



Deuteronomy 1-4

Tape #7051
Deuteronomy 1-4
By Chuck Smith

Shall we turn now in our Bibles to Deuteronomy. Moses has come to the end of his journey. He has led the children of Israel as far as God will allow him. He is on the east side of Jordan, he cannot cross Jordan to come into the land. Three times in the first five chapters, he mentions the fact of his inability. For their sakes, God would not let him lead them in. He kept saying, "It's for your sake, that God won't let me lead you in. You see, God was wanting to teach the people the importance of obedience. Moses had disobeyed God.

He was a great leader. In fact, no one before or since, seemed to have such a close communion with God. God speaking to him as He did. Mightily used of God. A hero for the nation. For he is the one that God used to lead them out of their bondage, and to bring them to the borders of the land. But, for the people's sake, He could not lead them into the land. For the sake of teaching the people the importance of obedience. That really is the theme of the book of Deuteronomy. In almost every chapter, Moses is calling them to obedience, and speaking of the importance of their obedience; and, the dangers that will befall them when they disobey the commandment of God.

Years to come throughout the centuries. As the mothers of Israel held their children upon their laps, and rehearsed to them the story of the beginning of their nation. How that God chose Moses and used Moses, to give them the law, to lead them out of Egypt. They tell of this great hero, but then in hushed voices they whisper in their children's ear, "But he could not lead us into the promised land because, he disobeyed the voice of God". Oh what a powerful lesson on obedience! Here is this man, prohibited by God in the fulfilling of his life's ambition, his failure resulting from disobedience.

Deuteronomy is known as the second law. It isn't that God is giving them new law, but it is sort of a repetition and in it there is the enhancement, we are learning much. Moses in the book of Deuteronomy, for the most part, puts down the mantle of the lawgiver, and takes up the mantle of the prophet. He speaks much concerning the future of the nation, and the things that will transpire to them, as he, by the Spirit of God, looks down the centuries and sees what is going to happen to these people, that God has used him to lead out of the bondage of Egypt. So...

These are the words which Moses spoke to all of Israel on this side of the Jordan in the wilderness, [the eastern side] and in the plain [opposite of Succoth] between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab (1:1).

Now here is sort of a sad commentary of failure. A failure of obedience to God.

It is an eleven day journey from mount Horeb by way of mount Seir to Kadesh Barnea (1:2).

There is an eleven day journey from mount Horeb to the border of the promised land. It should only take them eleven days to go through the wilderness. It's only an eleven day journey. The next verse...

Now it came to pass in the fortieth year, and in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spoke to the children of Israel, all of these commands (1:3);

The eleven days was stretched into forty years, because of their failure to obey the voice of God. It was the failure due to unbelief. It was the failure that came as a result of the fear, because ten of the spies said, "Their cities have walls that are all the way up to heaven! And we saw the sons of Anak, or there are giants in the land"! So, Moses will point out to them, as he is encouraging them now, to do go ahead and do what they should've done forty years ago. "Go in and take the land, sure there are giants there, but God has delivered other nations of giants into the hands of people, because of His promise to give them the land." We'll see that as we move along.

So, Moses began to explain the law, and that's really what the book of Deuteronomy is all about. The explaining of the law, the going back and rehearsing.

And the Lord [verse six] our God spoke to us in Horeb, saying, You have dwelt long enough at this mountain: Turn, and take your journey, and go to the mountains of the Amorites, to all the neighboring places in the plain, the mountains, the low land, the south, the seacoast, the land of the Canaanites, to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Euphrates (1:6-7).

“Okay. You’ve been here long enough. You’ve encircled this mountain, long enough. Time now to move. Go and take that land that I’ve promised!” So, He’s going back and rehearsing now for them, their movement through the wilderness.

See, the Lord said, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give to their descendants after them. And I spoke to you at that time, saying, I alone am not able to bear you: [The pressures were getting to heavy upon Moses.] Because [he said] the Lord has multiplied you (1:8-9),

There were six hundred thousand adult men. So a total population of up to three million people! Potentially. Three million people. Moses said, “That’s too much. I can’t handle it”. So he said...

May the Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times more numerous than you are, [So may God just add to your numbers. Make you a thousand times more numerous.] as he has promised you, and bless you! But I can’t bear the problems, and the burdens alone, so the Lord said, Choose wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men from among your tribes, and I will make them the heads over you. And you answered and said, The thing which you have told us to do is good. So I took the heads of your tribes, the knowledgeable men, and made them officers over fifty and ten, and over the tribes. And then [verse sixteen] I commanded your judges at that time, saying, Hear the cases between you and your brethren, judge righteously between man and his brother, or the stranger who’s with him. And you shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid in any man’s presence; for the judgement is God’s: if the case is too hard for you, bring it to me, and I will hear it (1:11-17).

So Moses sort of became the Supreme Court Justice, and if the cases were too difficult for them to handle, then they would bring it to Moses. But, they were to judge. Now it is interesting that he gives the way they were to judge. First of all, without partiality. They’re not to show favor. They’re not to be impressed by man, because really the judgement is God’s. If judgement is really God’s, then it follows that Judges should be, godly men.

Now, in the Primary that will be coming up in a couple of weeks, three weeks I guess, there are two men running for Judgeship, here in Orange County, that are godly men. I really have no intention of voting on other issues, but there are two men that I’m going to go to the polls and vote for. Just because I know that they are godly men, and they’re running for Judgeship. We’ll be sharing with you the names of these men, and be giving you some records, so that you can determine whether or not you feel if these men are worthy of your vote. One of them has been a part of our congregation here at Calvary, for a long time. His name is Bob Thomas, running for the Harbor Court Municipal Judgeship. Another man is running for the Superior Court. I don’t remember his name off hand, or I’d give it to you. It’s a “ski” on the end, and it starts with a “W”. So there’s, uh I think there’s only one man with a “ski” on the end of his name, and it starts with a “W”. But this man teaches bible studies, and is really a God fearing man. I think that we as Christians should strongly consider the supporting of those men that we know to be God fearing men, and godly men. So if you don’t vote for anything else. You should go ahead and vote just so that you can cast your vote for these two men running for Judgeship. Men who will not show partiality in judgement, who will listen to the small as well as the great, and will not be intimidated by the persons of men. Knowing that judgement is really of God. So verse nineteen,

We departed [God said, “You’ve been in this mountain long enough. Time to move in and take the land”. “So, we departed,] from Horeb, we went through that great and terrible wilderness, we passed through that on eleven days. And I said to you, You’ve come to the mountains of the Amorites, which the Lord has given us. Look, the Lord has set the land before you: let’s go up and possess it, as the Lord God of your fathers has spoken; do not fear, or be discouraged. And every one of you came, and said to me, Why don’t we send some men into the land to look it over, so we can determine the best route to go into the land

(1:19-22).

So the people came to Moses, suggesting that they send these men in as scouts to sort of look over the land, find out the way they should go in.

And the plan [Moses said] pleased me well: so I took twelve of your men, one from each tribe: And they went up into the mountains, and they came to the valley of Eshcol, and spied it out. They also took some of the fruit of the land in their hands, and they brought it down to us, and they brought back word to us saying, It's a good land which the Lord our God has given us (1:23-25).

Of course referring to Joshua and Caleb who had gone to the valley of Eshcol, and came back with a bunch of grapes, and a good report.

Nevertheless [Moses said] you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of the Lord your God (1:26):

The importance of obedience. One thing I should've mentioned concerning Deuteronomy, it is the most oft quoted book of the Old Testament, in the new testament. Jesus quoted more from the book of Deuteronomy than any other book. Jesus was extremely familiar with Deuteronomy, and it is interesting to me, when Satan came to Jesus with the three temptations, and He answered the temptations of Satan with the word of God, "It is written". In all three cases, He quoted the book of Deuteronomy, unto Satan. So Jesus was very familiar with this book, quoted it often.

People rebelled. They would not go into the land, they would not obey the command of the Lord.

You murmured in your tents, and a horrible accusation of God, Because the Lord hates us, he's brought us out of the land of Egypt, to kill us here (1:27).

What a horrible accusation against God! The bible tells us concerning Job in all of his afflictions, that Job maintained his integrity. He did not curse God, neither did he charge God foolishly. I think that sometimes we are guilty of charging God foolishly. That's what they were doing here. When they said, "Oh the Lord hates us, that's why He's brought us here". That's charging God foolishly. "I don't think that God's concerned with me at all!" That's charging God foolishly.

Many times people are guilty of making foolish charges against God. "God doesn't love me, He hates me. Look what's happened to me! God must hate me!" Foolish charges against God. We ought to be careful of those in the time of distress, that we don't speak rashly and make foolish accusations against God. What a horrible accusation. "Because God hates us. He's brought us up here to kill us."

Where can we go up? [they said] our brothers have discouraged our heart saying, The people are greater and taller than we; the cities are great and fortified up to heaven; moreover we have seen the sons of Anakim (1:28).

"The giants are in the land!" The Anakins, boy that was one of the names that struck fear in the hearts of everybody! The Anakins! In the other land, it was the Zanzumins, that really sounds awesome you know. They were the giants that were in the land of Moabite. The land of Moabites that Ammon took. The Zanzumins were there.

But I said to you, Don't be terrified, don't be afraid of them. For the Lord your God who goes before you, he will fight for you, according to all that he did to the Egyptians before your eyes; And in the wilderness, where you saw how the Lord carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went, until you came to this place. And yet for all of that, you did not believe the Lord your God, Who went in the way before you, to search out a place for you to pitch your tents, to show you that way that you should go, in the fire by night and in the cloud by day (1:29-33).

Moses tried to encourage them. He said, "Hey, God will go in for you! God will go in and fight for you. God will deliver the land. You're making a mistake in measuring the cities and the sizes of the people by yourselves. You're leaving God out of the equation and that's always a dangerous thing to do." When you just look at the situation in your own strength, your own power, fear grips your heart, and you're prone to just sort of say, "Well it can't be done. Why did we ever come out here anyhow? This is impossible!" The moment God is introduced into the equation, the word impossible has to go out. And Moses is saying, "You're leaving God out of this. Remember what God did to the Egyptians. Remember how God carried you through that awesome wilderness, like a father carries his son".

You probably read that little pamphlet on the footprints, how that the fellow when he got to heaven, he was able to look back at his life and saw how that all the way along there were two footprints, as he walked along, the Lord was walking with him. Except on certain areas there was only one footprint, and he happened to notice that in those areas where there was only the single footprints, were some of the areas of the greatest danger in his life. They were the times of some of the heaviest duty things that he went through. And he said, "Lord! How is it that when I was going through the worst places, you seemed to desert me? There's only one set of footprints!" And the Lord said, "Those are my footprints. I carried you through those places". Here it is. The Lord said, "He carried you like a father carries his son". It was a rough place. It was a tough situation! They couldn't do it on their own. So what does the Lord do? He carries them through the rough places.

But then he goes on, and he declares, "I went before you to prepare a place for you to pitch your tent". I love that! God goes before your life. You never arrive at any place, for what God has not preceded you there. But not only has God preceded you there, He said, "I've prepared the place for you to pitch your tent". He has preceded you there, and He has prepared that place for you. We get to that place say, "Wow! What a perfect place! Look at this! Neat place to put our tents! It's all laid out! What a great place!" Of course it is, God was already there and He's already prepared it for you. "I went before you to prepare the places for you to pitch your tents".

God does the same for you. He goes before your life and He prepares the path ahead, and He prepares the place for you to pitch your tents. You don't arrive at any place in life, but what God hasn't preceded and prepared. But, He also prepares you for that place. As God is working in our lives, preparing us for each step, for each experience, for each trial, or whatever that is ahead, He prepares, not only the places for me, but He prepares me for the places.

The Lord heard the sound of your words. [He heard your murmurings. He heard you say that He must hate you.] And he took an oath, and he said, Surely not one of these men of this evil generation shall see the good land, that I swore to give to their fathers, [I swore to give to their fathers.] Except for Caleb and Joshua [verse thirty eight] Joshua, and I am giving the land on which he walked because he wholly followed the Lord (1:34-36).

He's promised it, "I'm going to give the land to Caleb, the land on which he walked". So, interesting thing. When they came into the land, Caleb of course, was about a hundred and twenty years old, at this point, and after they had taken a lot of the land in the upper part, the other tribes were settled, Caleb, this old fellow, came to Joshua, he said, "Alright, we've helped those guys take their land, now I want permission to take my sons and go down and get the land that God promised me". So Joshua said, "Alright. Go for it Caleb!" And this old man went down and led the people, and he dispossessed the inhabitants of the land, and he took the land that God had promised him. We'll get to that when we get to Joshua. But I love this fellow Caleb, who wholly followed the Lord. That was the secret. His obedience to God. Wholly following the Lord.

The Lord was angry, [Moses said, and this is the first reference, and he reminds them three times as I told you.] The Lord also was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Even you shall not go in there. But Joshua shall go in there: and encourage him: for he shall cause Israel to inherit it (1:37-38).

So, "Encourage Joshua". The mantle of leadership is to be turned over to him.

Moreover your little ones, and your children, whom you say will be the victims, who today have no knowledge of good and evil, they shall go in there, and to them I will give it, and they shall possess it. But as for you, turn, and take your journey into the wilderness by way of the Red sea. Then you answered and said, Oh we've sinned against the Lord, we'll go in (1:39-41),

And Moses says, "No you're too late. God won't be with you. But they presumed to go in without the help of God, and were defeated before their enemies. So Moses said, "I spoke to you, but you wouldn't listen". And that's sort of the history of these people.

You rebelled against the command of the Lord, and presumptuously went up to the mountain (1:43).

Be careful of that presumption. God won't honor presumption. He honors obedience. But if you go forth, make sure that God is in it. Make sure that God is guiding you. Make sure that you're not just moving

presumptuously. There's a lot of presumption today, in the things of the Lord.

So he remained in Kadesh for many days, the days that you spent there (1:46).

Chapter 2

And then we turned, we journeyed into the wilderness: and we came to mount Seir. [Down in the area of the Edomites.] And the Lord said, You've skirted this mountain long enough: now turn northward (2:1-3).

So they were, many years down in that area. And God said, "Okay that's long enough. Now go northward".

Command the people, saying, You're about to pass through the territory of your brethren the descendants of Esau, that live in Seir; they will be afraid of you: therefore watch yourselves carefully: Do not meddle with them; for I will not give you any of their land, not so much as one footstep; because I have given mount Seir to Esau as a possession (2:4-5).

"So you go and you pass through, but you don't take anything. I've given that to Esau." And God is honoring now, His former commitments to Esau.

You will buy your food with money, that you may eat; you'll buy the water with money, that you may drink. He knows your trudging through this great wilderness: these forty years the Lord your God has been with you; and you have lacked nothing (2:6-7).

What a statement! Forty years walking with the Lord, and lacking nothing. Such is true of those who truly walk with Him.

When we passed beyond our brethren the descendants of Esau, who dwell in Seir, who dwell away from the road, on the plain away from Elath, Then the Lord said to me, Do not harass Moab, nor contend with them in the battle: for I will not give you any of their land for a possession; because I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot as a possession (2:8-9).

So God is honoring His commitment to Lot, as far as the land of Moab. Now, he is pointing out, and this is in reference to their fear of the giants, by which they turned away from going into the land. God gave the land of Moab to Lot, and before Lot was there, the Emim had dwelt there in times as passed.

The people who were great and numerous and as tall as the Anakim, or the giants (2:10).

So there was a group of a huge people, in stature, who were in Moab prior to Lot going in and taking that land.

They were also regarded as giants, as the Anakims; but the Moabites call them Emims. The Horites formerly dwelt in Seri; but the descendants of Esau dispossessed them, and destroyed them from before them and dwelt in their place; just as Israel did to the land of their possession, which the Lord gave them (2:11-12).

So, "Hey God has dispossessed strong giant people before, He'll do it for you". He's seeking to encourage them not to be afraid in this endeavor to go in and take the land, just because the people are the Anakins, the giants.

So we crossed over the valley of Zered, [and we took] and the time we took to come from Kadesh Barnea, until we crossed over the valley of Zered, [where they finally were gonna start taking some territory] was thirty eight years; and all of the generation of men of war was consumed from the midst of the camp (2:13-14),

For they all died. All of those men who were involved in the first census, who were above the age of twenty, who could go out to battle, they all died with the exception of Joshua and Caleb.

For indeed the hand of the Lord was against them, to destroy them in the midst of the camp, and they were all consumed. So when all of the men of war had finally perished, from among the people, the Lord spoke to me, saying, This day you're to cross over at Ar, the boundary of Moab: And when you come near the people of Ammon, do not harass them, or meddle with them: I'll not give you the land of the people of Ammon as a possession; because I've given it to the descendants of Lot. That also was regarded as the land of giants: the giants formerly dwelt there; but the Ammonites call them the Zamzummims (2:15-20);

They are those creatures now.

A people who were great, and numerous, and tall, as the Anakims; but the Lord destroyed them before them; and they dispossessed them, and dwelled in their place: ["God will do it for you, He's done it for the descendants of Lot. He'll do it for you!"] And just as he has done for the descendants of Esau, when he destroyed the Horites and dispossessed them; and all he's going to do for you (2:21-22):

Now rise and [verse twenty four] cross the river Arnon: look, I have given into your hand Sihon the Amorite, the king of Heshbon, and his land: begin to possess it, and engage him in battle. And this day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the nations under the whole heaven, who shall hear the report of you, and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of you (2:24-25).

"Alright, now is the time. We're gonna start moving on this side of Jordan, and taking the land that God has given us here. First of all king Sihon."

And I sent messengers from the wilderness of Kedemoth to Sihon the king of Heshbon with words of peace, saying, Let me pass through your land: I'll keep strictly to the road, I'll not turn to the right or the left. Sell me the food that I might eat; give me water and I'll buy it, that I may drink: let us pass through on foot (2:26-28);

But they came out to meet us. He would not pass through: [verse thirty] and God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into your hand, as it is this day. And the Lord said to me, See, I have begun to give Sihon and his land over to you: begin to possess it, that you may inherit his land. So they came out to fight at Jahaz. And the Lord God delivered him over to us; and we defeated them, his sons, and all his people. We took his cities, and utterly destroyed the men, women, and little ones of every city, we left nothing remaining: Except the livestock and the animals, which we took for a spoil for ourselves. And there was not a single city that was too strong for us; for God delivered all to us (2:30-36).

Now, the fact that they utterly wiped out everybody, women, children and all, causes some people concern. Why would God order the extermination of everyone? To really understand the orders of God, you must understand a little bit of the history, and of the practices of these people. God was using the children of Israel, really as instruments of judgement against them.

Now if we believe that in the last day, God is going to judge the world, in righteous judgement. Those that have rebelled against the Lord, will be destroyed. If we really believe in this righteous judgement of God, then we need not really be alarmed or question, the activities of God, as He used the children of Israel as His instrument of judgement.

The practices of these people were much like those of the Canaanites, which were horribly vile. God did not want His people infected by the practices of these people. It would be sort of like, you're being appointed as a noon time monitor at a school ground, watching over a group of little preschoolers that were playing in the yard. And your task would be to watch over them, and make sure that things were okay during the lunch hour. As you were watching these little children, you saw this little dog coming up the street, yapping, and foaming at the mouth, sort of running erratically. Immediately, you recognize that this little dog has rabies. You know that with rabies, the dog is going to die. It cannot be cured with rabies, it's going to die, because of the rabies. But you also know, that if this little dog should bite any of the little children that are under your care. That those children that are bitten by this dog, will also get rabies, and will either have to go through the painful Pasteur treatments, or they also will die. Even some of them that take the Pasteur treatments, will die. So this little dog, mad-dog, that is going to die anyhow, is a threat to these beautiful, innocent little children that you are watching there.

Or let's say they're your own children. You're in a park, and your own children are there, and you see this little dog coming, foaming at the mouth. Now would you then be justified in killing that cute little doggy? Or would you say, "Oh, such a cute little dog, yeah, I think I ought to just let it live". Well, it's gonna die anyhow. If you just stand there and watch that little dog bite your kids, you're crazy! You're not using good judgement, no, of course you would take action. You would destroy that little dog, before it infected your children and destroyed them.

That's why God ordered the extermination. They had a deadly malady. They were doomed to die as the result of their own practices. And their practices were so horribly vile, that we could not really discuss them in a mixed congregation. When you read the history of what these people were doing, it's just beyond

our minds even to conceive. The horrible practices! Of course among their practices was, the sacrifice of their own children to their god. The throwing their children into the fire, or the placing of their children in the glowing, red hot, arms of their little iron god. Allowing them to be burned alive, as they sacrificed to their god. So God ordered their extermination, so that they would not infect His people. He was wanting to keep the nation that was pure, undefiled.

Chapter 3

Then we turned, ["After conquering over Sihon, the cities of Ag, we turned"] and we went up to the road to Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. And the Lord said to me, Do not fear him: I will deliver him, and all of his people into your hand; and you shall do to him as you did to Sihon the king of the Amorites, who dwelled in Heshbon. SO the Lord God delivered into our hands Og, the king of Bashan, and all of his people: we attacked him until there were no survivors. We took all of his cities, sixty cities, all in the region of Argob, in the kingdom of Og in Bashan. And all these cities they were fortified with high walls, they had gates, and bars; besides a great many of the rural towns. And we utterly destroyed them, as we did Sihon the king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children, of every city. But all the livestock we kept as spoil and booty. And at that time we took the land from the two kings of the Amorites which were on this side of Jordan, from the river of Arnon to mount Hermon (3:1-8);

So this is the area that the present day Golan Heights, that they took at that time.

Only Og the king of Bashan remained of the remnant of the giants; indeed, he had an iron bedstead [And here's where the term came, "king size bed".] his bed was about twelve feet long, and six feet wide. [So that is a king size bed! It doesn't mean that he filled the whole bed, but he was a big guy. Og the king of Bashan.] So then they divided up that land that they had taken. And the tribe of Gad, received the mountains of Gilead, the land that once belonged to Bashan, the kingdom of Og they gave to the tribe of Manasseh: [The Golan Heights, the area where half the tribe of Manasseh settled.] The Reubenites and the Gadites took the land that was once in the mountains of Gilead as far south as the river of Arnon, and the river Jabbok, They took the plains of Jordan, along the Jordan, the plain area, all the way down from the sea of Galilee, to the Dead sea (3:11-17).

So you that have been with us in Israel, when we make the journey from Galilee on down to Jericho, and we look over on the other side and we see that land of Jordan. The plains and the farms and the cities over there, that is the area and the territory that was conquered by Israel, and given to the tribe of Gad as their possession.

And you've seen all that the Lord your God has done to these two kings, and so will the Lord do to all of the kingdoms in the land where you're going to possess. You must not fear them: for the Lord your God himself fights for you (3:21-22).

"Not to fear. God will fight for you." Fear is the enemy of faith, and of obedience. It was the fear that caused them to disobey God and turn. So Moses is encouraging them over and over, "God's done it before, He'll do it again! As God has already done, He'll continue to do. God will fight for you. Don't be afraid, don't turn back!"

Moses said, then I pleaded with the Lord at that time, said, O Lord God, [After they had taken these kings, they started to conquer this land. Moses was all excited and he came to the Lord, and said, "Oh Lord! Alright!"] you've begun to show thy servant your greatness, and your mighty hand: for what God is there in heaven or in earth, who can do anything like your works, and your mighty deeds? I pray now Lord, let me cross over, and see the good land beyond Jordan, those pleasant mountains, and Lebanon. ["Lord just let me go over. Please Lord. I want to go ahead!"] But the Lord was angry with me on your account, and would not listen to me; so the Lord said to me, That's enough of that, speak no more to me about this matter. ["It's a closed issue Moses. Don't talk to me anymore about it."] Go up to the top of Pisgah, lift up your eyes toward the west, north, south, and east, behold it with your eyes: but you're not to cross over this Jordan (3:23-27).

So, "Settled issue. Can't do it." However Moses did sneak in. When we get to the New Testament, who appeared with Elijah on the mount of transfiguration, talking to Jesus? He made it. Moses and Elijah

appeared and talked with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration, there in the New Testament. But he was wanting to go in and help to conquer the land. It was the ambition that desire, his heart. Oh what an awesome lesson of obedience that teaches us. Even Moses as great a man as he was, was refused by God. "Don't talk to me anymore Moses." He prayed to the Lord, "Lord please!" "That's enough. Don't talk to me anymore!"

Chapter 4

Now O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgements, which I teach you, to observe that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers has given to you (4:1).

"Now listen to me! Listen to the statutes and judgements that I've been teaching you. Observe them! Keep them, that you might live and go in and possess."

You shall not add a word which I command you [To the word which I command you. Oh the danger! And man is always wanting to do that. Adding to God's word, or taking away from God's word. We are warned here, "Don't add to it. Don't take away from it." In the book of Revelation, we are warned, "Don't add to it. Don't take away from it". The book of Revelation we are warned, "If any man adds to the words of this book, shall be added to him the plagues that are in the book. And if any man takes away from the words of this book, his name will be taken away from the book of life". Hey, you don't tamper with the word of God. Don't add to it and don't take away from it. I can't understand the brazenness of man who would tamper with the word of God, trying to add or take away.] *You shall not add to the word nor take anything from it, you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you. Your eyes have seen what the Lord did at Baalpeor:* [Now you remember exactly what happened at Baalpeor don't you? That's where Balaam came out and advised the king to send the people down, make friends, invite them to your feasts, to worship your idols, and so forth. The plague of God came against the camp of Israel and fourteen thousand were slain. You remember what the Lord did at Baalpeor. And Baal is the word for lord. The lord of Peor. Or the god of Peor.] *but you who held fast to the Lord your God, you're alive today.* ["You saw all the people that got wiped out. But you held fast, and thus you're alive."] *Surely, I've taught you the statutes and the judgements,, just as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should act according to them.* [So now notice] *you're to observe them, you're to keep them, you're to act according to them.* [Surely I,] *Therefore be careful to observe them. For this is your wisdom and your understanding. Surely [this], those who hear these statutes, and the other people who hear them will say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people (4:1-6).*

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. Testimonies of the Lord are right, the statutes of the Lord, the judgements of the Lord. You remember the nineteenth psalm, how David goes down, the statutes, the judgements, the commandments, the law of the Lord. Our whole system of government was framed after the Mosaic law. It's the basis for our whole system of government. "Wise and understanding people." This law of the Lord is perfect.

For what great nation is there, that hath God so near to it, as the Lord our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon him. ["God is so close, I mean you can call on Him for anything! Isn't that glorious? Whatever reason you might have, whatever the problem might be, you can call upon the Lord. What nation is there that God has been so close to, that God is available to, that you can call upon God whenever you need Him?"] *What great nation is there that has statutes and righteous judgements, as are in all this law, as I set before you this day? Only take heed to yourself, diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life: and teach them to your children, and to your grandchildren. Especially the day that you stood before the Lord your God in Horeb, when you saw the power of God manifested (4:7-9).*

"Now impress this on the mind of your children, and upon your grandchildren. Share these experiences of what you have seen God do."

For then you came near mount Horeb; and stood at the foot of the mountain [verse eleven] and the mountain burned with fire in the midst of heaven: with darkness, cloud, and a thick darkness. And the Lord spoke to you out of the midst of the fire: and you heard the sound of the words, but you saw no form; you

only heard a voice. So he declared to you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, that is the ten commandments; and he wrote them upon the two tables of stone (4:11-13).

“You stood there before Horeb, you saw the fire on the mountain, you heard the voice of God speaking. And He gave to you, the Ten Commandments, and then He wrote them on the two tables of stone.”

Now take heed [Remember, share, tell!] and take careful heed to yourselves; for you saw no form when [you saw the form, or when] the Lord spoke to you [You did not see any form.] out of the midst of the fire: Be careful lest you act corruptly, and make for yourself a carved image in the form of any figure, [“You should never try to make any kind of a representation of God. Be careful of that. Remember when you heard the voice of God, you saw the fire, but you didn’t see any form at all. Therefore, beware lest you act corruptly, and you make a form that would represent God.” And yet, look how many of the various cultures, primitive cultures, always had the little idols, the forms. Look at the Hindu religion, and all of these forms that they have for their various gods. Go to the south sea Pacific islands, and see the natives there, and the various gods that they’ve carved out, the forms. Many times grotesque forms.] lest you make a form of any figure, the likeness of a male or female, The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, The likeness of any thing that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water beneath the earth: Take heed lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and all of the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them, and serve them, when the Lord God has given unto the peoples under the whole heaven and the earth (4:15-19).

There is, within man, that innate drive to worship. Everybody worships something. It’s a part of our very nature. You can’t escape it. You are all worshipping something. You have some object of worship in your life. And if you are not worshipping the true and the living God, this drive to worship, will lead you to worship something else.

Again going into the primitive cultures, going down into South America, among the Serranoi Indian tribes, and the Green Hill country of Bolivia, or into some of these various tribal groups. You will find that it is very common for them to worship the sun, or to worship the moon, or to worship the stars. Full moon! Tremendous ceremonies, they have a fire, and they dance and chant around the fire, as they’re worshipping the moon when it is full. Driven to worship. Gotta worship. Part of my being, I can’t help myself. I’ve got to worship something.

How tragic when people worship man. The Hollywood idols that have been created, and they are just that. They are idols. People are worshipping them. They call themselves idols! That’s right, the Hollywood idols. You hear of that all the time. Because they have been put up as objects of worship. And yet, people worship these corrupt people. They have their pictures, they belong to their fan club, they have you know, all plastered over their walls, all kinds of artifacts and all. Live for the day that they can get their autograph. They follow them around. They stand at the stage door, hoping to get a glimpse. Scream when they see them. Tragic, tragic, tragic. But that’s human nature, we’ve got to worship something. If we forsake God, and do not worship God, then our hearts will drive us to worship something else, far less.

Now, this is what Paul is talking about, when he is writing to the Romans. He talks about the downward trend of man, “Who when they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, neither were they thankful. But their foolish hearts were darkened, and they began to worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for evermore. Because they did not want to retain God in their minds, God gave them over to reprobate minds. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.” Tragedy of man. Because when you forsake God, and take God out of your life, and take God out of your concepts, you become a fool. You become a prey for every weird and corrupt idea and concept. “Be careful when you look up at the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and you feel driven to worship them, to serve them. They are part of God’s creation.”

The Lord has taken you, brought you out of the iron furnace, he brought you out of Egypt, to be his people, his inheritance, as you are this day (4:20).

Now, the church of Jesus Christ, is God’s inheritance. Paul prays for the Ephesians, “That they might know the riches of His inheritance in the saints”. In other words, if you only knew how much God

values you! The great value that God puts upon your life, as His child, as His servant. Oh what a value, what a premium God puts on your life! If you only knew how much God treasured you and valued you, you wouldn't be doing a lot of the things that you're doing, that are displeasing to Him. Nor would you be sort of putting yourself down, when you think of the tremendous value, the inheritance that you are to God. As Peter said, "We are His peculiar inheritance. A people who have been called to worship and to serve Him".

So take heed [Again, the warning.] take heed, lest you forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which he made with you, and make for yourselves a carved image, in the form of anything, which the Lord your God has forbidden you (4:23).

"Now be careful. Take heed. Because God made a covenant with you. And that covenant that God made with you, the very first commandment is, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me', and the second, 'Thou shalt not make any likeness of things that are in heaven and earth, bow down and worship them', Now (he says), take heed, take heed! Be careful that you don't forget the covenant of God!"

The first step of backsliding, is when you allow some other interest, to replace the place of God in your life. God should be first and foremost in your life, above anything and everything else. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy might." God should be tops, first, primary! And if you allow anything, any interest, any thing, any ambition, any hobby, any pleasure, if you allow that to supercede the place of God in your life, that's the first step towards backsliding. And Moses here is warning them now, of the dangers of backsliding. "Take heed lest you forget the covenant of the Lord, and you begin to worship other Gods, you begin to make gods, carve them out".

For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, and a jealous God (4:24).

Here is God first mentioned as a fire. We are also told in the book of Hebrews, that God is a consuming fire. In the book of Isaiah, it says that when God destroyed the Assyrian army, that fear gripped the hearts of the sinners in Zion. Terror took hold of the hypocrites. They saw what God did to their enemies! God passed through the camp of the Assyrians in one night, and a hundred and eighty five thousand, of the front line troops, of the Assyrians, blotto, wiped out! They got up in the morning, and they looked out over the walls, and they saw all of these corpses out there in the field. A hundred and eighty five thousand slain, by the presence of the Lord the night before. And fear gripped the hearts of the sinners, terror took hold of the hypocrites. They said, "Ooh, who among us can dwell in the midst of the devouring fire? Who amongst us can approach the fire?"

God is a fire. A consuming fire. Who amongst us can dwell in the midst, or in the presence of God? Interesting question. Who amongst us can dwell there in the presence of God, without being consumed? Interesting figure. God is a consuming fire. A jealous God.

Now when you beget children, and grandchildren, you've grown old in the land, and you act corruptly, and you make carved images in the form of anything, you do evil in the sight of the Lord your God, to provoke him to anger: I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you will soon utterly perish from the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess; you will not prolong your days in it, but will be utterly destroyed. And the Lord will scatter you among the peoples and you will be left few in number among the nations, where the Lord will drive you (4:25-27).

"I call heaven and earth to witness. Hey, we see that God did keep His word." Moses here is prophesying here, of their future. "Down the road, you're gonna turn away from God, and when you turn away from God, He's gonna turn you over to your enemies. You're gonna be scattered throughout the nations, you're gonna be decimated, you're gonna perish from dwelling in the land. I call heaven and earth to bear witness. If you make carved gods, if you begin to worship other gods, you're gonna lose the value of the power and the presence of God among you." They did. Prophecy was fulfilled, and they were scattered.

But if from there from this place of captivity, this place of desperation, if from there, you will seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you will seek him with all your heart and with all your soul (4:29).

"Even in that corrupted condition, in captivity, if at that point, you begin to seek God, God will become available. You'll find Him, when you seek Him with all your heart, and with all your soul." I think that we make a mistake when we think that God is just, you know, so easily available. All I have to do is say, "Hey (click of the fingers) need you Lord!" And many people have sort of a half-hearted approach to God.

“Well, I’ll give it a chance. See if He works. I’ll give it a chance.” No. You need to seek Him with all your heart, and all your soul.

Usually that comes from a desperate situation where, we’ve sought everything else, and nothing has worked, and everything is down the tubes. I’ve got no place else to go. It’s all over, you know, “If God doesn’t come through man, I’ve had it”. And we get so desperate, that we begin to seek God with all our heart and all our soul, and that’s when God comes through! How many times God allows us to get to that place of just absolute, total hopelessness and desperation. Where we really seek God with all of our heart, and all of our soul. I mean we’ve got no place else to go. And in that desperate time, we find that God is there, and that God responds, and we see His power.

(For the Lord your God is a merciful God); [Now we just read that He’s a jealous God. He’s a consuming fire. But He’s also a merciful God.] he will not forsake you, nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which he swore to them. For ask now concerning the days that are past, [Just inquire! Read your history books!] since the day that God created man upon the earth, ask from one end of heaven to the other, search whether any great thing like this has ever happened, or has ever been heard of? Did any people ever hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and still live (4:31-33)?

“Search! From one end of heaven to the other, search through history! Search from the time that man has existed. Has anything like this ever happen before?”

Or did God ever go in and take for himself a nation from the midst of another nation, by the trials, and signs, and wonders, by war, and by a mighty hand, and by an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? To you it was shown, that you might know that the Lord himself is God; and there is none other besides him (4:34-35).

Wait a minute! What about all these Mormons that have been faithful? Have worn the right undergarments? He said, “There is no other gods besides Him”. Now, you take the word of the Joe or do you take the word of God as the basis for your beliefs? The Lord Himself is God, there is none other besides Him.

And because he loved your fathers, therefore he chose their descendants after them, and he brought you out of Egypt with his presence and with a mighty power; And brought you into this inheritance. Therefore know this day, consider in your heart, that the Lord himself is God in heaven and above, and on the earth beneath: there is no other (4:37-39).

In case you didn’t get it before. He alone.

Therefore keep his statutes, and commandments, that it may go well with you, and your children after you, that you may prolong your days in the land. Then Moses set apart three cities for the cities of refuge, one in each of the tribes (4:40-41).

And we studied the cities of refuge last week.

And this is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel: These are the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgements, which Moses spoke to the children of Israel, after they came out of Egypt, On this side of Jordan, in the valley opposite of Bethpeor, in the land of Sihon, the king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon (4:44-46).

And so forth. And so we get to the end of chapter four, and we’re going to take chapter five next week. And so, we’ll go from five to nine or something next week. But, go as far as we can anyhow. Shall we stand?

How important it is, how important it is, that we take heed to the word of God. Let me just take the first verse of chapter five. Moses said, “Hear O Israel, learn, observe, and do”. The four things. Now you’ll find these four things repeated through the book of Deuteronomy over and over, and over, and over again, and over again! Eleven times you’re told to learn. Over a hundred times you’re told to do. Thirty some times you’re told to hear. How many times does God have to tell you before you pay attention? Hear them! Do them! Observe them! Keep them! These are the key words. Keep the promises, do the promises, hear the promises, learn the promises and the law, the provisions. So it is so important.

This book is foundational to your whole experience and relationship with God. It’s important that

we really take our time and absorb and learn and study, observe, and keep, and do the things that God has commanded us. That we indeed, might be His people, and walk in fellowship with Him.

May God be with you and may God bless you. May His hand be upon your life this week, that you might learn the way of the Lord, that you might walk in His statutes, that you might keep His commands, that you might do His will, that you might be the people of God, blessed by Him, walking with Him, living in the glory, and the joy and the power of His presence, as you observe the ways of the Lord, and walk in righteousness. May God make this a special week, of the work of His Spirit within your life, drawing you unto Himself, and into that place of full blessing, walking close by His side. In Jesus' name.