9.

Moses knew that unless people actively build up their relationship with the Lord daily, they will spiritually go down over time, and that means they will sink to the level of those they fellowship with. Moses calls the heavens and the earth to witness that he has taught them well and they are without any excuse before the Lord. Can we do this pastors?

If the people leave their holy path and go after the ways of the pagans whom they have displaced, then their fate will be the same as the pagans; they will themselves be displaced. They will be removed from the land and scattered amongst the nations of the entire earth. They will be the minority in the lands to which they are scattered, but the Lord will "lead them" into these places, and if they see that and repent, there will be blessing even in dispersion.

They will however be more likely to serve the gods of the nations amongst whom they are scattered and so their discipline will intensify. This would happen during their Babylonian exile between 605 – 535 BC, when many stayed behind in Babylon when the first group returned and some served the pagan gods and died in the rebellions that occurred there in the centuries following.

The **good news is given** in verses 29 – 31. No matter how far away they are they **can always return** to the Lord who loves them and has provided all they need for their spiritual life. Repentance is the doctrine that Moses leaves them with, to save their lives and restore their hope in a future day. It will be nearly 1000 years before they go into captivity in Babylon, 1500 years before they go into their present captivity and total dispersion under the Romans, and it is now 3500 years later, but through the words of Moses they are forewarned, and they are provided with the remedy. Leviticus 26:39-42.

It is these words of Moses that Nehemiah remembers in the century after the exiles have returned, and that he calls upon for personal strength to return and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah 1:8-11. Nehemiah's actions will begin the prophetic clock ticking for Israel, with a precise count down to the arrival of Messiah in Jerusalem. Daniel 9:24-26.

Pause and reflect upon the prophetic significance of Moses words here. He states a principle that has everlasting significance for all mankind while this present earth lasts, and he sets up the principle for the restoration of his own people nearly a millennia into the future from his own day. When we stand as Moses stood, in absolute obedience to the Lord, we stand in a place of spiritual influence, where the legacy of our words and actions can span centuries. We truly have impact in our own generation and beyond it when we are obedient to the Lord.

Moses also, as noted above, models repentance and restoration to service after his own serious episode of disobedience. Like David later, he is restored, because he 100% humbles himself before the Lord, seeks the Lord's face,

and gets back into his correct path in obedience. Psalms 51, 103:10-18. In the midst of the worst, self-induced troubles, God's people can be restored if they seek Him with all their heart. We truly serve a gracious and loving God who knows our weaknesses and loves us, and proves that with his perfect provisions within the Law and at the Cross.

In the Great Tribulation period, in a yet future day to my time of writing, the people of Israel will read again these words of Moses and they will claim them, and be nationally delivered by the Messiah in person. Jeremiah 3:12-16, 29:10-14, Daniel 9:27, 11:36 – 12:13, Zechariah 12:10 – 14:21.

God's "good news" to all peoples is the good news of salvation and forgiveness. All mankind can be told that the Lord God who made the heavens and the earth has provided for the salvation of all the peoples of the earth through the person of the Jewish Messiah. That the one of whom Moses will speak, is the one who is Moses hope and all mankind's hope. All man needs to do to be saved from the power of sin and death, and delivered from the pollution of evil, is seek the Lord with all their heart, rather than continue in satanic blindness and distraction.

Mankind must bow before the Lord God of all, and accept His provision for them, and then walk in obedience to Him. Psalms 119:1-16, 58, 145, 161-170, Isaiah 43:8-13, 55:6-11, Joel 2:12-13, John 3:16, 36, Acts 4:12, 16:31. Let us not join the "gain sayers" and rebel against the holy and righteous demands of our creator and saviour; let us be obedient to all his requirements.

Verses 32 – 34. Moses now refers back to past history back to the days of Adam and asks the people of Israel before him, whether any generation of men have ever seen and heard the things they have. No generation ever experienced the concentrated miracles that this group did. The children who left Egypt and now enter the land have seen the glory of God like no other generation before them or since. Only the Disciples of the Lord Himself saw more miraculous events, and they were on a much smaller scale than the Exodus generation witnessed. Having seen more than any other group, great things are expected of them!

To those who receive much, much is expected. Luke 12:22-28, 43-48. In our day we have so many people seeking great signs and wonders without fully understanding what they will mean for them. If great wonders are seen, then great deeds are expected by the Lord from the generation that witnesses those wonders.

Verses 35 – 36. The purpose of signs and wonders is to underline a point of doctrine. For this generation, after 400 years of being surrounded by paganism, they needed to see the character and power of the one true God so that His power could be seen to be superior to the demons which were behind Egyptian religion. God gave enough miraculous signs to prove who He was, and who the demons were, so they could know with certainty, that He could deliver them. They were to draw upon this truth as they moved into the land and settled there. The miracles could stop, for now they were to draw upon the truth of the Word and that alone was what they needed to apply and God would give them the victory.

Verses 37 – 40. Moses wants the people to see that love motivated the Lord, not any right or goodness on the part of the people of Israel. God's love for their fathers led to their blessing, and this next generation would be blessed as they remained in the faith that the Lord called them to live. They had already driven out nations greater than they were in the Amorites and the people of Gilead. The total adult population of these areas would have been in excess of 100,000, and yet they were thoroughly beaten by the Israelites who numbered far less than them. This is another piece of evidence that supports the lower number for the Israelites that I have argued is correct since the studies on the book of Exodus. I firmly believe that the total adult population would be around 30,000 and that their army was no more than about 10,000 strong at a maximum level, and probably around 6000 as a strike force.

Moses calls the people to reflect upon the facts of their low numbers and the feat of defeating this great people group, the Amorites, and see that God alone has enabled them to conquer superior forces. The only way they can possibly survive in the land and hold it is to be obedient to the Lord, for they cannot do without His power to defend them, for their enemies are far more numerous than they are.

Today we face the same predicament each time we arise in the morning. We face overwhelming opposition in this earth, from unbelieving men and from the demonic forces of Satan who hates us. We are advised to put our spiritual armour on daily, and so be still standing at the end of each day. We face serious opposition in the Angelic Conflict and need to be positioned in the place of spirituality, not carnality, for to be carnally minded is death! Romans 8:6, 1 Peter 5:8-9.

Verses 41 – 43. Moses now reminds them all about the three cities of refuge on the east Bank of the Jordan for anyone guilty of manslaughter to flee to in order to await a fair trial. These places were to be kept for all to come to and for trials to be held within them, and for the killer to be safe until his case was heard by the judges and his innocence or guilt determined. The two key elements for the defence in such cases was, firstly that there was no intention to kill, and second that there was no history of hatred between the men involved. The three cities are well spread out and a man who accidentally killed a neighbour had to run a fair way to be safe, but these places were to be the places for refuge for all caught in such a predicament. Numbers 25:6-14.

Verses 44 – 49. These verses introduce the next major speech that Moses is to give. Deuteronomy records a number of such speeches and the next ones are significantly longer than this introductory one we have seen to date. It appears that Deuteronomy was written over a few weeks but delivered possibly over a longer time frame.

These verses form a brief summary of the invasion of the east Bank of Jordan and prepare for the next speeches that will unfold over the next chapters.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. The greatness of the children of Israel rested upon their being the “called out” people of God. Our power, our purpose, any legacy we have, and our destiny, all rest upon our position in Christ Jesus. We are God’s “called out” people in Christ Jesus. Romans 9:19-30, 1 Peter 2:9-10. Let us stand in the power of the Holy Spirit each and every day and serve the Lord as we are called to as His special people before the nations.

In the Great Tribulation period the Jewish people will once again take up their role as the “called out” people, and their role then is to hold out and hide in the hill country, or fight around Jerusalem, until the Lord Himself arrives to deliver them. Let us recognize our role, and do what we are called to as His called people.

2. We must seek the Lord, “with all our heart”. We must, “hear the Word of God”, believe it, and prove our belief by its application into the fabric of each day’s life. As preachers, heralds of the King, we are neither to ignore passages of the Word, nor add to the Word our own thoughts; for we are to hear what God says to mankind and do/say what He says. Anything short of total commitment to the work/words of the Lord is not good enough for the called out believer of any age. Let us apply ourselves to the truth and let us be transformed by it, and then we will be transformers in our societies.

3. Let us draw close to the Lord in our daily Bible study and prayer times. Unless we draw close to the Lord every day we will drift further away from Him every day! There is no alternative to obedience other than disobedience. There is no alternative to knowledge of God’s Word and Will for us, than ignorance, and such a state opens the door to disaster in the life of the fool who ignores vital truth.

4. “Be alert”! This remains our daily order for the battles in the Angelic Conflict each and every day. We are to be alert to dangers on the way through each day, and alert to our own weaknesses and ensure they are well covered by prayer and confession. We are to be ready for Satanic attack and not surprised when we are facing difficulty. In this present world we are grossly out numbered and face overwhelming demonic and human opposition, yet if we walk in the Holy Spirit’s power we have the balance of power with us. We are to be prayerful and so we will be powerful. Let us choose each and every moment to walk in the power of the Spirit, in obedience to God’s Word.

5. We are to remember that we are creatures of space and time, and not speak of God as if the Lord of all is a man or woman. There is no room for feminist theology any more than there is room for male theology. We must not squeeze God into our image, but sit with the uncomfortable truth of our finitude and temporality, and the Lord being beyond both categories of our thinking. We are all rather pathetic creatures limited by space and time thinking, because that is who we are at this point. We are neither male nor female, bond nor free, Jew nor Gentile, we are simply “His People! Let us affirm this truth and walk humbly in it. Galatians 3:26-29, 1 Peter 2:1-10.

6. We are to stand out in this present world as people of the Lord God, and none by our dress, our speech, or our behaviours is to think we are pagans. Let us be careful of our appearance and our behaviour, that all might know that we are of the Lord, and not ever confuse us with the enemy of the Cross.

7. As we read Moses words here we are reminded of the prophetic truths of the scriptures. History is fore-written here before us on these pages here. Reflect upon the prophetic teaching of the scriptures and draw strength today from the certainties of the future. The plan is clear and the victory of the Lord in time is certain. All that every generation needs is here before us in the scriptures. Let us take the truth in today and apply it, whether we are in the Church Age, or you are reading this in the midst of the Great Tribulation period! Believe God’s Word and apply it and prove that the Lord is indeed good, powerful, and an ever present comfort to those in need.

NOTES

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins Part 2 of the book of Deuteronomy. It is the second major discourse of the book and commences the formal repeating of the Mosaic Law, commencing with the "Ten Words". The outline for this central part of the book is repeated below from chapter one.

PART 2 The Mosaic Law – Love and Obedience

Chapters 5 – 7		Repetition and Re-interpretation of the Ten Commandments
Chapters 8 – 11		Egypt and the land of Canaan
	Chapter 8	God's past dealings give assurance of his future dealings.
	Chapter 9	God knew Israel and in spite of their sins remains their God.
	Chapter 10	God sent them into Egypt and has brought them out
	Chapter 11	God has principles for their successful occupancy of the land.
Chapters 12 – 21		Regulations to ensure the land remains their own
	Chapter 12	One place only to worship in the land – no "high places".
	Chapter 13	Warning against false prophets and false gods.
	Chapter 14	Dietary regulations.
	Chapter 15	God's poverty program.
	Chapter 16	The three main feasts that all males are to attend.
	Chapter 17	Various Laws.
	Chapter 18	Tests for the true Prophet of the Lord.
	Chapter 19	Cities of refuge and the extent of the land and legal jurisdiction.
	Chapter 20	Laws regarding Warfare.
	Chapter 21	Laws regarding Murder, Marriage and juvenile delinquents.
Chapters 22 – 26		Rules for domestic and personal relationships
	Chapter 22	Various laws relating to all aspects of life.
	Chapter 23	The world, the flesh and the devil.
	Chapter 24	Divorce
	Chapter 25	Punishment and protection issues.
	Chapter 26	Firstfruits and thanksgiving.

DEUTERONOMY 5:1-33

5:1 And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. **2** The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. **3** The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day. **4** The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire, **5** (I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to shew you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount;) saying, **6** I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. **7** Thou shalt have none other gods before me. **8** Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth: **9** Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, **10** And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments. **11** Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. **12** Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee. **13** Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: **14** But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. **15** And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day. **16** Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. **17** Thou shalt not kill. **18** Neither shalt thou commit adultery. **19** Neither shalt thou steal. **20** Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour. **21** Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbour's. **22** These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered

them unto me. 23 And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, (for the mountain did burn with fire,) that ye came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders; 24 And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath shewed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth. 25 Now therefore why should we die? For this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die. 26 For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? 27 Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it. 28 And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the LORD said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken. 29 O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever! 30 Go say to them, Get you into your tents again. 31 But as for thee, stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which thou shalt teach them, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess it. 32 Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 33 Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 - 5. The way the rest of this book reads is as Joshua's formal account of the words of Moses, from the "script" that he assisted Moses in recording before it was given. I may be proved wrong in this assumption when we get to heaven, and I will be happy to be corrected by those who really know how this book got into its final form, but we will not be 100% sure until we speak with Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Ezra, for all these men may have been part of the final form of the book we are reading. It certainly reads like a script, prepared for reading aloud to the assembled nation, with the formal statements of introduction and summary acting as the framework.

These first five verses form the formal introduction. There is a formal call to the entire adult population to come and assemble to hear the words that Moses is to give them. He will formally summarise the entire law given to date, and already recorded in portions of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers.

The summary that we are about to commence studying gives us the Lord's points of emphasis in the entire Law. Note the four stages of learning the Law. They are first to open their ears and hear the words, and they are to learn them by heart, then they are to keep them personally in their daily life, and finally they are to do all the things that the Law directs them to do in all the details of life.

They are to recognise that the Law begins with this generation, not with their parents. The covenant was made at Mt Horeb, and its provisions begin there for the nation. What happened before can be learned from, but what is to guide their behaviours is the directions of the new Law received at Mt Horeb. The life of the Patriarchs will give many principles of spiritual guidance but the Mosaic Law is their legal guide for daily life then and there.

The Lord spoke directly to the people through the mediator, Moses, and in fear and trembling the people heard the voice of God speak to the people. All was changed for the people at Mt Horeb and would be changed for Israel from then onwards. Moses is reminding them that history has turned a corner at Mt Horeb, and what has been established there will have application until the end of time.

We live today, in the Church Age, in what has been called by some commentators, "a parenthesis period". The Mosaic Law operated as the rule for daily spiritual life until the Day of Pentecost, when a new period of history begins which temporarily sets aside the Mosaic Law, but it is only temporary. This "temporary period" has now run for 1982 years (from 32 AD – 2014) to the time that I write these words. Even though the doctrines of the Church Age complete the Law, and the Lord fulfils the Law in all details, the Church Age is Temporary, and Israel will be taken up again, so that as a nation their remnant can accept their Messiah.

We must always remember that the Church Age is only an insertion into the end stage of the Age of Israel, and that God will again take up His people for the last week of their history, and then move into the Millennial Kingdom. Daniel 9:24-27, Zechariah 12:10 – 13:8, Daniel 11:36-45, Romans 11:1-25, Hebrews 7:12 – 8:6, 10:1.

Verses 6 – 21. The "Ten Words" are now repeated and commented upon. Exodus 20:1ff. The first words centre the hearers in the reality of God's directing every step of their nation's establishment. The Lord alone is the one who called them out of Egypt, and the Lord alone is the one who by mighty works of power delivered them from Egypt, through their forty years of wanderings, and to this point where they stand upon the plains of Moab hearing these words. Moses begins this speech by reminding the people, that everything starts and ends for the believer with God's character, God's plan for them, and God's power to bring that plan through to fulfilment.

Verse 6. The Lord brought them from "the house of bondage". God set them free to serve Him, not to return to the demons that were behind the gods of Egypt. He set them free to serve Him in the wilderness and learn of Him, not to ignore the one who delivered them. They were to have no other gods alongside the Lord, the one true God. No additional objects of worship were to be placed anywhere in the life, the community or the nation, for the Lord alone

was to be worshipped. The danger was not that the Israelites would stop worshipping the Lord God, but that they would place other gods alongside Him and worship them also. This remains the danger for all men at all times in history.

The modern world's extreme example of idol worship is Hinduism which has a god for every occasion, just as the Greeks, Romans and other pagan peoples (our ancestors) had, but modern western secular man can be equally deceived. He/she worships at the shrines of wealth, power, position, job role, politics, and the approval of others. These things are equally pagan to the Hindu gods. We can place our car or home alongside God and spend far more time on their care and beauty than we do with the Lord. God challenges every generation not to place "things" alongside Him, but to worship Him alone.

God was to be worshipped as the creator He is, not with any visual aids, by way of statues, pictures, or any form of idol to "assist" people in their worship. No images were to be made of God, for they would be things, and God is not a thing! To make an image is to reduce God to a created thing, and the Lord God is the creator of all things. To make an image is to locate God in the space-time world, and yet that is the world He has made. He enters that world in the person of Jesus Christ, but He is not part of that world, He is beyond and above it.

When Jacob saw the vision of the staircase, Genesis 28:13, he saw God above it, not upon it. What the theologians call the "otherness" of God is to be taught to all in the form of worship itself, for they are never to bring God down to their level, but let the truth lift them up to the heavenlies, for that is the destiny of mankind.

God's character is the base line for all these "words" that form the heart of the Mosaic Law. God's character is stable and sure and He is jealous of His people's love and worship. He will not share us with any fake god/demon. He cares too much to see us destroyed by the evils of the enemy, and He will discipline us as a caring father, to ensure we turn away from things that will otherwise destroy our life. Hebrews 12:5-15. The "Four Generation Curse" is then repeated, as evidence of the certainty of discipline and finally judgment for all those who persist in active hatred of the person and plan of God.

Verse 10 is the key to understanding the Four Generation Curse. God's judgment is His "strange work"; He seeks every opportunity to bless us and judgment is the exception to His stable purpose in His dealings with us. We have to work hard to be judged, we have simply to be obedient to be blessed. Isaiah 28:21, Ezekiel 33:11, 2 Peter 3:9.

Verse 11 is often taken as a reference to using the Lord's name in the sense of swearing and bad language, and it refers to that, but it is secondary to the main meaning.

To take the Lord's name in vain is to promise to perform something before the Lord and fail to complete what is sworn to be done. We are to ensure that our words are backed by deeds, and all promises to the Lord are fulfilled. We are not to be hypocrites, BUT CAREFUL in our handling of the truth and our manner of life. Our "yes" is to mean "yes" and our "no" is to mean "no". Matthew 5:37, James 5:12.

The keeping of the Sabbath Day was a defining behaviour that set Israel apart, and it is their key new regular ritual of distinctiveness that set them apart from their ancestors and the church age believer of today. The Sabbath days were to be "sanctified", or set apart, for the worship of, and contemplation of the person, plan and work of the Lord. They were to be a weekly reminder of the grace, mercy and love of God for the people. They were to be days of total rest for everyone in the land, not just the believers, but for all.

There was to be no hypocrisy in the keeping of the Sabbath, with the men worshipping and the women and slaves working. All were to rest from work on that day every week. The worship of Israel was to cut across the barriers of sex, culture, race, social status, and religion. All within the Land of Promise were to benefit from the grace of God.

They were to recall that they were delivered from Egypt by the grace and mercy and love of God and so they were to treat all people in the land God had given them on the basis of how God had treated them. They were to worship in a spirit of thankfulness and they were to treat all people as equals before the Lord, whatever their social position within society.

The family was to be the foundation of their society and that rested in respect for parents and grand-parents. Honour and respect was to be their social foundation. This meant parents were to be cared for when they were no longer able to work, and the children were to be brought up to value the family bond that provided the cement for society.

Verse 17 bluntly repeats the "word" from Exodus 20:13. No society can function if human life is not valued and if the person, who without just cause kills any other person, is not punished. The only appropriate punishment for murder is set by the Lord our God and it is execution. If a homicide is justified or accidental, then the person is to be let off any penalty, and be free to return to full function in society, but if there is pre-meditation, hatred and unjustifiable use of force, then that evil person is to be eliminated from society.

We face societies today where murder is seen as a "ten year sentence", and the result is that we have the families of the victims of murderous crime with life sentences of fear and despair. What are we to do in light of our modern society's rejection of God's standards? The answer is clear; we are to evangelise in prisons and try to lead the murderers to the Lord, in order that they might become life givers rather than life takers. The only time wasting activity is to try to get politicians to toughen up the laws! Lets turn prisoners into pastors – far better than restoring a death penalty!

Right behind the prohibition of murder is the prohibition of adultery. Murder violates the divine institution of "Free Will", for it unjustly superimposes the murderer's will over the victims. Adultery violates the divine institution of Marriage by violating the trust of the partners in the marriage. Adultery is not a minor offence, and the stories of the adultery of famous people are not to be used to justify the evil of it. We are not to be influenced by the Hollywood crowd of today, but we are to hold to the standards of the Lord our God and be faithful to our husband or our wife all the days of their life.

Verses 19-20 cover the sins that violate society's bonds of trust. To allow theft, fraud, and false witness to go unpunished, is to destroy the fabric of social and business life. All societies depend on trust to ensure smooth dealings between people, and all who violate that trust must be eliminated from the society, or their evil influence negated. All fraudsters, lairs, and thieves were to be dealt with publicly, so that others were not hurt by their double dealing at a later time. Public disgrace was to follow all social crimes, so that the person who was dangerous to deal with was well known, and others could not be so easily fooled by them. All crimes of property were also to be set right, and that meant there was to be restitution made for them.

There was to be no pointless prison time served, for that would not change the evil man, nor set right the wrong they had done. The guilty person was to pay back what they had lied to obtain, fraudulently obtained, or stolen, and they were to pay it back with interest. If they could not pay it back as a free man, then they were to be sold into slavery to pay it back. This slave time was set at a maximum of seven years at which point they could return to normal life. The Law of God had dependable consequences, for these alone change people from criminals into safe citizens. Refer back to Exodus 22:1ff, Leviticus 6:1-7, 24:21.

Verse 21 examines the mental attitude sins that destroy our peace of mind and upset society's stability. The sin of lust is at the heart of most evil. When we desire what we do not have we give way to a thought that has its source in pride. We believe we are entitled to things that we don't have and unless we take such self centred thinking before the Lord it will eat us up and lead to all manner of evil later.

God's purpose for man's society is that we have a safe place to bring our children up within, and that depends upon our respect for each other's choices and lives. Everything that is your neighbour is to be seen as your neighbour, and not looked upon with envy. When envy enters the heart it is to be confessed as a mental attitude sin and dealt with before it grows.

Verses 22 – 23. Moses then reminds the people that these were the words of God quite literally and they were absolute for all time. God has not made any "amendments", for these are His foundational rules for mankind to live safely upon the earth He has made for them. These are the creator's rules and as such they are binding upon His people. If they want blessing as a nation, then they must keep these rules. They were carved upon two tablets of stone and delivered to Moses. He omits here the breaking of them, Exodus 32:19, and his having to re-carve them himself, Exodus 34:1-4, 28.

The key point was not their disobedience, nor his own anger, but the Lord's stability in writing the same ten words, and requiring the people to keep them as His fixed standard for them as a people. All the leadership and all the people were told bluntly of these things then, and now again. Exodus 35:1ff. At that time it was underlined by the drama of the fire and smoke of the Lord's visible presence upon the mountain, but at this time, they must just quietly hear the words of Moses. We also face the demands of many for "signs and wonders" now, but the sign that we have to give them is the same as that of Moses here; the still quiet voice of the words of God being clearly proclaimed to His people.

Verses 24 – 27. The people were impressed by what they saw and heard and knew that God was indeed superior to all the gods of Egypt and anything they had ever known before, but they were in fear of the Lord at that point, wondering whether the Lord would kill them all there. This is the same challenge we face in difficult situations. We can fail in faith, forget the Lord loves us, and fear He has brought us into a place to destroy us there. We ought not to be too quick to mock these people, for we also fall into this sinful foolishness at times. Let us practice faith in love, and remember the character of God in our prayers for deliverance. Love is meant to cast out fear; let us ensure it does so. 1 John 4:10-19.

The people sent Moses forward to stand in the place they considered dangerous (close to God) and they promised they would keep the Word of God that Moses passed on to them. They failed again and again, but God did not change His policy, or His plan. God kept the focus of His people forward, and challenged them to keep moving forward in obedience, irrespective of their past failures.

Verses 28 – 33. God heard their promise and was going to keep them to it. They had promised to keep the Law and so they were expected to keep the Law, and there would be serious consequences if they did not. God's heart desire is expressed in these verses; that they might truly carry the "fear of the Lord" with them onwards and keep His commandments, and so it would be well with them now and always.

The people were sent off to hide in their tents and the Lord spoke to Moses and gave him the message for the people to obey. Moses job was to hear, teach and ensure the commands of God were obeyed by the people. They were not to deviate from the commands of the Lord to one hand or the other. The path of life remains the path of obedience to the Lord, and the path of judgment remains the path of disobedience. If the people wanted long life and blessing in the land then obedience was the way to it.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Let us ensure that we do not ever forget Israel and the Jewish people world wide, for the Lord has not finished with them, and they will as a nation (a third of the nation will be saved according to the passages in the Minor Prophets) come to the full recognition of their Messiah in the dark days of the Great Tribulation period. Let us ensure that we teach the full counsel of God's Word so that when we have gone and Jewish people seek the truth, that they might find it in our writings and be encouraged from our history, as Moses tries to encourage them from their own history.
2. Everything centres in God for the believer. It is the Lords plan that we are to follow, His holy character that we rest upon in difficulties, and His power in which we move forward to seize the spiritual objectives we are set. Let us walk in the Holy Spirit's ministries each and every day and so fulfill our purpose here upon the earth.
3. No object is to ever be placed alongside the Lord and worshipped. We are to worship the Lord alone, and avoid all worship practices that lower God to our level as creatures, and make us forget that He is the Creator and Saviour of All.
4. Our "yes" is to mean "yes". We are to make no promises we do not intend to keep, nor say anything we do not believe and intend to apply into our lives. Hypocrisy is the enemy of all truth, and makes us an enemy of God. Let us be obedient in word and deed.
5. As believers we are to be people who stand for the integrity of the Divine Institutions. The right of people to free will in matters of faith is vital to a safe and free society, and this is to be the foundation of our nations. We are also to stand for marital fidelity and against adultery, and for respect within the family, not for either domination or license. Respect for others marriages, property and life is also a foundation stone of a safe society.

As believers we are to be people who deal with, and eliminate, any lust, envy, jealousy or pride based emotion that might upset our dealings with others.

6. Let us hear the words of the scriptures as the very words of God. Let us pay attention to them closely, seeking the true sign of the Lord's presence, which is the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our hearts as we hear the Word of God. Let us build upon the knowledge of the Word with application of the Word. The words of the old song are always true. "Trust and obey, for there is no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey".

REFLECTION UPON THE JEWISH SABBATH AND THE LORD'S DAY

1. Sabbath means Rest.
2. Salvation is the eternal Sabbath. (Matthew 11:28) – we must trust in God to save us, apart from our own works.
3. Trusting in the promises is the daily Sabbath. (Hebrews 3:11) – we must trust in God to provide all our needs.
4. The original Sabbath (Genesis 2:2, 3) God finished His work of creation on the sixth day and rested on the seventh.
5. The Sabbath of Israel. (Exodus 20:8-11, Deuteronomy 5:12-15)
 - a) In the Old Testament, the Jews were commanded not to work on the seventh day. They were to trust in the finished work of God to supply their needs.
 - b) The Sabbath (Saturday) was the remembrance day of the old creation, of the old covenant. (Exodus 20:10-11, 31:12-17, Hebrews 4:4)
 - c) Legalists burdened the Sabbath with many hundreds of extra-biblical commandments and regulations.
 - d) Under the Mosaic Law the Jews had a sabbatical year; they were supposed to rest every seventh year. (Exodus 23:10, 11)
 - e) Because they did not take their sabbaticals they endured the 70 years of Babylonian captivity. (Leviticus 26:33-35, 2 Chronicles 36:20, 21, Daniel 9:2, Jeremiah 25:11, 12, Jeremiah 29:10)
6. The Sabbath spoke of the Old Creation Exodus 20, 31 and Hebrews 4 – the Lord's day speaks of the New Creation Saturday belongs to Israel, the family of God, Sunday belongs to the Church the royal family of God. Matthew 28:9, Galatians 6:15, Hebrews 9:15, 10:20
7. The Lord's Day
 - a) The Lord's Day (Sunday) is the remembrance of the new creation, the resurrection life of the Church in Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 6:15, Hebrews 9:15, 10:20)
 - b) In the New Testament, all days are as unto the Lord. (Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 4:1-3)
 - c) There is a moment by moment Sabbath for the believer in the Church Age. (Hebrews 4:1-3)
8. Why is Sunday so important?
 - a) Sunday is resurrection day Matthew 28:1,
 - b) It was also the day of the first meeting of the disciples John 20:19,

- c) It was the first day they received instructions from the Lord Luke 24:36-39
 - d) It was the day the church began as the day of Pentecost was always on a Sunday Acts 2,
 - e) It was the day the early church met Acts 20:6-7
 - f) It was the day to give offerings 1 Corinthians 16:2.
9. This day has been blessed by God. If the church was wrong on meeting on a Sunday the Lord would have pointed it out before the Seventh Day Adventists came on the scene.
10. There is no such thing as a Christian Sabbath Ephesians 4:1-3, Romans 12:1,2 –every day should be lived as unto the Lord, lived in the filling of the Holy Spirit. We meet on the Lord's Day when we celebrate our new birth, the Lord's victory, the birth of the Church. There are no particular rules, a day of joy, rejoicing and celebration.
11. The concept of the moment by moment Sabbath is illustrated in four passages in the Old Testament
- a) Moses at the Red Sea (Exodus 14:10-14)
 - b) Abraham (Romans 4:17-21, Genesis 22, Hebrews 11:17-19)
 - c) The bones of Joseph (Hebrews 11:22)
 - d) Caleb and the Giants (Numbers 13, 14, Joshua 14:6-14, 15:14, Judges 1:20)

NOTES

CHAPTER 6**INTRODUCTION**

The danger for God's people at this time, and for our selves today, remains the same; it is forgetting the Lord our God and failing to live in accordance with His holy standards. We receive great blessings from the Lord and we have great responsibility before the Lord to keep His commandments. Jesus words back those here with His simple and logical demand; "If you love me, then keep my commandments". John 14:15, 21, 15:10.

All the Mosaic Law centres round the person and plan of the Lord, and at the centre of the heart of God is His desire for the blessing of His people. Blessing can only come in the place of obedience to the revelation of the Lord. As we enter this next chapter let us position ourselves in the place of power through prayer. Let us pray for forgiveness for any sin we have committed in mind or deed, and let us dedicate ourselves to the Lord's purposes for us this day and forever.

In the first verses of this chapter God has given His standards for spiritual growth and service. We still have some foolish people within our churches who will say to you that they have got eternity to read the Bible, and that they do not need it now. These people want church to be wonderful experiences of God's presence, but not involve anything that taxes their mind, or challenges them to action through the week. They want religion without life change – and that is Satan's religion.

The truth is that there is no alternative to the Bible as food for spiritual growth; it is the book for time. It is a rule for life now and we all must learn it for ourselves and teach it to others. We all have to take that personal responsibility, and also teach it to our children. If we fail to thrive in the spirit, it will have exactly the same results as a child "failing to thrive" in their body. The child that "fails to thrive" doesn't eat enough or get the right exercise, love, and sunlight they need and they are physically smaller, less robust, constantly ill, and they often die early.

People are looking for a short, easy way to spirituality, but there is no way to spiritual growth other than the learning of God's Word and its application into daily life. These lazy people want "no pain, no strain, and all gain", but you cannot obtain this in any field of endeavour. Paul uses the analogies of the farmer, the athlete, and the soldier to illustrate this principle; that without energy expended there is no gain. 2 Timothy 2:1-13. No-one enters the gym and asks the trainer to not try to change them, nor work them hard at all!

DOERS OF THE WORD

In James 1:22-27 we are to be "doers of the Word", not just a hearer who looks at himself in the mirror and then forgets his face. James tells us bluntly that what we see in God's Word we are to act upon, and if we do this, it will change our life for temporal impact in our life walk, and eternal blessing. Study of God's Word will always lead to the people of God dealing with the sin in their life, and then they will have compassion for others, and will demonstrate their love for others in practical actions. If Bible study does not make us deal with sin and be compassionate, then it is not effective, and we are hypocrites. God's Word must work out in our life, or it is not being applied properly. James 2:14-26.

GOD WANTS TO BLESS US

In Deuteronomy 6:3 God states that He is settled in His desire to bless His people, but the believer's reception of this blessing is dependant upon our obedience. What is God's will? It is that we should love Him. The great statement of faith of Israel, the SHMA Y'SRAEL, is here in this chapter before us, and the centre of it is God's love for His people and their need to know fully who He is, and be His people in love for Him and for others.

So believer, follow Moses, saturate yourself in the Word, and see this chapter as another one in which you can feed upon the truth of God's revelation. Walk in the filling of the Holy Spirit, and overflow into daily life with the fruit of your love for the Lord. Let your days be full of walking with the Lord. Sin spoils it for Adam and will spoil it for us, and so let us deal with it through confession. We are to study, love, teach, and obey. Let us love Him and show it by obeying Him, loving our neighbours, and teaching truth to all we meet.

DEUTERONOMY 6:1-25

6:1 Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it: **2** That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. **3** Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. **4** Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: **5** And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. **6** And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: **7** And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. **8** And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. **9** And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates. **10** And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, **11** And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards

and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; 12 Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. 13 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name. 14 Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you; 15 (For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth. 16 Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted him in Massah. 17 Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee. 18 And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the LORD: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers. 19 To cast out all thine enemies from before thee, as the LORD hath spoken. 20 And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you? 21 Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand: 22 And the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes: 23 And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he swore unto our fathers. 24 And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day. 25 And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 3. Having read these three verses, go back now to our introduction and read the three New Testament passages I referred to there. 2 Timothy 2:1-13, James 1:22-27, 2:14-26.

Moses challenge is to application of the truth, not just knowledge of the truth. To know the truths of this chapter and fail to apply them is to fall into the sin of hypocrisy, and it is to be nothing better than a godless, legalistic Pharisee. God calls us to action application of the Word of Truth so that we are transformed by it. The tenure of the Israelites in the land depended upon their application of the truth of the Word of God. Just like the Exodus Generation, our spiritual service and power on earth, and our eternal rewards in heaven depend upon our application of the Word into our daily life.

The purpose of Moses teaching the Commandments is that the people might “do them”. The only output of genuine education is life change. Unless there is life change as a result of an educational process, then there is no purpose or worthy result in that education. The purpose of the Mosaic Law is that the people might have holy “fear of the Lord”, and in respect and awe, serve Him in obedience to all that the Law demanded of them. If they want blessing in the land of Israel, and if they want length of life and prosperity for their children and grand-children, then they are to take the demands of God seriously. The fear of the Lord brings genuine and lasting spiritual and national prosperity. Psalms 111:10, 128:1-2, Proverbs 1:7, 2:1-5, 16:6.

Verses 4 – 9. These verses contain the great statement of faith of the nation Israel; the SHMA YSRAEL. The first command is again the familiar one; “Hear O Israel”. God wants us all to hear His words and understand His policy. The first truth we must understand is that God is a unity; He is one God, not many gods. There is one God and creator of all, and man is to sit with the truth of the unity and transcendence of God and worship Him in truth.

The second point that man is to understand, is that worship is to be an expression of love towards God. This love is not to be half hearted, but with all our soul's focus and with all our mighty power. Every unit of energy is to be poured out in loving service to the Lord our God. We demonstrate this level of love by our devotion to the Lord's Word, and we show this by memorizing the Word of God, so that it is within our hearts and minds every day. We demonstrate that we take the Word seriously by teaching it to our children and grandchildren systematically so that they can understand and apply it also.

We will show our faith by our teaching of the Word at every opportunity, whether we are seated in the comfort of our home, lying in our sick bed, walking outside, or working in the fields. The Word of God was to be like the head covering that most wore in the Middle East; it was to cover and protect the head from the sun, and to come down in front of the eyes, so that the Word of God was always seen by the person, between them and the temptations of the devil's world.

The world was to be seen through the Word, so that every detail of life was continually interpreted through the Word of God. The people were also to decorate their houses with texts from the Word of God, so that wherever they went in or out of their home they saw reminders of the need to make the Word of God central to their life and work. Isaiah 42:1-8, 44:6-8, 45:5-7, Jeremiah 10:10-11, Mark 12:28-33.

Verses 10 – 12. The basis of the Lord's demands upon His people is the grace gifts that He has given for His people to enjoy. The land was given to the people and they would receive all the blessings of that place without working for them. They would receive houses filled with goods, wells with water, crops in the fields, vines, fruit, olive, and palm trees. All these things would be theirs without any work to produce them. All they had to do was enter the land and fight the battles they were called to fight, and in the Lord's strength defeat the enemy. They would hold these things as their possession as they obeyed the Law. The danger they were in was that they would forget that the blessings came from the Lord and in their ease stop their daily worship of the Lord, and their obedience to His commands.

They were delivered from slavery in Egypt to prosperity in the land, in order to serve the Lord, and if they forgot that, they would lose their prosperity. Proverbs 30:5-9, Jeremiah 2:26-32, Ezekiel 14:22-23. These verses will be a comfort to the people of the Great Tribulation when they read them, and they see that their father's sins of forgetfulness have led to the great punishment upon the nation, but their repentance restores their blessing and assures their deliverance by the Lord.

Verses 13 – 16. They are to fear the Lord, serve Him, and when they take any oath to perform any duty, it is to be taken in the Lord's name. They are not to be distracted by the people amongst whom they will dwell, but reject their gods and destroy their evil paganism. They are not to be distracted by any thing or person from the true worship of the Lord their God. They are to remember that the Lord is a jealous God, and will not share them with others. They will be kept from evil by divine discipline, for the Lord will not let them drift away into disaster because of their slackness towards Him, or their being tempted by the pagans around them.

The Lord will deal with them in justice and love. They are not to moan and groan to God about how hard things are, or accuse God of being unfair, or unthoughtful towards them, as they did at Marah/Massah. Exodus 17:1-7, Numbers 20:1-13, 23-29. The last of these two incidents ended Aaron's ministry and his life, and meant that Moses would not enter the land of Promise at all. There was terrible judgment for God's leaders due to the sin of the people and their own anger at it. The message is strongly stated; do not tempt the Lord to judge you, because He will! Psalms 95:6-11, 1 Corinthians 10:9-13, Hebrews 3:7-11, 15-19, 12:5-15.

Verses 17 – 19. There was to be diligence in the keeping of the commandments. They were to apply themselves with the same concentration that a person has in business, in war, and in athletics. The athletes apply themselves to win a temporary crown of glory, which in these days lasted just for a few days of fame, yet we strive for eternal rewards. How much more "diligence" should we apply to our spiritual life?

All aspects of God's Word were to be known and applied by the people, in the same way as every rule of the athletics contests had to be applied by the athlete or they were disqualified. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Philippians 3:13-17.

They were to do the things that were "right and good" in the sight of the Lord. All the decision making of life was to centre round the one question; what is the best thing in God's sight here? Pleasing the Lord in all things is to be the sole desire of the believer. Philippians 4:4-9.

As the mind and soul is filled with good things that honour the Lord, so the believer overflows with the fruit of the Holy Spirit to others and so their ministry to the lost and the saved, finds its power.

These people had to see before they entered the land, that their ability to fight and destroy the enemy, as well as fight and destroy their own temptations, would depend on their saturation with the Word of God and their obedience to all God's holy demands towards them. They were to follow the Lord's instructions absolutely, and show no mercy to the unrepentant pagans; they were to destroy their evil religion, and all its vestiges were to be swept from the land. Exodus 23:28-33, Numbers 33:52-56.

Verses 20 – 25. The adults of every generation were to have an answer for their children as to why they were to keep the commands of the Lord through all generations. They were to base their faith upon the solid foundation of history. The historic reality of the Exodus was to be the base line for Israel's future history. The miraculous deliverance of the people from the power of Egypt (both its pharaoh and its gods), was to be their answer to their children's questions, and be the reasons for their on-going obedience in each generation. God was purposive in His deliverance; they were brought out of Egypt, in order that they might be brought into the land of promise. They would hold the land only through their obedience to the Lord their God, and they would lose it if they turned away from the Lord and His Law for them.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. We were delivered "out of" sin that we might be delivered "into righteousness". God's purpose is that we might serve and worship Him all the days of our life. Let us be as diligent regarding the scriptures as an athlete is regarding the rules of their competition.
2. Let us be "very scared" of tempting the Lord to discipline us for stupidity, for the Lord will deal with sin very directly. Divine discipline can be extremely serious in some circumstances. Let us walk with obedience and focused energy directed to following the path the Lord has for us.
3. There are eternal rewards for the believer who serve the Lord diligently in time. Let us focus upon the Lord's well done and the rewards He has for us in eternity and strive to live at the level the Lord wants us to be.

CHAPTER 7**INTRODUCTION**

We face the difficult issue of the total destruction of the local Canaanite population here again. How can a God who is loving consign an entire people group to death? Were there none that could be saved; even if only the youngest children? Whilst we know that Abraham had led at least a couple of these people to the Lord in the persons of Mamre, Aner and Eshcol, by this day the situation had totally changed, and it appears that the entire gene pool of these people was corrupt. They had become so totally decadent, and sexually polluted that they would be a walking genetic time bomb for the Jews had they interbred with these people. They were so dangerous that none of them were safe to touch physically. They were disease carriers both physically and spiritually because of the low form of their sexualised religion.

When you see a nice looking unbeliever and they are apparently cultured and religious it is very easy to start thinking about compromise. If you do find compromise occurs in such situations, you will find it is the believer who compromises, and they will always end up with the lowest common denominator being the point of contact. When people get together you find that it is to the lowest point that they go, and in such a place, the believer's testimony will have disappeared.

A lot of Christians underestimate the polluting power of paganism. The children of these 7 nations were by this stage sadly all born infected with incurable sexually transmitted diseases. When the children died in the campaign they were in God's care, and due to having not reached the age of accountability, the children went to heaven as we have previously seen.

This situation was an extreme one, and this is an exceptional case of judgment upon the Canaanites. This reality brings us back to the doctrine of the Character of God. In Deuteronomy you have to know God and history, and either see, or believe that you will one day see, that there are reasons for the things that happen. This is a really hard faith test, but one we cannot skirt around as we face these things before us here.

Evil in the world is not the will of God, but it is what has happened as a result of the fall of Satan and Adam. God is allowing the whole drama of history to unfold as a result of the fall, in order to give man a choice to do what he wants to do. This is the doctrine referred to as the ANGELIC CONFLICT. There is a battle for the minds and bodies of mankind, and when sexually transmitted diseases spread through a people group they are destroyed by it in time. Remember, Satan hates mankind, for we are the "evidence" that less advanced creatures than himself can accept the free offer of God's grace and mercy and be saved, and thereby he is condemned for he would not bow his knee to God.

As we read the accounts of what was done in this day each of us have to be convinced about the Righteousness and Justice of God in our own soul. These are hard things, and they are not to be wiggled away from, or ignored. Get to know the divine and human authors of this book so that you can come to terms with these hard things. We also need to accept that some of these things will only be understood fully when we see Him face to face. 1 Corinthians 13:12.

God makes it quite clear that he does not want us to compromise with evil. If there is a rotten apple in the barrel it will turn all the others rotten rather than the good apples restoring the rotten one. When we recognise that we are dealing with evil we must be ruthless in our opposition to it. There can be no compromise with evil people. We must defeat their strategies by walking in the Spirit around them, or they will destroy all the ministries they touch.

When walking through this present world we will come into contact with seriously evil people who are determined to do Satan's work until the day they die. These people are always going to baffle and sadden us, for we desire their salvation, and we see how much joy they could have in Christ, but they are determined to follow the enemy. We should always feel sad at their plight, but we must show them no mercy if they attack the Lord's work, for they have chosen their part to play in life and they are servants of Satan himself.

Even in the church the enemy's best and most dangerous people will be found at times. Satan's preferred strategy is to infiltrate his people into key roles, and so attack the ministries there from within. If you have someone causing serious problems in the church, it is important to follow the principles laid down in the scriptures, and to deal with them ruthlessly in accordance with scripture. The doctrine of Church Discipline covers this, and at times we must be ready to throw that troublesome person out, if required, to save others from contamination.

God says one thing but we often think or feel that another way will do, or will make us feel less guilty. If God wanted to give us a compromise option He would have given us ten suggestions. He didn't, He gave us Ten Commandments. God is not a kill joy but has given us these rules and principles for our benefit, to keep us safe in a dangerous place, and this world is a dangerous place. James 4:7-10, 1 Peter 5:5-11.

To apply God's Word you have to value it, study it, know it, believe it, and then apply it. 2 Timothy 2:19 This is the Lord's call to Moses and the people of his day and our own. We must take the Word of God seriously and throw ourselves into diligent application of all it orders, without thinking we know better than our creator!

DEUTERONOMY 7:1-26

7:1 When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, 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 thou; 2 And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: 3 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. 4 For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. 5 But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. 6 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. 7 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: 8 But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9 Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; 10 And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. 11 Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them. 12 Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he swore unto thy fathers: 13 And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he swore unto thy fathers to give thee. 14 Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. 15 And the LORD will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee. 16 And thou shalt consume all the people which the LORD thy God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them: neither shalt thou serve their gods; for that will be a snare unto thee. 17 If thou shalt say in thine heart, These nations are more than I; how can I dispossess them? 18 Thou shalt not be afraid of them: but shalt well remember what the LORD thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt; 19 The great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched out arm, whereby the LORD thy God brought thee out: so shall the LORD thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid. 20 Moreover the LORD thy God will send the hornet among them, until they that are left, and hide themselves from thee, be destroyed. 21 Thou shalt not be affrighted at them: for the LORD thy God is among you, a mighty God and terrible. 22 And the LORD thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee. 23 But the LORD thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed. 24 And he shall deliver their kings into thine hand, and thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven: there shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them. 25 The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it is an abomination to the LORD thy God. 26 Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it: but thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 4. Notice the way Moses speaks in the first verse of this chapter. Notice he says, “When the Lord brings you”. There is no doubt in Moses mind that they will be brought into the land. He expresses his faith in the plan of God, and that the power of God will always be sufficient to fulfill the plan of God. There is no doubt that the Lord will deliver, it is only a matter of the timing when the deliverance will come. The only doubts Moses has are about the people’s determination to obey the Lord once they have ease from fighting and are settled in the land. While battle rages they will do what they are told, but when they have peace they may become slack.

Moses knows psychology very well, for this is the common response of people after pressure comes off. They may do what is right under maximum pressure, but when it eases they will “ease up” on their rigid battle-oriented habits, and so can fall into dangerous and fatally slack habits. Strong and fit men can develop “beer pots” around their stomachs, and become unfit to fight within a few years of no training and poor eating. This physical deterioration mirrors the spiritual within. Moses knows the evil malice of the enemy and he wants the people to remember just how dangerous the evil of the Canaanite religious system is, and remain battle fit and spiritually devoted to the Lord until they die.

Seven nation or people groups form the Canaanite confederacy of the land of Canaan at this time. Each group has a pagan religious system that is satanic in origin. They hate the Lord God and are determined on genocide if possible; to defeat Israel if they can, and survive to infiltrate and subvert Israel later if they are defeated in battle. If any are left alive they will remain perverters of truth until they die.

The Israelites must destroy them all and then remain ever ready to defeat any further invasions of the land by their remnant armies that may have fled. They must not lose their battle fitness, nor their spiritual vigor and purity, or else they will not be in a state to defeat or resist these evil people. The price of their religious and personal freedom is everlasting vigilance, just as our own is also.

There was to be no mixing of populations. These people were to be utterly destroyed, and if any remnant later crept back, they were to be destroyed. No treaties/covenants of any sort were to be entered into with these people. They were

not to allow them to marry into their families, for these people would not ever cast away their paganism after their defeat, for their religion harboured revenge at its heart, and they would continue to worship their gods to gain that revenge on Israel.

It was normal in this day after battle to keep alive the prettiest of the women for wives for the soldiers later, but with these people groups this course of action was not safe, for sexual disease reasons, and for their religious belief system. Unless these people were saved before the battle, and came over to Israel (as Rahab will), they will not be genuinely saved later, they will just pretend salvation to try to save their lives.

The Canaanites were to be seen as evil to the core and treated as a polluted people that were a lasting danger to them. No mercy was to be shown them once battle was begun, lest they later destroy the people showing mercy. There is a saying in history that is sadly true regarding evil men and women. "You cannot safely show mercy to those who have shown none to others, or later none will be shown to you and yours". They must be totally ruthless and rigorous in the destruction of these people or they will later be destroyed by their children. Sadly Moses doubts about his people will be borne out, for under Joshua they will not eliminate all the Canaanites, and their children will harass and lead astray the grand-children of the Israelite invaders.

Verse 5. There is a lasting prohibition against any close association with determined pagans and their worship systems. Believers are to pull back and keep well away from all paganism, and in this day they were to thoroughly destroy all the remnants of it from the face of the earth. In our own day the Taleban of Afghanistan were criticized for destroying the two great statues of the Buddha that went back nearly 2000 years. They were looked upon as destroyers of heritage, yet in biblical terms they were right and biblical in their actions.

All the temples of Buddhism and Hinduism will be destroyed totally by the Lord on His return. No shrines where worship of the gods occurred will be left intact by the Lord, for they are places of satanic religious domination of people. The worship of the gods of the nations is the worship of demons and is to be seen as such. Believers are to avoid these places as places that are centres of demonism. We see things in terms of culture and archaeology, but God always sees things in terms of spirituality, and we must get used to seeing them that way also.

The destruction ordered by the Lord was to take place under Joshua, and sadly he will not be thorough enough and so the old worship of the pagan gods will come back to dominance in the land. The one chance to destroy all paganism was lost, and the evil returned to destroy the grand-children of Joshua's people. The altars, the images, the statues and the groves of trees (or circles of pillars) were to be destroyed and smashed, and if wooden were to be burned, and if metal they were to be smeltered into ingots.

Verses 6 – 8. The Israelites were to be a holy people before the Lord. This means they were to be a separated out people for the service and honour of the Lord. They were to stand for the Lord in the midst of the paganism of the nations around them. They were a chosen people; chosen to serve and minister God's truth and holiness to a dark world. They were to stand against the forces of Satan and they were to be the light bearers of the Lord to those who would seek the truth.

They were not chosen because they were great and powerful, but by God's grace and mercy, for they were nothing apart from the election/plan and power of God. They had been delivered from pharaoh, and would be delivered the land, because it was God's plan to deliver the land to them, but their holding of it was determined by the exercise of their free will in their weekly worship and in the holiness of their daily life.

Verses 9 – 11. Certainty in all things comes from the stability of the character of God and our relationship with the God who does not change. Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8. The Israelites are to remember the unchangeableness of the character of God and draw their strength from the certainties that surround His Plan. Believers become actively part of the Plan of God at the point of salvation and remain active within it through their holy obedience to the Lord. God does not change His Word, and if He has promised deliverance it will occur in His time. 2 Peter 3:7-9.

A thousand years or a thousand generations of man is nothing to the Lord, and the plan of God will be fulfilled, only the timing is unsure to man. On the basis of the certainties of the person, plan, and power of God, man is urged to keep God's holy Word in all the details of life. There is absolute certainty that the Lord honours those who honour Him, and He surely punishes those who hate Him. There is the certainty of deliverance for the believer, and the certainty of personal judgment for the unbeliever who has rejected God's Word and will for their life. Deuteronomy 32:35, Psalms 21:8-13, Isaiah 59:16-20, Nahum 1:2-8, Revelation 20:10-15.

Verses 12 – 16. The promise of the Lord to keep them safe is conditional upon their obedience to His Law. If they are obedient, then they will be kept and protected in the land of promise, but if they do not follow the Lord's instructions then they will suffer the penalty of those they dispossessed. Their tenure depends upon their obedience. The repetition of this principle is almost tedious, yet it reminds us of the need to constantly remind men and women of the truth lest they forget it in times of plenty.

Adversity is not the enemy of truth, but all too often prosperity is! When we relax things can slide past our guard, that a state of alert military tension would not have allowed to pass. Let us be alert to the enemy's devices and resist him in all things, or else we will fail to fulfill our destiny, just as these people did. They only ever got 50% of what the Lord had for them. Sadly many today do not even get that!

The land was promised to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, and so it will be received by the Jewish people who descend from these three men, but each generation decides whether they will reap this reward personally, or whether they will be under divine discipline. There are two ways for man to live in all the ages of man; God's "narrow way", or the "broad way" to eternal destruction. Men seeking the "easy street" of worldliness will always find it and reap rewards in time, for the Devil pays his subjects well for a time. Those who seek the Lord's face must seek His narrow (or constricted) way, the rough path of a disciplined life, heeding the Word of God and the Holy Spirit's guidance alone. Matthew 7:7-14.

Absolute pastoral blessing is promised to the Israelites if they worship the Lord in truth in the land He has given them. They will prosper there and be able to grow and fill the entire area, if only they will keep the Law that Moses has given them. Their destiny will be above all the peoples of the earth if they obey this Law. For a brief time in their history they experienced this from the reign of David through until after the dedication of the temple of Solomon, but it was lost as he fell into sin and the people fell into paganism again themselves. 1 Kings 1:1 -13.

The message of total judgment upon the pagans is given again. If they obey the Lord they will have freedom from disease, as well as having their enemies plagued by all the diseases that would otherwise plague them. All they must do is be obedient and destroy the enemy from before them or they will become a hidden trap for them.

Verses 17 – 26. Fear of the enemy is confronted by Moses head on now. He knows these people either are doubting or will doubt that they can win against such strong enemies, just as their parents doubted. Numbers 13:27 – 14:10. They will see with human eyes rather than the eyes of faith. Hebrews 11:1.

The basis for their faith is the facts of history, especially the way Pharaoh of Egypt was defeated and how all his gods were humiliated through the divine judgments upon them. Exodus 7-12. Moses makes a promise from the Lord to them of the same miraculous power being available to deal with their present enemies as dealt with pharaoh and Egypt. God's power has not had a crisis. There is no shortage of power on God's part, and the people are to "stand firm and see the deliverance of the Lord". Exodus 14:13-14, Psalms 27:14, Habakkuk 2:1-4, Romans 4:16-20.

Each of these texts above the Lord has given me strongly in recent months, in the great test that he has allowed me to go through since 2004. I have been in a place in our home situation and professionally where we cannot manoeuvre to escape pressures by normal human means, and only the Lord can really deliver us. The Lord has called me through these years to stand firm, keep working for Him with these studies, keep prayerful, and focus myself forward in spite of the pressures. As I reviewed these notes in July of 2011, and again in April of 2014, I am still under this pressure and the Lord has kept me through these long and hard ten years.

God is great, and God is gracious, and He still requires me to be obedient and I remain at my post doing his work. This is our call, as we await his deliverance, and I still expect that deliverance and have confidence in His Person, Plan and Power in my life. This was the challenge to these people, and I cannot expect to teach this unless I am applying it myself! This is the challenge for all who would be the pastors of the Lord's flock. We must learn and apply what we write, well before we teach it. The Lord expects application by His pastor-teachers well ahead of their teaching to the church.

The Lord will send the "hornets" ahead of the army of Israel. The fear of them will go ahead of them and the enemy will be beaten in their spirit before they enter into battle against Israel. God is with Israel and they are not to be afraid of anyone. 1 John 4:4-10. The Lord is with us and we are also not to fear any man or demon. This does not mean that we go into places we ought not go, or do things that are forbidden, but it means that when we walk with the Lord we can relax about our safety on the road.

The instruction is to defeat and destroy the enemies before them "little by little". Under Joshua they will defeat the main armies and take the main cities, but the next generation is to keep up the momentum and destroy the enemy each year until all are gone, and they are replaced by the Israelites.

This is another piece of evidence of the small numbers of the people under Moses. They do not have the population to seize and hold all the land without the lions coming back into the deserted suburbs around the outlying villages. They can take a number of key places and hold them immediately, and then each subsequent generation is to keep the Law, and so grow in numbers and power. God's purpose is that each new generation is to make war upon the remnant of the enemy and drive them further out, so that within two or three generations the Israelites are able to hold all the allocated territory.

The promise from the Lord is sure and stable. He will deliver to this generation and the next the heads of the pagan kings. None will stand against God's people when God's people obey their God. No-one will be able to stand against them when they fight under God's orders and in obedience to His Word.

Once again the order is repeated to destroy the images of the pagan gods, and deliver the silver, gold and iron and bronze that they are made of to the Lord. They are not to lust after the wealth or beauty of the pagan worship items, but they are to destroy all of it. They are to take nothing associated with paganism into their homes lest they be cursed with its presence. They are to hate all such things, as items of evil and objects of contempt. We are also to have a holy hatred of everything that is associated with the evils of satanic religion. There is to be no compromise with evil.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. All objects associated with paganism are to be banished from believer's homes. Visits to pagan temples are forbidden as associating with demons. We are to be people who stand for holiness and complete separation from the evil of the devil's world. Let us be known as people of purity, not people of compromise. The doctrine of separation is to be heeded, for all compromise with evil will pollute that which is good.
2. Love casts out fear, and it does so because Love is built upon knowledge of the person and power of the loved one. It is the certainty of the Lord's plan and power that enables us to defeat fear. Let us grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord and then we will be growing in confidence and defeating fear when ever it arises. 2 Peter 3:17 – 18.
3. We do not know better than our Creator, Lord and Saviour. We are given His orders for a reason, and we are to obey them and so keep ourselves from temptation and disaster. We are to retain our battle fitness all through life and be alert and fully armoured as we walk through each and every day. Let us not fail in prosperity, when we have walked close to the Lord in difficulty. Let us walk close to the Lord every day of our life. The cost of religious freedom is everlasting vigilance against evil. Let us walk in the Spirit, and so not fear what men or demons can do to us.
4. We must accept the sadness of the fate of the lost and yet not be ruled by our love for them as people so much that we forget their danger to us as the servants of evil they have chosen to remain. The damnation of the lost should always sadden us, for it is eternal and awful, but it is also a chosen path. We must simply ensure that we have given those we love every chance to accept the love of God for them. We must know that they go to the lake of Fire without any excuse, and that we can say our goodbyes to them without any regrets for what we ought to have said to them.
5. The eyes of faith see things in accordance with God's actions in history rather than our fears and the size and numbers of our enemies. Let us challenge ourselves in this matter; let us believe God's Word and apply it whatever the odds against us, and do what is required by God whatever the cost, leaving the outcome in the Lord's hands. Isaiah 29:13, Jeremiah 1:18-19, Ezekiel 3:3-6.

REFLECTION UPON CHURCH DISCIPLINE

1. Those who will not heed the Word of God within the church are to be first warned and then rebuked (privately if the error is private, or publicly if their error is public). 2 Thessalonians 3:14, Titus 1:13, 14.
2. If they still will not listen to the truth then the individuals are to be isolated from the fellowship and others are to separate themselves from them. 1 Timothy 6:3-5.
3. If they still refuse to change they are to be expelled from the fellowship. Titus 3:10, Galatians 1:6 -10.
4. Paul warns about false doctrine. 1 Timothy 1: 4, 11. Then he expels the two false teachers, Hymeneus, and Alexander, that they might learn the truth and stop blaspheming. 1 Timothy 1:18-20.
5. Any expulsion is only temporary; it applies only so long as the person is unrepentant. When they repent they are to be received back again as was the prodigal son, Luke 15:11-32, and the man in adultery. 1 Corinthians 5:1-13. 2 Corinthians 2:5-11.

REFLECTION UPON RELIGION

1. Satan's religion is a humanly acceptable one: no sin, no judgment, no Saviour needed, and no Hell. Satan appears as an angel of light – to deceive man that by his own efforts he has "done enough". (2 Corinthians 11:13-19, 26)
2. Many pastors in the churches are servants of Satan's policy, knowingly or unknowingly. (Isaiah 30:12, Jeremiah 2:8, 2 Peter 2:1-10)
3. Satan's strategy towards unbelievers is to keep them blinded to the gospel. (2 Corinthians 4:3-4, Colossians 2:8, 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10)
4. Satan's strategy towards believers is:-
 - a) To confuse by false teaching. (Matthew 7:15, Romans 16:18)
 - b) To appeal to pride. (2 Corinthians 10:12)
 - c) To promote idolatry. (Habakkuk 2:18, 19)
 - d) To promote legalism. (1 Timothy 1:7-8)
5. Satan's policy calls for counterfeit faith:-
 - a) Counterfeit gospel. (2 Corinthians 11:3-4)
 - b) Counterfeit pastors. (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)
 - c) Counterfeit communion. (1 Corinthians 10:19-21)

- d) Counterfeit doctrine. (2 Timothy 4:1)
- e) Counterfeit righteousness. (Matthew 19:16-28)
- f) Counterfeit way of life. (Matthew 23)
- g) Counterfeit power. (2 Thessalonians 2:8-10)
- h) Counterfeit gods. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SEPARATION

1. Believers are instructed to be separated from habitually carnal believers. (1 Corinthians 5:10, 11)
2. Separation is ordered from apostate religious organisations. (2 Corinthians 6:17)
3. Separation is commanded from unbelievers where scripture is compromised by the relationship or marriage, business partners. (2 Corinthians 6:14 ff)
4. Separation is commanded from the human viewpoint. (Romans 12:2, Romans 16:17, 18)
5. Separation is commanded from pseudo spirituality. (Romans 16:17, 18)
6. Separation is commanded from those who seek pleasure in fast living – pursuit of parties, immoral situations. (1 Peter 4:4)
7. Separation is commanded from other believers who reject Bible doctrine. (2 Thessalonians 3:14, 15)

NOTES

CHAPTER 8**INTRODUCTION**

The constant danger for God's people is that they become arrogant and forget their daily need of the Lord and His guidance in all things. The danger for Israel and for ourselves is that we forget the Lord in the hustle and bustle of daily life and fail to obey the clear teachings of His Word, because they simply no longer enter our minds.

The psychologists speak of a "learning and memory curve". By this they mean that we learn over a time frame during which a point of knowledge is repeatedly heard, applied into situations, and reinforced. A well learned principle may be retained for a long time, but unless there is regular application there is a memory, or "forgetfulness curve" that will operate over time, and lead to the complete loss of an item of knowledge that was previously well understood.

What we do not use regularly we lose! Moses warns the people that if they allow their knowledge of the person, plan and power of God to drop away from their minds, then they will drift into the area of divine discipline, and that will mean national and personal disaster.

DEUTERONOMY 8:1-20

8:1 All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers. 2 And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or not. 3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live. 4 Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years. 5 Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee. 6 Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him. 7 For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; 8 A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; 9 A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass. 10 When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee. 11 Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: 12 Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; 13 And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; 14 Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; 15 Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; 16 Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; 17 And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. 18 But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day. 19 And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. 20 As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 2. The testing times in the wilderness march were purposive. God's purpose was that the people might be humbled before Him and learn to trust Him and be obedient to Him in all things. God sought their obedience under pressures that made many turn away from Him. These verses are the opposite to the principles of the so called "prosperity gospel". This false gospel teaches that God's way is the way of constant blessing and praise, and that the believer will not have hard times, but blessing added to blessing all the days of their lives. Moses is teaching the exact opposite here.

God promises blessing in the path He has called the people to walk, but to open the door to that they must learn to walk humbly before Him and be ready to have their devotion tested under great pressures. They must learn to trust the Lord under these pressures, and keep His commandments in all situations, whether they are feeling good or feeling bad. God desires their obedience at all times, and He wants them to serve Him in adversity and prosperity. Psalms 119:1-6, 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2. Moses hopes that they have learned these things in the forty years of wandering, but he fears they will fall back, and he is right to fear this.

Verses 3 – 4. The people were placed in situations where they literally ran out of water and food. The Lord deliberately left them in situations where they wondered what He was doing with them. They had to face the pangs of hunger and feel thirst, and see their children hungry and thirsty and look to the Lord in earnest prayer. The Lord wanted them to learn to pray and depend upon Him for answers to prayer, and He wanted them to learn to trust Him, as again

and again He provided for them. They were to learn humility, and that is a thing we only learn under great pressure, in a situation where we are totally hopeless, and where our hope is in the Lord alone.

The people moaned and panicked at every point on the early journey when they faced a testing situation, but slowly over time they had learned that the Lord would come through for them. But their faith was still weak, even at the end, when they complained again in the wilderness of Zin, and Moses got so angry then that he forgot the words of God! Numbers 20.

The people could look back now however and see that for forty years the Lord had provided the manna every day outside their camp, and that every day they arose with good health. They did not suffer the vitamin and mineral deficiency diseases that the Arab peoples of these areas often suffered, with skin and cardiovascular problems and the swelling of the feet and ankles. Psalms 78:25.

Moses' point to them, and to ourselves today, is that the Lord provides for our daily bread, and He provides for our health. Our days are in the Lord's hands and "to the Lord belong the issues of death". Psalms 68:20. We will not die one day earlier than we are destined to die and we will be looked after by the Lord so that we can do the work that has been assigned to us. Psalms 119:15, Jeremiah 15:1, 24:4-7.

The manna was to stop once the people entered the land, as then they were expected to live off the land and all it provided for them. Today we are expected to work for our living, and the Lord's promise is that there will always be work that will meet our ministry needs. We are here upon the earth to serve the Lord and the Lord has the responsibility of ensuring that His servants are provided with the things they need to serve Him. We are His Ambassadors and an ambassador is not responsible for their own support, they do what they are directed to do!

The challenge to these people and to us every day of our lives, is to trust the Lord to provide the work we need to fulfill our financial obligations and work out our ministry. We say "amen" to any prayer asking for work, by rising early and heading out to any work that is provided, in humility, without any complaint or embarrassment about the nature of our work.

Verses 5 – 6. These points will be repeated by the writer to the Hebrews in Hebrews 12:1ff. The Lord does not deal with us as an angry tyrant, but as a loving father. His care and concern is shown by His patient dealing with us in all the testing circumstances we face. He waits for us to bless us, as we trust, obey and walk in the path He has prepared for us through the difficulties. 1 Corinthians 10:13.

The Lord wants us to WALK in the path He has prepared for us through this life. Each of us has a slightly different path and each is responsible to find the path through the Holy Spirit's ministry within, and walk it.

Verses 7 – 10. The land to which they are heading is a good land. The Lord has not led them this far to place them into a situation that is unsustainable but into a land that will support them fully. This land is able to provide all the staple foods of the day and all the luxuries. It is also able to be mined and bronze made locally. The people did not do this, but purchased the metals they needed from others, but within the Exodus generation there were metal workers and men able to smelt metals, both for good and ill. Exodus 31:1-5, 32:4. The outcome of all these good things should have been praise and worship from the people for the great blessing of the Lord.

Verses 11 – 14. All generations need to "beware" of forgetting the Lord and His Word. This was their danger, and they would fall into it, and this remains our danger today. Notice that it is the prosperity of the land that will be the biggest challenge to these people. They will be more likely to forget the Lord when they relax in their large houses and are surrounded by the extensive flocks and herds. They must never forget that they were delivered from slavery in Egypt, and the ever present danger in a violent world was that they would be enslaved again.

During the years of the Judges the Egyptian armies went through Canaan several times and destroyed areas of the land at will. The people of Israel were offered the land with plenty of prosperity to ensure their lives were good for hundreds of years, and all they had to do to secure this long term blessing was to be obedient to the Lord's Word and keep His commandments. Psalms 106:13-21, Proverbs 1:28-33, 30:5-9.

Verses 15 – 20. There were many dangers in the wilderness march, and yet the Lord brought them through them all with power and purpose. They were kept through the years of wandering and they will be kept in the land itself, but they must obey the Lord their God. God delivered water to them out of the rocks! There was nothing that the Lord did not do to assist them and bring them through to glory. God's plan called for blessing in the end, and it always does lead to blessing.

All we must do is walk the way He calls us to walk. We must never get to the place where we praise ourselves for what we have achieved, for all our power to do things comes from the good things the Lord has done. One alone deserves praise and that is the Lord alone. 1 Corinthians 4:5-16, 2 Corinthians 11:23 – 12:10.

It is the Lord who places us in our homes, into our workplaces, gives us health to work, and provides the work and the finances to enable us to achieve what He wishes us to achieve.

We must be obedient to His Word, and that means keep our body as the Temple of the Holy Spirit. This means we pay attention to our general health, we do not abuse our body, but ensure we are as well nourished as we can be and in as good fitness and health as possible. Having said this, all our gym training is nothing, if we do not recognise our Lord and Saviour as our King and follow His Word. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 2 Corinthians 6:16, 1 Timothy 4:7-8.

Any wealth we have, we have it from the Lord. Jesus tells several parables about the dangers of being self satisfied in wealth and not remembering that life is but a vapour, and that we dwell here upon the earth by the grace and mercy of the Lord alone. Luke 12:16-31, 16:19-31, James 4:13-17.

To leave the path of life is to walk the path of death! Deuteronomy 30:19, Proverbs 1:19, Isaiah 56:4, Daniel 9:9-14, Matthew 7:13-14. There is no third alternative in this world; we are either walking with the Lord in obedience to the holy Word of God, or we are walking with the enemy, in opposition or deliberate ignorance of the orders of our Creator and Saviour. Hebrews 2:3-10, 1 Peter 1:5-9. Moses is blunt and repetitive in his message is he not? If the people do not obey they will perish! It cannot be simpler than this, or more accurate for all the ages of man. Let us reflect upon this truth and be obedient to the Lord God our Saviour.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Our life is a vapour. We live and move and have our being upon this earth in the grace, mercy, and plan of God alone. In a millisecond all can be changed. Let us walk with respect for our God who keeps us here to serve Him, and so let us express our gratitude in humble service of the Lord each and every day we live. Let us praise God for another day today and determine to serve Him in power and with a focus upon His will for our life alone.

2. There are only two paths in this life. Let us celebrate the path of life by praise, worship, and the daily study and application of God's Word into the fabric of today, while it is called "today". Hebrews 3:7-15. Let us "buy up the time" of each and every day. As believers in the Lord we are to be good practitioners of time management. Every moment is to be seized and used for the Lord. Ephesians 5:14-18, Philippians 4:4-7, 13. We are to do all our earthly work, "heartily, as unto the Lord, not to men". Colossians 3:23.

3. What we do not use we will lose over time. Let us be hungry for the Word of God every day and feed upon it. Our job as pastors is, having fed upon the Word ourselves, to feed the flock of the Lord over which the Lord has given us oversight. John 21:15-17, Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:2.

4. If we are walking in obedience to the Word of God, any testing times are not for punishment, but to build faith and power. God will allow suffering and testing times to come into our lives as a part of our growth and training for greater service. Let us take the testing situations we face now to Him in prayer and seek the Lord's purpose in the midst of them. If we are hungry, thirsty, or short of anything required for service we are to, in humility and total dependence, seek the Lord's face and wait for His deliverance while we continue to serve Him in purity and truth. Let us meet the challenge today and as pastors seek to model this behaviour to the Lord's people.

REFLECTION UPON OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE – BACKSLIDING AND RECOVERY

1. Definition – falling from the standard of living that the Lord calls us to and living at a lower level of belief, behaviour, and emotion. Living in a state of embarrassment at the gospel, thinking as an unbeliever would.

2. The Lord knows who are his, we don't. 2 Timothy 2:19. A backslider is out of fellowship, and may resemble an unbeliever in every way yet still be saved. They are like the prodigal son. Luke 15:3ff. These people are different (although they appear to be the same) to religious unbelievers. 2 Peter 2:1-22, Jude 4-13, 18, 19, 22.

3. The Lord desires these people to be restored. Matthew 18:12-14, Luke 15:3-32. In the Old Testament this message is also clear. Hosea 4:14-19, 11:7, 8, 14:1-4, Jeremiah 2:19, 3:6, 8, 11, 12, 14, 22, 5:6, 8:5, 14:7, Jeremiah 31:22, 49:4.

4. Believers who are "offended" at the Word have failed to grow spiritually, and have slipped into a backslidden condition, thinking in terms of "worldliness" rather than scripture. John 6:61-63, Matthew 11:6, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Matthew 13:21, Mark 4:17, John 16:1, Matthew 24:9, 10.

5. The disciples all were offended at the Lord at his death. Matthew 26:31, 33-35, cf. 67-75.

6. Falling from grace is another way of expressing backsliding. Colossians 1:23, Galatians 5:4, 2 Peter 3:17. It means to fall from a place where you stand for grace and adopt an inferior way of living the Christian way of life, like legalism.

7. God disciplines the backslider, but their eternal security is secure. Hebrews 12:5-13, 16, 17, 1 Corinthians 3:12-15, 1 Peter 1:4, 5, 2 Timothy 2:11-13, John 1:12, Ephesians 1:13.

8. The Lord is able to keep us from falling, although we can walk away from his provision by following our pride rather than his truth. Jude 24. 1 Corinthians 10:11-14, 1 Timothy 3:6, 7.

9. At the end of the church age the Lord prophesied that there would be a time of almost total backsliding on the part of the organised church. 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 1 Timothy 4:1- 6, 2 Timothy 4:3, 4.
10. The Lord warns all backsliders very directly in Revelation 2: 5. No fruit for too long = sin unto death! John 15:1-5.
11. Backsliding and Recovery

Seven Steps Downwards

- a. Trifling with Sin Romans 13:14
- b. Yielding to Sin Romans 6:13
- c. Habitually Serving Sin 2 Peter 2:8
- d. Abandoning Ourselves to Sin Ephesians 4:19
- e. Being Abandoned by God to Sin Romans 1:24,26, 28
- f. Encouraging Others to Sin Romans 1:32
- g. Experiencing Hell on Earth James 3:6, 1 Timothy 5:6

Seven Steps Upwards

- a. Resisting Sin in our Attitudes James 4:7
- b. Overcoming Sin by Faith in Christ Galatians 5:16
- c. Habitually being Victorious over Sin Romans 6:14, 1 John 5:4-5
- d. Entering into the Secret of a Victorious Life Hid with Christ in God Romans 8:37, 2 Corinthians 2:14, Colossians 3:1-3
- e. Being Taken by God into Deeper Fellowship 1 Timothy 1:12, 1 Corinthians 4:2
- f. Delivering Others from Sin. Jude 22-23
- g. Experiencing Heaven on Earth Jude 24-25, Philippians 4:6-7

NOTES

CHAPTER 9**INTRODUCTION**

The danger of ignoring God's blessings and instructions has been Moses theme so far, but here he moves to what many would consider a more religious and even more dangerous problem. It is the danger of starting to believe that the Lord is blessing you because you are so good, righteous, and noble, and that you deserve blessing. This is Narcissism, and based in pride, and it is very common amongst legalistic people. This chapter covers the dangers of Pharisaism; the great danger of self-righteousness.

DEUTERONOMY 9:1-29

9:1 Hear, O Israel: Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven, **2.** A people great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the children of Anak! **3** Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God is he which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee. **4** Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the LORD thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee. **5** Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. **6** Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people. **7** Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the LORD thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the LORD. **8** Also in Horeb ye provoked the LORD to wrath, so that the LORD was angry with you to have destroyed you. **9** When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water: **10** And the LORD delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them was written according to all the words, which the LORD spake with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly. **11** And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights, that the LORD gave me the two tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant. **12** And the LORD said unto me, Arise, get thee down quickly from hence; for thy people which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt have corrupted themselves; they are quickly turned aside out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten image. **13** Furthermore the LORD spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff necked people: **14** Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven: and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they. **15** So I turned and came down from the mount, and the mount burned with fire: and the two tables of the covenant were in my two hands. **16** And I looked, and, behold, ye had sinned against the LORD your God, and had made you a molten calf: ye had turned aside quickly out of the way which the LORD had commanded you. **17** And I took the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands, and brake them before your eyes. **18** And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. **19** For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the LORD was wroth against you to destroy you. But the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also. **20** And the LORD was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time. **21** And I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burnt it with fire, and stamped it, and ground it very small, even until it was as small as dust: and I cast the dust thereof into the brook that descended out of the mount. **22** And at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibrothhattaavah, ye provoked the LORD to wrath. **23** Likewise when the LORD sent you from Kadeshbarnea, saying, Go up and possess the land which I have given you; then ye rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God, and ye believed him not, nor hearkened to his voice. **24** Ye have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you. **25** Thus I fell down before the LORD forty days and forty nights, as I fell down at the first; because the LORD had said he would destroy you. **26** I prayed therefore unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, destroy not thy people and thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed through thy greatness, which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand. **27** Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin: **28** Lest the land whence thou broughtest us out say, Because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land which he promised them, and because he hated them, he hath brought them out to slay them in the wilderness. **29** Yet they are thy people and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest out by thy mighty power and by thy stretched out arm.

REFLECTIONS**Verses 1 – 6.**

Once again Moses begins this section with the call, "Hear O Israel". The people must pay close attention to the instructions he is about to give and apply them into daily life. The people were to enter the land proper, miraculously to cross the Jordan, that at exactly the right moment would run dry, due to a blockage upstream. They were to cross over as a nation and seize the land starting at Jericho, and they would be faced with significant hill

fortresses that were well defended. They would seize these hill fortresses without any long sieges. This was unheard of in the ancient world, and only the Lord could do this, and deliver this mighty people to Israel.

The parents of this very generation had not believed it was possible to defeat the great "Anakim". Numbers 13:27 – 14:12. Their parents failed the test of faith and so they lost the right to live in the land. This next generation is ready to advance across the river and they must claim the enemy by faith, and see them as already defeated in the power of God. They must understand in advance of any battle, that the Lord has already gone over before them and the enemy is defeated in their spirits before Israel even takes the field of battle. Israel must see with the eyes of faith, and that means, they must see the Lord at work before they go to work themselves in obedience to the Lord.

The Lord will be like fire before the army of Israel and drive the enemy before them. They will defeat these people groups "quickly", and the speed will surprise all peoples who hear of it. They will move so fast that the enemy will not be able to put together a united front to even have a chance to defeat them. Caution and slow military techniques are not to be used. Every assault is to be followed by another, not by any periods of consolidation.

Attack is to follow attack, and they are not to give the enemy any opportunity to regroup. Israel is to be bold, even according to most, reckless, in their assault upon the peoples of the land of Canaan. They must move quickly, and fight often and fiercely, moving steadily through the land, taking on every target they meet with speed, and the Lord will give them victory.

The reason the land has been given to them is not their righteousness, but because of the wickedness of the Canaanites. The people of Canaan have lost their tenure to the land because of the great evil at the heart of their religion. The Israelites have been anything but perfect in their forty year sojourn in the wilderness lands, but they have been obedient enough to reach the place where they now stand arrayed for battle, and the Lord will honour the promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

They are not to get proud or over confident about their abilities, their righteousness or their obedience. The Lord bluntly reminds them that he sees them as a "stiff necked people". They are to walk humbly before the Lord and advance with recognition of grace and mercy, not any right or deserving to the blessing they are receiving. They must remember why the Canaanites have lost the land, for if they follow their example, they also will lose the land.

Verses 7 – 9. They are to remember their failures. This is an important point, and it raises an area of confusion for many believers and their pastors. We are rightly encouraged to put away our memory and guilt over sins forgiven, and it is right to leave aside our feelings of guilt in these matters, for we are forgiven, but it is also important to remember certain things about our past sinful patterns, so that we are not tempted to return to old paths of failure. There is a balance here that we all need to find, so that we are neither plagued by guilt for a past that is forgiven, or so over-confident and forgetful of our weaknesses that we fall into foolishness and disaster as a result.

They are to recall their past track record of rebellion and guard themselves against the temptation to moan, complain and reject the truth. Notice that Moses adds, "until you came to this place". They have been obedient here, in fact since crossing the brook Zered around the area of Hasa, they have been obedient and soldierly in their actions. Numbers 21:12ff. It was there that the last of the original rebels from the Exodus generation died and were buried beside the road. Deuteronomy 2:13-19. The last sexual rebellion, orchestrated by Balaam and Balak, cleaned out the last religious rebels from amongst the Israelites, but the rest of the people have been repentant and keen to advance into the land proper. Numbers 25:1ff.

Their recent history has shown that they are ready to learn and advance now in their service of the Lord. Things look hopeful on the surface, but Moses wants these people to be without excuse before God for any disobedience. This is our role as pastors also; to ensure that we fully teach our people the truth, so that they are without excuse before the Lord for any deliberate disobedience. Ezekiel 33:1-7, 1 Thessalonians 5:14, 1 Timothy 4:13, 2 Timothy 2:3, 4:1-5.

Verses 10 – 12. Moses reminds them of their parent's disobedience at Mt Horeb and his own breaking of the two tablets and his having to return up the mountain with the two replacement tablets of stone. Exodus 32:19, 34:1-4, 27-28. He reminds them that he was away forty days, and during this time the "Golden Calf" rebellion broke out. The "stickability" of their parents was only weeks long before they forgot about Moses and turned back to paganism. Exodus 32:1ff.

Moses received tablets written with the very finger of God, and in his rage at their parent's idolatry he would smash them. The Lord had already noticed their rebellion and called Moses down to confront it, but he would lose the plot there and so these tablets would be lost forever, and replacements be made by Moses to go into the ark.

Verses 13 – 17. Moses reminds the older ones and tells the younger ones who may not know, that the Lord offered to eliminate all the people at that point before Horeb. Exodus 32:9-14. Moses stood between the people and the Lord their God who was righteously angry with them. Moses was extremely angry at them also, but he became their mediator and their Saviour in these times of rebellion, for in spite of the nation's hatred towards him, (and his anger at their rebelliousness) he remained loyal to them and prayed for them every day.

Verses 18 – 20. Moses tells them that he fasted for another forty days before the Lord to pray for deliverance for the people. He poured his heart out for these people and he was ready to put his body on the line again and again to

assist their learning and their safety before their God. He was ready to do anything to assist them come through to the place of victory. He was fearful of the Lord's wrath towards the people, and his response was to place himself between the Lord and the people, offering his life for the people.

This man is the mentor for all of us who would be pastors of the Lord's people. This is the devotion the Lord calls us to maintain towards His people and for His work. Aaron was judged for this great sin in the matter of the golden calf, and he would later receive the sin unto death for his sin at Kadesh the second time. Numbers 20:12. Moses buried his brother with the sadness of a man who recognized his weaknesses and his own weaknesses and knew that the pressures both of them had faced from this people were above and beyond the pressure most would ever face in a life time.

Verses 21 – 22. Moses tells them that he ground the golden calf up and made them all drink it. Most of those who were the children then would not necessarily recall this event, but all over fifty would still have vivid memories of that day I suspect. Exodus 32:20.

Moses then lists a number of other times when the people sinned before the Lord on their march. Taberah, Numbers 11:1-5, Massah Exodus 17:7, Kibroth-Hattaavah, Numbers 11:4, 34. He reminds them that their parents provoked the Lord to anger and judgment, and they were judged as a result. The message he gives here is clear; the Lord will judge His people if He is provoked to by disobedience. Divine Discipline is a reality for the persistently disobedient – but blessing is always restored by confession. Romans 8:28.

Verses 23 – 25. That first time at Kadesh Barnea that generation of the people rebelled fatally against the direct order of the Lord to go up and seize the land. Numbers 13:26 – 14:19. Moses interceded again on their behalf but there was no remedy for that generation once they had clearly and finally rejected the Lord's direction. He had led them to the point of entry to the land and all the mighty acts He had done had given sufficient evidence that He was able to bring them into the land, but they rejected His will finally at this point and so lost everything they had hoped for and been prepared for by the Lord.

Verses 26 – 29. Moses very specifically tells them of his prayer, for in it there are the very principles that they need to claim now as they enter the land and seize it. Moses prayer was based upon the character of the Lord. He prayed on the basis of the promises and plan of God, knowing that the Lord would honour His promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Lord would not let the pagans mock His inability to deliver His people. They were not delivered because they were wonderful and great, but because they were recipients of God's grace and mercy and inheritors of His plan.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Our sins are put away from us as far as the east is from the west. Psalms 103:12. We are forgiven and may put the guilt and sorrow of our sins out of our minds, but the balance needs to be held between joy in our forgiveness and wariness about falling into the same sin again. The balance is set right when we remember our area of Old Sin Nature weakness and set our guard against sin there. Let us remind our people of the two truths; that sin is forgotten, but the area of weakness needs to be remembered and guarded against for all of life.
2. Just like Israel, we are inheritors of the grace and mercy of God in our position in Christ Jesus. Through our union with Christ we have grace, mercy, and peace, and blessing that comes by position, not by our worth. Let us praise the Lord for His grace towards us.
3. Let us thank God that we are treated by the Lord on the basis of the blood of Christ shed for us, not on the basis of our rebelliousness and our sins. We stand covered by the blood and we are seen as beloved sons and daughters of God. Let us praise His Holy Name for His love towards us.

REFLECTION UPON THE “SIN UNTO DEATH”

1. There is a sin unto death (1 John 5:16, 17, 1 Corinthians 11:31, 32).
2. The sin unto death is the physical death of a believer, where ultimate discipline is administered to the Christian due to unconfessed sin of a serious nature.
3. Confession of sin under the concept of 1 John 1:9 is the way to forgiveness.
4. Examples of sin unto death:-
 - (a) The Corinthian Pervert - (1 Corinthians 5)
 - (b) The Corinthians who habitually came to the Lord's Table in an unworthy manner (1 Corinthians 11:27-32)
 - (c) Moses (Deuteronomy 32:48-52)
 - (d) Achan (Joshua 7:16-26)
 - (e) Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5: 1-11).
5. Whilst there is a sin unto death there is no condemnation to them in Christ Jesus - all believers (Romans 8:1).

6. The effect of the sin unto death is to reduce the time which a believer can spend on earth accumulating good of eternal worth; the gold, silver and precious stones of 1 Corinthians 3:11-15.

DIVINE DISCIPLINE

1. Divine discipline is the result of a believer disobeying the will of God.
2. God disciplines all true children. Those who are not true children do not know discipline. (Hebrews 12:8; 1 Peter 5:9-10).
3. God's discipline of believers is shown in
 - a) Old Testament (Proverbs 3:11, 12);
 - b) New Testament (Hebrews 12:3-13; Revelation 3:19).
4. Attitudes towards God's discipline (Hebrews 12:3-15).
 - a) Think lightly of it (v 5).
 - b) Faint or become disheartened (v 5).
 - c) Endure discipline (v 7).
 - d) Learn and benefit from discipline. (v 11).
5. The effect of God's discipline
 - a) Discipline blesses the believer (Psalm 94:12)
 - b) Lives are changed (Hebrews 12:11)
 - c) It is for a limited time. (1 Peter 1:6, 7)
 - d) It is for the believer's benefit (Hebrews 12:10)
6. The believer who refuses to repent may be disciplined to the extent of death (1 Corinthians 11:30-31, 1 John 5:16)
7. Divine discipline never implies a loss of salvation. Galatians 3:26, 2 Timothy 2:11-13.

NOTES

CHAPTER 10**INTRODUCTION**

Moses continues the story from chapter nine here. What we will find is that most chapters are of uniform length from now on, with the exceptions of chapters 28 and 32. It is well to remember at this point that chapter and verse divisions only enter the sacred text as a part of the printing process in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. No early manuscripts of either Hebrew or Greek have "chapter and verse", they simply have long sentences and paragraphs. The chapter divisions are mostly helpful, but from a point of view of inspiration they can be set aside. Always read a passage in its context, and that means reading before and after it.

This chapter takes up the story and continues the account of events after the breaking of the first two tablets of the Law. Moses is telling the story in a didactic, or teaching and preaching style, much as both Asaph, in Psalms 78, and Stephen will later do in Acts 7. The facts and time sequence details are secondary to the points about the character of the Lord and the need for the people to walk forward in faith, obedience and in worship. This remains the way that we are to advance.

DEUTERONOMY 10:1-22

10:1 At that time the LORD said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto me into the mount, and make thee an ark of wood. **2** And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest, and thou shalt put them in the ark. **3** And I made an ark of shittim wood, and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in mine hand. **4** And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me. **5** And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the LORD commanded me. **6** And the children of Israel took their journey from Beeroth of the children of Jaakan to Mosera: there Aaron died, and there he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered in the priest's office in his stead. **7** From thence they journeyed unto Gudgodah; and from Gudgodah to Jotbath, a land of rivers of waters. **8** 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 unto him, and to bless in his name, unto this day. **9** Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD is his inheritance, according as the LORD thy God promised him. **10** And I stayed in the mount, according to the first time, forty days and forty nights; and the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also, and the LORD would not destroy thee. **11** And the LORD said unto me, Arise, take thy journey before the people, that they may go in and possess the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give unto them. **12** And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, **13** To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good? **14** Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is. **15** Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day. **16** Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked. **17** For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: **18** He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. **19** Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. **20** Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name. **21** He is thy praise, and he is thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen. **22** Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons; and now the LORD thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 4. In this passage Moses gives us additional information to that written up previously in Exodus 34:1-4, 27-29. Now at this point re-read those verses, for they appear to say that Moses himself had to carve the words upon the stone, yet these verses before us here appear to teach that the Lord wrote the words upon the second set of tablets. What is the truth here? The clue to this is in the break up of the chronological order of the events here. The instructions regarding the Ten Commandments were received before the tablets were carved in stone the first time. (Exodus 20:1ff, 31:18). The stone tablets were given as solid testimony for the people, and were to be kept later in the ark, which spoke of the one who was to come and be their Saviour. Re-read the Commentary on this section of Exodus.

The Tabernacle and the Ark were made after Moses returned from the mountain that second time, although the instructions to build them were received before he goes up the mountain to receive the first tablets. Exodus 25:8-24, 36:1ff. Until the Ark is made, the tablets of stone may have been set up before the people each and every day in some prominent place; possibly by the temporary altar that operated until the tabernacle began its operation. From the point they are placed in the Ark no Israelite ever sees them again, but the people of this generation clearly saw them, and all those over fifty would remember that day when the first tablets were smashed by Moses, as they could remember the arrival of the second replacement set.

Now who carves the second tablets? The first were clearly totally made by the Lord God Himself; carved by the very "finger of God". Exodus 31:18. The second tablets were physically made by Moses, as he was instructed, but did he carve the letters? Exodus 34:1-4. This passage here in Deuteronomy corrects our initial reading of Exodus 34:27-29. Moses tells us here that the Lord did write the words on the stone that second time. Moses job was to write up the entire event on paper later. Perhaps Moses is stating the fact that God carved the words again, to qualify and clarify the complicated words of Exodus 34:27-29, written earlier, which leave open who may have carved the words. We cannot be sure at this distance.

Verse 5. Now Moses runs together events that are spread over a considerable time here, as the Ark may be weeks in the making. His focus is not upon the time taken, and interim placement of the tablets, but the end result that is still with the people today. The tablets of stone are hidden in the Ark and the Ark is hidden in the tabernacle, and whenever it is moved, it is hidden under the coverings. Exodus 40:3, Numbers 4:4ff. This divine testimony to the reality and application of the Law is now hidden from their sight, but they saw it received.

The next generations will only read the story of its reception and being placed in the Ark. The truth must be passed by word of mouth, and it must be passed accurately and often to each generation, so that all remember the events by Mt Horeb. This generation must apply their faith, on the basis of what they remember they saw, but subsequent generations will have to depend upon their teaching of these truths. They must walk in faith; believing a truth that is now visually hidden from them. John 20:29-31, 21:24-25, 2 Corinthians 5:7, 1 Peter 1:8-12, 2 Peter 1:16-21, 1 John 5:13-15, Jude 3.

Verses 6 – 7. The children of Israel were a long time by Mt Horeb and the Law was received there in full and apparently recorded there by Moses in the books we now call Exodus and Leviticus. Numbers 3:11ff, 10:11-13. The account of the specific places journeyed to is now very briefly overviewed. The places listed are, Beeroth, Jaakan, Mosera, and then Moses mentions the death of Aaron. This is the clue that the places are not associated with leaving Horeb that first time, but are simply a selection of places, for he moves straight to the death of Aaron which occurs 38 years later after they leave the Wilderness of Zin that second time. Numbers 20:1-29.

Now turn over to Numbers 33. Read through the names of the places and see what Moses has done here in his selection of these names. The incidents that occur in these places are the important thing for this speech. It is also a reminder to us that the history of the Exodus wanderings were recorded well before this and are being read to the people often, or otherwise three random names will mean nothing.

The first correction that needs to be made will be seen from your reading of the place names of Numbers 33. There is no such place as Beeroth. Now what is the explanation? The explanation is easy here. "Beeroth" means "the wells of ". There are only two places mentioned here not three. The first is "The Wells of the Sons of Jaakan", (Bene-Jaakan) and then Mosera (Moseroth).

It is a reminder that in the Semitic language of the time there were variant ways of expressing the names of places, which were simply resting places, not settled cities or even villages. The places listed as stops on the way from Arabia back to Kadesh Barnea, (Numbers 33, verses 31-36) are also camped at on the way from there to the Promised Land. Aaron's death occurs in this time frame by Mt Hor, but at the camp called Mosera/Moseroth. The word means "a place of correction", and so it was, for the people were corrected, and Aaron was corrected also, and then brought home to be with his God.

Moses point in recounting the death of Aaron, is not to get the actual chronological sequence of events 100% correct, but to record the theological truth, that the sins of the people at these places did not stop the grace of God continuing and the High Priest's office being passed on to the next generation. They also have inherited the promise of their fathers even though they failed with Aaron. All these people would die the "sin unto death" because of their sin at Kadesh Barnea, Numbers 14:1-29, and Aaron and Moses would die this death of judgment before they reached the Promised Land also.

All this generation were judged, but they are saved and enter heaven. Their failure to enter the land does not stop them repenting of their sin and being forgiven, and being restored to eternal blessing. Moses mentions these places because they are places that testify of God's grace and forgiveness, and that even though these people lost the land, they did not lose their God. This generation taught their children the truth and so their children are ready to enter the land now. They too may fail, and they are to remember that God judges, as He did with Aaron, but that God also forgives those who are repentant, and the failure of one generation does not rob the next of their hope to receive the blessing of the Lord.

The journey back from Ezion Geber took them through country now desert waste, but then flowing with streams and rivers. Numbers 33:32-36. The Lord provided for their flocks and herds on the journey, for on that last lap, as they headed north towards the land of the Amorites, they needed to move quickly and their attack needed to be a surprise to all the peoples of that part of the land. The flocks and herds could only move quickly with readily available water, and the Lord ensured they were moving at a time of year when that was available. God provides for all our needs on the path He calls us to walk, and He provides for our goods and livestock also! The Lord intended to bring these people into the land of promise and so they were kept on their journey, just as we are kept on our journey through life.

Verses 8 – 9. The evidence that Moses is deliberately ignoring the time sequence to make the theological points is here really made clear, for he now returns to the selection and setting aside of Levi for their task. It is theologically logical to mention them here, as he has just mentioned Aaron. This is the Hebrew way of speaking and

teaching, where time sequence is not important, but connection of ideas and themes is. Our western mind likes a set time sequences, but the ancient people didn't connect time sequences as having much significance at all, for they understood, where we often do not, that God is beyond time, and He wants us to see the connections He makes, not simply the sequence of events.

Moses refers to the importance of the tribe of Levi, set aside for the service of the tabernacle and the duties of the priesthood. The point he makes also connects to his own and Aaron's loss of any tenure in the land. Just as Moses and Aaron will not inherit the land, neither will all the members of their tribe inherit any land at all. They will receive the use of land in each tribal area, but their service of the Lord means their focus is to be eternal, not temporal. Numbers 35. They are to serve without having any "continuing city" here on the earth, just as we are called to have our focus upon heaven not the things of earth. Hebrews 13:13-15, Matthew 6:19-21, 1 Corinthians 3:10-17, 2 Corinthians 4:6-11, James 5:1-8.

Verses 10 – 11. Moses now returns back to the message of the Lord when he prayed for them that first time he was up the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments upon the tablets of stone. This is a further reminder of this very Hebrew way of preaching and teaching, where time connection doesn't matter but Theo-logical connection is all important.

Moses reminds them again that he interceded for their lives at that time, and the Lord answered his prayer and saved the people from the immediate death penalty. Moses connects this past time event with this present time, when they are ordered to enter the land.

Moses connects the forgiveness of the Lord for the people at Horeb with his speech on the plains of Moab, because theologically they are connected, for only the grace and mercy and love of God has brought them here, and the door is now open to them to enter the land. Unlike their parents at Horeb and later at Kadesh Barnea, their faith must not fail them this time; they must cross the river and enter the land. Moses moves on in the next verses to call them to say "amen" with their feet as they march up to the river's bank. Joshua will be tasked to execute this plan and enter the land.

Verses 12 - 13. These words are often known well by believers, but they do not know the context of them. These words come as the exhortation after severe warning. We are to read these words with the understanding that there is great blessing promised and great judgment threatened as their background. What does the Lord require of us in all generations? Here we read the answer. We are to:

1. Fear the Lord, and stand in awe of Him, rather than being in awe of men and other powers. Psalms 34:8-11.
2. Walk in His ways. We are to value the Word of God, learn it and believe it, and apply it into our daily lives in practical details. Psalms 81:13-16, Ezekiel 11:19-20.
3. Love the Lord with all our hearts. The natural result of true understanding of the Lord's grace towards us will be love for Him. Psalms 18:1-3, 145:14-20, 1 John 4:7-21.
4. Service is the natural outflow from the reservoir of love. Service in the Church, and in the community in Jesus name is the sign/fruit of love working out. It is whole-hearted service without holding back the energy of the body or the money in the wallet. Zephaniah 3:7-9.
5. Keep the clear Commandments of the Lord. Proverbs 9:10-12, John 15:1-17.
6. Keep the statutes. These were the rules relating to daily life. We have fewer of them than the Israelites did, and in this area only we depart from their action application. This means today that we dress, eat, act and speak in a manner becoming the ambassadors of Christ.
7. Follow the "daily orders" received. This refers to the command to advance into the land for these people, but will cover our action of all answers to prayer for us. If the Lord provides specific guidance, then we are to apply it. Jeremiah 32:39-44, James 1:19-27.

Other prophets will refer back to these words and repeat their basic provisions as a way of reminding later generations that the rules of the Lord have not changed, and they will not change. Jeremiah 1:9-17, 3:12-15, 7:21-34, Micah 6:6-9.

Verses 14 – 15. When in any doubt about who you are, and who God is, always look up into the starry heavens, and remember you are a creature speaking with your creator. Psalms 8:1-5, 57:5-11, 96:5-13, Hebrews 1:10. The Lord our God made the heavens, and one day they will be unmade. Nuclear implosion was discovered to be a possibility with man's uncovering of "black holes" in the universe, yet Peter, the fisherman of Galilee, had spoken prophetically of them in his last letter. 2 Peter 3:10-14.

By looking up to the majesty of the creation, we recall the majesty of the Creator, and we orient ourselves correctly to reality, and through the revelation of God's Word we understand our place in this present world. We are here to **worship, witness, and work** for our Lord and Saviour. Many say they are looking for the Lord's will for their lives. Well, this is the Lord's will, and if this is done the details for daily life will become clear.

The parents of the generation that is hearing these words on the plains of Moab were loved by the Lord, but they did not return their service and love to the Lord, but moaned and complained to the Lord. The parents of these people sinned against the Lord's love for them, and ignored His provision, and so they lost His blessing and found only death in the wilderness. God's choice is now upon this present generation, as it had been upon their disobedient parents, and they must choose now to accept their destiny and walk in it through their daily obedience to the Lord's words.

Verses 16 – 18. There is always an application point after any understanding of a doctrinal truth. Once the people have accepted their uniqueness before the Lord and accepted their call to be people of the Lord for blessing, they are expected to respond and say “amen” with their feet. God’s “In-Put” into our life is Bible Doctrine. There is always an action “out-put” of faith required. Remember the principle behind James 2:14-26. Faith without works is a contradiction; for all genuine faith will “work out” into the fabric of daily life. Real faith does not exist alone, it always produces fruit in the life and witness of the believer in the community.

For this generation, their application point is to circumcise their flesh (for this has been forgotten in the wilderness marching by some) but they are also to circumcise their hearts and set themselves totally apart for the Lord their God. They are not to reject the words of the Lord, but to set themselves the task for total daily obedience to the Lord their God. Obedience is a “task”, to which we must commit energy. Unless we determine to follow the Lord’s will and Word each day, we will find the details of daily life will overwhelm us and we will not do what is required.

God is not like the puny gods of the pagans. He is not a limited demon, who though scary to man has no power to fulfil his promises, or complete his threats. God is the creator and the only one able to be the Saviour of mankind. God cannot be bribed, nor can He be threatened. God stands up for the weak and helpless and defends the righteous. He will judge the guilty, but will protect and bless those who are obedient to His Word. God provides the necessities of life to those who serve Him in spirit and in truth. Matthew 6:25-34, John 4:23-24.

Verses 19 – 22. Love was not to be exclusively given only to their relatives and neighbours (who were all distant relatives through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), but to any stranger who lived amongst them in obedience to the Law of the Lord. They were to remember that they were treated badly by the Egyptians in the end, and they were not so to treat anyone who honoured the Lord, no matter what their background.

They were to be totally devoted to the Lord. They were to “cleave” to the Lord as a faithful wife to her husband. They were to swear by the name of the Lord alone and serve the Lord all the days of their lives. Their humility was to be expressed in praise, in which they recognized that the Lord alone was the source of their blessing and the origin of their strength. They had entered Egypt as seventy people and now were tens of thousands strong, and this growth was after over one hundred years of sustained persecution. They are to remember their history and give praise, honour and glory to God for what He has done, and they are to honour His Word in all things.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. There is always a required “out put” action that reflects genuine biblical faith. Faith without works is a contradiction in terms. Let us ensure we put the Gospel message into shoe leather each and every day. Let us be obedient to the Lord our God and serve Him in spirit and in truth.
2. Let us trust the Lord for our necessities and work in the area the Lord has called us to work within. Let us say “amen” each day with actions that speak of our love for the Lord and our trust in His Plan for us.
3. We must walk in faith, trusting in realities we can see with the eyes of faith alone. We must trust in the truths passed to us from the Prophets of God and Apostles of the Lord many years ago. We are to trust their words, just as the Israelites had to trust the words received from Moses. We will be kept on our journey through life, just as the Israelites were kept on their journey through life.
4. Have we spiritually exercised ourselves today in reflection upon the Lord’s commands to us and the need to apply His Word into the fabric of today? Hebrews 3:7-15. Let us look up at the stars tonight and remember we are dust ourselves, but we are called to glorious service and we are called to praise Him who has given us the heavens and the earth in which to serve Him.

NOTES

CHAPTER 11**INTRODUCTION**

Two important themes emerge immediately from this chapter; the first is the theme of love, and the second is the consistently repetitive nature of the teaching of Moses. Moses anchors all the Law upon the foundation of the love of God for His people, and their proper response of love to their creator and Saviour. He teaches in what I call a spiral fashion; with the same subjects and “catch cries” being returned to often, re-covered, and reinforced.

It is by repetition of key points that we learn over time, as each time a subject is re-covered it is covered in slightly more detail and with a slightly different emphasis. The Mosaic Law is fulfilled as the believer loves God and his neighbour as himself. Matthew 5:43-45, 22:35-40, Luke 10:23-37, John 13:34-35, 14:15, 15:9-19.

While the Mosaic Law is set aside at our point of history, and replaced by the “Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus”, Romans 7:21 – 8:4, the principles behind it last forever, and the Law of Moses will be taken up again in the Millennial Kingdom, and will be the basis of the Legal System of the entire world.

DEUTERONOMY 11:1-32

11:1 Therefore thou shalt love the LORD thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, always. **2** And know ye this day: for I speak not with your children which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of the LORD your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his stretched out arm, **3** And his miracles, and his acts, which he did in the midst of Egypt unto Pharaoh the king of Egypt, and unto all his land; **4** And what he did unto the army of Egypt, unto their horses, and to their chariots; how he made the water of the Red sea to overflow them as they pursued after you, and how the LORD hath destroyed them unto this day; **5** And what he did unto you in the wilderness, until ye came into this place; **6** And what he did unto Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben: how the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their households, and their tents, and all the substance that was in their possession, in the midst of all Israel: **7** But your eyes have seen all the great acts of the LORD which he did. **8** Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land, whither ye go to possess it; **9** And that ye may prolong your days in the land, which the LORD swore unto your fathers to give unto them and to their seed, a land that floweth with milk and honey. **10** For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs:

11 But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: **12** A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year. **13** And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, **14** That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. **15** And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full. **16** Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; **17** And then the LORD's wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you. **18** Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. **19** And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. **20** And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: **21** That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth. **22** For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him; **23** Then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves. **24** Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be. **25** There shall no man be able to stand before you: for the LORD your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as he hath said unto you. **26** Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; **27** A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: **28** And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known. **29** And it shall come to pass, when the LORD thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal. **30** Are they not on the other side Jordan, by the way where the sun goeth down, in the land of the Canaanites, which dwell in the champaign over against Gilgal, beside the plains of Moreh? **31** For ye shall pass over Jordan to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God giveth you, and ye shall possess it, and dwell therein. **32** And ye shall observe to do all the statutes and judgments which I set before you this day.

REFLECTIONS

Verse 1. The command to have love centrally placed in the life of the believer is given boldly first, and then the reasons for this will be given. Moses will draw upon what they have seen of the deliverances and the judgments of God as evidence for their serious and regular obedience. Psalms 116:1-7.

They are to love the Lord their God, and that love is to overflow into keeping the stewardship that He has given them, as His light bearers to the world. To be His stewards means to be His people representing Him upon the earth, and that means keeping His standards, and following His laws always. Psalms 105:37-45.

Verses 2 – 7. Moses will not live long enough to minister fully to the next generation, so he passes the truth on to these people so that they can pass the truth on to the next generation. They have seen the great acts of God, but the next generation will only hear about them. Miracles will not occur for them very often at all, for in the plan of God they have only occurred in a concentrated manner with this Exodus group.

Miracles occur in accordance with the plan of God, not the desires of men to see dramatic things. The children of these people will not see what their father's saw, for their challenge is to believe the words of the fathers and mothers and apply them in trust as to their truthfulness. Proverbs 22:16-21, John 20:24-31, 1 John 5:9-15.

The two categories of the Lord's miracles are then noted by Moses as a reminder to the people that they either walk under the blessing, or the judgment of the Lord. Moses reminds them that the judgment of the Lord upon those who were the "drama kings" of their time is a warning to others to be careful and prayerful in their obedience to the Word of the Lord. Firstly he reminds them that the deliverance from Egyptian power was by the power of God alone. Exodus 14 – 19.

The deliverance of the people was "by faith", but it was not their faith, rather it was the faith of Moses that they walked in, it was his "baptism" they shared in. 1 Corinthians 10:1-15. The people doubted at every turn, but Moses trusted the Lord and set the example of faith at every turn. The role of the pastor is seen clearly in this; to set the example of faith and hope to the people, and so teach them to trust the Lord. Psalms 145:1-21.

The pastors motto is always, "follow me". Philippians 3:12-17, Hebrews 11:23-29. Let us be worthy of this!

The generation that Moses addresses have seen the Lord's deliverance from Egypt and the perils of the wilderness march, and they have also seen the Lord's judgment of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Numbers 16:1ff. Refer back in this study of Moses to the Commentary on this chapter. The deaths of these people was a warning to follow exactly the words of the Lord, and do not go beyond the Lord's words in any matter.

It is a serious thing to desire to be a "master" of the people of God. Pastors are required, like Moses, to be mentors of truth and good behaviour, and they are, like Moses, disciplined twice as hard as the people of the Lord. James 3:1-2. There is no room for pride in the pastor's life, for he stands before the people in the place of the Lord, and is to be Christ like in his life and words. Matthew 23:8-12, Mark 12:38-40, Luke 12:48.

Verses 8 – 12. To guard the Word of God in the heart is to build internal strength day by day. The only way to build strength to achieve the objectives the Lord has for us in this life is to feed on the Word of God each and every day and apply it into the fabric of daily life. As we feed upon the Word we learn more of the character of God and more of His mighty deeds in the past, and so we build our faith in the present, and for the future.

Only as they build faith will they have the strength to go in and possess the land. They will need to take on enemies who outnumber them in every battle, and to do this they will need absolute trust in the Lord their God to deliver the enemy into their hands. They must seize the land by force; for it will not be handed to them on a plate.

We too need to pour ourselves out in the Lord's service, not hold back any energy. We are to trust the Lord for tomorrow and that means we "go for it" today. If we are fighting for an objective nothing is to stand in our way, and we are to walk in the Holy Spirit's power to seize the objectives. Psalms 128:1-3, Isaiah 40:31.

This land they are entering is not like the land of Egypt, watered by foot powered irrigation devices. This land is a land that depends upon the rains to fall upon it. These people's parents had not grown up seeing rain, but for forty years in the wilderness they have seen the rains come in the seasonal cycles and they must learn to use them to feed their families once they get into the land. They have to learn totally different horticultural and pastoral techniques, and they must learn them quickly or their families will starve.

The learning curve will be steep when they enter the land and Moses does not want them to be under any misunderstanding that the Lord intends them to throw themselves into learning every new thing they must master, and not wait for Him to provide things that He now expects them to provide for themselves.

Previously they had tended their flocks and herds and obtained the milk and meat at times, but their main food was the manna, but now they must work all day, every day except the Sabbath, to feed their families, and they must do it without complaining or acting as if it is an unfair judgment. The manna was special, but its days are over.

They must accept the new age and work in it with all their heart, for they have simply returned to the real world, covered by the consequences of the fall of man, that they had been especially protected from during their wanderings. Genesis

3:17-19, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15. God's eyes are upon them in this new land, and they need to remember that, but they need to remember that as they live in active obedience to everything the Lord has told them to do.

Verses 13 – 15. The word "if" is a small one, but it has big significance for these people, as it does for us today. If we obey we are blessed, and if we disobey we are disciplined. Pastoral blessing through the fertility of the land is tied to their obedience in the things of the Spirit. Their spiritual prosperity will open the door to their agricultural prosperity.

They must be ready to work all day and night to bring their crops in, but the Lord will ensure there are crops to bring in, IF, and ONLY IF, they are obedient to His law. If they obey the Lord's Word they can relax in the Lord's provision, and then work within His care and protection. All their work will prosper if they base their lives upon the Word of God, but all their work will come to nothing if they walk outside the Lord's will for their lives. Malachi 3:6-18.

Verses 16 – 17. The big danger of the land is the fertility religion of the pagan gods and goddesses (read "demons") of the land. They will not kill all the Canaanites as they are ordered, and so their evil religion will prosper and they will influence the Israelites to leave the truth and follow their lies. When they leave the truth and walk after the lies of the pagans, then they will be placing themselves outside the will and plan of God for them, and they will come under the discipline of the Lord. The Lord will not share us with evil, for He is jealous of our blessing and seeks our best.

The Lord will not let us fall into evil without judgment upon us, because He will not share us with the devil and will not see us slowly eaten away by his evil work. If the people allow themselves to be led astray by the deception of the evil that surrounds them they will know that the Lord is judging them by the drying up of the land. Drought will be one of the first signs that they have strayed away from the Lord. When the rains fail they are not to fail to fall upon their knees and confess their sins before the Lord and return to godly paths in order to restore the rains. Joshua 23:6-13, Haggai 1:5-11, 1 John 5:21.

Verses 18 – 21. Regular and consistent education in the truth is the only preservative of the truth for any people. When we stop teaching the living Word of God we stop protecting ourselves and our people. It is the regular and repeated teaching of the truth that protects us from error. Unless we are saturated in the truth we will over time be deceived by the error of evil. Let us keep on feeding the people God's Word and so protect them from error of all sorts.

Notice that the constant subject of conversation is to be the Word of God. They are to teach it, and preach it, and discuss it, at every opportunity. They are to sit with their children and speak of the things of God. When they walk, when they sit, and when sickness or age has forced them to lie down, they are to speak of the grace, mercy and love of God towards them. They are to thoroughly inoculate the people of God from evil by daily doses of the Word of God. 2 Timothy 2:14-19, 3:1-7, 4:1-5.

Verses 22 – 25. They are to "diligently" keep the commandments of the Lord. They are not to lightly or casually live their religious life, but live it with all their strength and power. They are to "cleave" to the Lord, as a wife clings to her loving and faithful husband. They are to walk with the Lord and then He will drive the enemy out before them. If they fail to walk with the Lord they will fail to drive the enemy before them. Sadly this generation will fail to follow through completely, and the enemy will remain as serpents to bite their heels.

The land borders they are given could have stretched from the Euphrates to the River of Egypt below Gaza. They could have inherited most of the Lebanon and Syria, but they will not because they lack the faith to seize their objectives. The Lord has already gone before them and the people of the land stand in fear of them. They just need to be courageous and attack the superior forces that oppose them. This takes faith in action! They will have it initially under the leadership of Joshua, but they will flag over the next few years and the land given by God will never be totally captured.

They are asked to really stretch out their faith and reach for a humanly unattainable goal, and they could have done it in God's strength. We also stand in this sort of place every day. The Lord asks us to walk in His power and do things that are humanly impossible, but in His strength they are possible. Let us stretch the borders of our faith and stand for the Lord today. Isaiah 54:2-5.

Verses 26 – 28. The stark daily choice is laid before them again here; will they have blessing or cursing? The choice is theirs to make daily, and it is ours also to make daily. They make it every time they choose to follow the Lord's Word, or decide to slip away and follow the pagan gods of the land. If they do that, then they will suffer great discipline and severe consequences. If they will obey the Lord they will inherit the blessing of the land, but if they fail to follow these things, then they will suffer, for the devil opens the door always to suffering, for he hates mankind!

Verses 29 – 32. When they enter the land the Lord wants the blessings and curses to be literally read out aloud to the entire people gathered between two literal mountains; Mt Ebal and Mt Gerizim. All the people will be there, except possibly the women and children of the tribes that stay on the Eastern side of Jordan. It is not clear at this point whether the women and children of these tribes will remain behind, as the plan was, or join the people at Gilgal. Numbers 32:16-25. For protection during the campaign of Joshua, I would suspect they joined the rest of the people, rather than stay on the East bank unprotected, but they may have with just the older and younger men to protect them. We will see this more clearly in Joshua's account of events in the book that bears his name.

Moses plan, following instruction from the Lord is for a great drama to be acted out, with the people divided into two groups and one will recite aloud the blessings for obedience to the Law and the other will recite aloud the curses if the Law is broken or ignored. This is further evidence of the literacy of the people of this day, for they must have the script in front of them in writing so that they can read and recite aloud accurately. It may be that they learned these things by heart, and that certainly would be one thing that the Lord and Moses would encourage, but they must get it right first off, and the only way to get it right is to recite from a written script.

These two mountains are named here, but have been actually seen only by Caleb and Joshua during their spying expedition. The final words that Moses speaks here are another warning to obey the words of the Lord and do what is required for the blessing to be received.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Love remains the heart of the plan of God for us all in all ages. We are called to express our love for the Lord often and powerfully, both in word and deed. We show this divine love by giving the Gospel message to the lost, and by doing practical gifts of love towards the saints. The pastor's motto is, "Follow me!" Let us set the example of loving the Lord our God and so mentor loving service and encourage it by word and deed in the church.

2. The desire to see the miraculous is a common human desire for dramatic events. People love drama, but God loves tenacious obedience to His Word of Truth. We are called to be obedient servants of the Lord, not drama kings and queens. If a miracle is required to fulfil the plan, then the Lord will provide it, but we have no mandate to demand the Lord produce one for either our comfort, or to impress other people. Jesus told the parable of "The Rich man and the beggar Lazarus", to underline this point. Read again Luke 16:19-31. Our challenge is to believe the words of the scriptures and serve the Lord in spirit and in truth, and so let us encourage others so to do. The great theatrical drama of reading the blessings and curses of the Law will be a wonderful way of education for the people which will reinforce memory. This is the only "drama" we are to organise regularly; anything that reinforces memory of the truth.

3. Let us stand in the power of the Holy Spirit and serve the Lord in focused energy on the tasks He has set before us and not desire the tasks of others. We cannot do the work of God in our own strength, but in God's strength we can do all things. We build this strength by saturation in the Word of God each and every day. As we build confidence in the Word of God we build confidence in the power and Plan of God.

There is no short cut to successful training and building strength, be it in the gymnasium or the church. We must feed upon the right food and exercise the right muscles! Let us stand and do our daily "work out" in the Word of God and seek the Lord's application of what we have studied.

4. Satan is a distracter and a deceiver of mankind. He seeks to lead foolish people away from interest in the things of God and get them side tracked into things that are of no consequence at all. We are surrounded by many distractions from the truth of the Word of God today, with multi-media vying for our attention every moment of the day, from television, the internet to radio and written material. Let us heed the instructions to Moses people, and speak often of the Lord and His Word to our families. Let us not let the media of this world (be it Television, computer games or the internet) bring up our children, but let us bring them up ourselves in the discipline and admonition of the Lord.

REFLECTION UPON "LOVE"

1. Love for God is total appreciation for all He is and has done.

2. Words for love in Greek language

a) eros (sexual love) not used in the New Testament

b) storge (comradeship) not used in New Testament

c) agape (concerned love for others, great esteem for the loved one, reverence, a love that springs from adoration and veneration, and is a love of the will that chooses the loved one and devotes self to them to the exclusion of lesser objects. It may mean a self denying and compassionate devotion to the loved one)

d) phile (a love that embraces and kisses. This love is that of the affections and speaks of friendship and all one will do for a friend).

3. Our Lord makes it clear to Peter in John 21: 15-19 that he wants Peter to love him with agape love that flows from a deep occupation with the Lord. Agape, as a love of the will, must work out in service of the Lord, and this will express the believers love (agape) for other believers also.

4. Do not love of the things the world has to offer. (1 John 2:15-17)

5. True love of God will always lead to love of the brethren. (1 John 1:3 -11, 1 John 3:1-3, 10, 4:7 -12, 19)

6. Love is expressed in worship and in service. (1 John 5:1-5)

7. Love for God will flow and grow from knowledge of his word. (1 Corinthians 2:9)

8. This deep love will be expressed in witness for the Lord to others. (2 Corinthians 5:14)

9. God loves every believer with perfect and unchanging love because we are united with His beloved Son.
10. It is also noted that the unbeliever has “agape” love for darkness rather than light. (John 3:19)
11. Love for others is an important feature of the Christian life.
12. There are three types of love:-
 - (a) love for God.
 - (b) love for your spouse.
 - (c) love for other members of the human race.
13. It should be noted that only in type (b) is the body involved. The rest involve the soul or soul and spirit only.
14. Love For God
 - (a) Love for God is a response to the love of God. (Deuteronomy 6:5)
 - (b) The capacity for this love depends on your maturity. (Philippians 1:20, 21; Ephesians 3:17-19; 1 John 4:17-18)
 - (c) For the Church age believer love for God occurs first through the filling of the Spirit. Confession of sin is therefore critically important. (Ephesians 5:2, cf. 5:18)
 - (d) Jesus Christ is the initiator of love of God through grace. (Ephesians 5:25-27; 1 John 4:8-10; 4:19)
 - (e) The believer loves God using his free will.
 - (f) The believer who does not love Christ is under a special curse and perpetual discipline. (1 Corinthians 16:22)
 - (g) Love for God is the true motivator for working for God such as witnessing. (2 Corinthians 5:14)
 - (h) This love is initiated by grace and increased in the believer who has a gracious attitude towards God and mankind. (Daniel 9:4; Psalm 31:23; 119:132; 1 Corinthians 2:9)
 - (i) Love for God was commanded to all Old Testament saints. (Deuteronomy 6:5; 10:12; 11:1; 11:13)
 - (j) Love for God is the basis of all true happiness as well as capacity for loving members of the human race. (Deuteronomy 30:16)
 - (k) Love for God provides courage in battle. (Joshua 23:10-11)
 - (l) As we see God through his Word it is impossible to love God except through his Word. (Psalm 119:165-167, 1 Peter 1:8)
15. Love For Your Spouse
 - (a) This is love for a member of the opposite sex designed by God for you in eternity past unless you have the gift of celibacy. (Song of Solomon 8:6-7)
 - (b) It is as strong as death and is a provision from God.
 - (c) Death does not destroy this love. (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6)
 - (d) This type of love is exclusive to one person. (Proverbs 5:18-19)
 - (e) This type of love is protective both in absence (Song of Solomon 1:13, 4:6) and in presence. (Song of Solomon 2:4) The man is a banner of protection to the woman.
 - (f) Love for your spouse illustrates relationships with the Lord. (Ezekiel 16:8, Ephesians 5:23-33)
 - (g) Mental sins attack all forms of love. (1 John 5:18)
 - (h) God has set aside time in each life for love. (Ecclesiastes 3:8)
16. Love For Others
 - (a) Love for others has great stability and power. (2 Samuel 1:26, Proverbs 27:9, 10, John 15:13, Galatians 5:4)
 - (b) Love for others provides pleasant and relaxing environment. (Romans 13:10, Proverbs 10:12)
 - (c) Love for others is free from hypocrisy. (Romans 12:9)
 - (d) Love for others is outgoing and objective. (Galatians 5:13, 2 Samuel 1:26)
 - (e) Love for others promotes orientation to grace. (Philemon 9-12)
 - (f) Love for others has enemies and can be destroyed by:-
 - (i) Mental attitude sins. (Job 19:19, Proverbs 16:28)
 - (ii) Sins of the tongue. (Proverbs 17:9)
 - (iii) National catastrophe. (Jeremiah 6:21-23, 20:4-6)
 - (g) Love for others can be counterfeited. (Proverbs 19:6-7)
 - (h) Love for others can be removed because of divine discipline. (Psalm 38:11, 88:18)
17. We are recipients of Gods love (AGAPE=ultimate concern) through the cross. (1 John 4:10, 19, John 3:16)
18. We must give out the gospel to all that they might see Gods love towards them. (Matthew 28:18-20)
19. Our attitudes to one another should show Gods love in action. (1 John 4:12, John 13:35)
20. Love is commanded of all believers towards other believers. (John 13:34, 1John 4:7, 8, Philippians 2:2-8)
21. This only becomes possible as we grow in Christ, as his word changes our minds giving us the capacity for love. (1Peter 3:18) Love is a fruit of the Spirit.

22. Agape love in the believer puts the eternal issues of the other persons life ahead of all else, so that all is done to them with their eternal state in mind. (1 Corinthians 13:1-8)
23. We show our love towards believers by our practical concern for their spiritual growth and physical welfare. (2 Thessalonians 3:15, James 5:13-16, 1 Timothy 5:1-3, 1 Thessalonians 5:11-24)
24. We have strength to love others through the word in which we see that we are under the much more love of God: We are in the beloved and the beloved is in us, we are always recipients of His love. (Romans 8:37, John 13:1, 20:2, 21:7,20, 15:9, Ephesians 2:4, 5:2, 25, Revelation 1:5)

Notes