



## Deuteronomy 7-8

**Tape #7053**  
**Deuteronomy 7-8**  
**By Chuck Smith**

Shall we turn now in our bibles to Deuteronomy, chapter seven. Again the background for this book. Moses is about to turn the leadership over to Joshua. He has brought them as far as God is going to allow him to take them. He cannot lead them into the promised land. So, Moses, knowing that he is soon going to pass the torch on to Joshua, he's going to be with his people, gathered together with his people. He is instructing them now. Really, the final words of instruction, by Moses, to these people that he has led for these forty years. Chapter seven, he's instructing them as to when they come into the land, and they possess the land that God has promised them.

*When the Lord God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and he's cast out the many nations before you, seven nations, [who are here listed] nations that were greater and mightier than you (7:1);*

Now, the Lord doesn't just cast out one nation greater than them. There are seven nations that are inhabiting the land that are greater and mightier than they are. And yet, God is going to give them the possession of this land, and is going to drive out all seven of these nations.

*And when the Lord your God delivers them over to you; you shall conquer them, and utterly destroy them; you shall make no covenant with them, nor show mercy to them: Nor shall you make marriages with them; you shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. For they will turn your sons away from following me, to serve other gods: so the anger of the Lord will be aroused against you, and destroy you suddenly. But thus shall you deal with them; you shall destroy their altars, break down their sacred pillars, cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire. For you are a holy people to the Lord your God: and the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for himself, a special treasure, above the peoples on the face of the earth (7:2-6).*

Now there are some who would take this passage of scripture, that God is giving to Moses, to give to the people of Israel, as prohibitions against mixed marriages. Yet nothing is further from the truth. It isn't the mixture of nationalities that God is concerned with here. It's the admixture of religious backgrounds. We are all one. God has created us one. We are all a part of the Homo sapiens. We need to realize that God has created us all one, and there is no superior race, or inferior race. There are those people who trust in God, and who serve and worship God, and there are those people who worship idols.

In the New Testament, we have the same kind of a prohibition, when we are told that, "You are not to be unequally yoked together with an unbeliever", and that, basically is what the prohibition is here. You have God's people, the godly race, from which He is intending to bring the Messiah, and He doesn't want them mixing with these other races where they are going. Not because of the sin of admixture of a race, but of the fact that, they would have the tendency to lead God's people into the worship of their false gods, and turn them away from the true and the living God. And that's basically what the prohibition is here.

God commands that they are to utterly wipe them out. They are not to make any covenant with them. They are to destroy them. They're to destroy all of their religious relics and idols, and images. They're to make a clean sweep of the land, as far as the religious articles are concerned. Wipe them out completely.

Now, looking back from this vantage point, having now the whole history before us, the whole history of the nation of Israel, we see where their failure to obey this command of God ultimately caused them the loss of the land. For in time to come, because they did not utterly destroy their idols, and break down the images and so forth, in time to come, the children of Israel began to go whoring after the gods of the Canaanites. They turned from the true and the living God. Whenever they did, you find that God's judgement came upon them, and the nation was weakened. Then there would be the time of spiritual revival. They would return to the Lord, but never a complete, complete eradication of those false gods. Thus they

were a snare to the children of Israel, and ultimately, cost them the land itself.

As you get into the prophets, and you read how that the people of God had turned away from God, and were following after idols, and images. You realize that God's warning, again, was not in vain. There was a reason why God commanded these things, and their failure to obey ultimated in their loss of the privileges. That is always so.

Our failure to completely obey the Lord, ultimately eventuates in our loss of blessing and the privileges that are ours as children of God. "The Lord your God", he said, "has chosen you as a people for himself, a special treasure, above all the peoples on the face of the earth."

Now, Peter takes this same concept and applies it now to the church. We are God's chosen generation. We are His special treasure among all nations, that we should bring forth unto Him, praises and glory to His name. You, the church of Jesus Christ, have now moved into this place of privilege and blessing, that once belonged to Israel.

Verse seven...*The Lord did not set his love on you, nor choose you, because you were more in number than any other people; for you were the least of all people (7:7):*

It's not because there was a great number, that God chose them. They were small. Probably only three million at this time. It's interesting how that we are always looking for reasons why God might show His grace to us. Looking at ourselves, saying, "Well it must be something that I have, and something special that God sees in me. I must have something!", and we're always looking for a cause within ourselves, that God should choose us, and call us, and bless us. But the grace of God is His unmerited favor, which means, "I don't deserve it!". There is nothing in me that calls forth something from God, that is particularly attractive to God. There's always the mystery of why God chose us. It's a mystery, but it's one that I don't bother to delve in much. I'm glad He chose me, I don't try to figure it all out. As long as He chose me, why should I care. I'm glad He did, and it's just a thrill to be chosen by God, that I should bring forth fruit unto His name. So, "It isn't because you're great in number, it's not something that you are, or you have done." But, verse eight...

*It's because the Lord loves you, and because he would keep the oath which he swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, and from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt (7:8).*

Just because the Lord loves you! That's excuse and reason enough for Him. "I love you!" Hard to understand why God would love me. I think one of the most difficult things that I've had to learn in my Christian walk is to accept grace gracefully. I'm a klutz, when it comes to receiving the grace of God. I just have a hard time gracefully receiving grace. I, I'm always just you know, doing klutzy things when God just shows His love and grace to me. Like just saying, "Well now God I'll show you that that was right, you made a good move there Lord, because I'll just prove to you now that I'll be worthy of this".

Really it isn't because I was worthy, or He knew that I would respond, He just loves me, and He does it just because He loves me. He loves you. He wants to bless you just because He loves you! Not because you're anything special, not because you've done anything special, or will do anything special. Just because you're you, He loves you! That to me is great! To know that God loves me, just as I am. Faulty, yes! But He still loves. So it's just because the Lord loves you.

*Therefore know that the Lord your God, he is God, and he is a faithful God, who keeps the covenant and mercy for a thousand generations to those who love him, and keep his commandments (7:9);*

So love Him, and keep His commandments. Now, Jesus said that the two are definitely related. He said, "He that loveth me, keeps my commandments. And he shall be loved of the Father". (Thank you fellows! I didn't think we should have the heat on tonight! I don't plan to put the heat on tonight, so let's keep it cool.) Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. And he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and we will come and manifest ourselves to them". "If you love me", Jesus said, "keep my commandments." So, "He that sayeth he loveth me, and keepeth not my sayings", or, "He that sayeth he loveth God, hateth his brother, is a liar". Uh, "Let's not love in word, but in deeds and in truth."

So, my love for God, is really proved by my obedience to God and to His commandments. So if I

will love God and keep His commandments, His mercy shall be extended unto me unto a thousand generations! Oh how merciful is God. He keeps His covenant and mercy for a thousand generations!

*And [yet] he repays those who hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack [or He will not give any slack] to those who hate him, he will repay him to his face. Therefore you shall keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgements, which I command you today, to observe them (7:10-11).*

“You shall keep them. You must keep them. Because in that, you are proving your love to God, and in the keeping of that covenant, and His commandments, God’s mercy will be extended to the nation for a thousand generations.”

*Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgements, and keep, and do them, that the Lord your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy which he swore to your fathers: And he will love you, and bless you, and multiply you: [The three things, love, bless, and multiply.] he will also bless the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your land, your grain, your new wine, your oil, the increase of your cattle, your offspring, your flocks. You shall be blessed above all the peoples: there won’t be a male or female barren among you, among your livestock. And the Lord will take away from you all sickness, and will not afflict you with none of the terrible diseases of Egypt, which you have known; but will lay them upon all those who hate you (7:12-15).*

Now this is really the covenant that God is making with the people. A conditional covenant. They are to love God and they are to keep His statutes, and do them. If they will, then God said, “I’ll love you, I’ll bless you, I’ll multiply you, I’ll prosper you, and none of the diseases that came upon the Egyptians will come upon you”.

Now, as we read this covenant that God made. As we read the statutes, we realize that many of these statutes that God established with the nation, many of the dietary laws, are really good health laws. God gave them good practices of sanitation. God gave them good practices of eating, and there are sanitation laws, and health laws, that if one would follow, your chances of getting some of these diseases would be diminished tremendously. In the sanitation codes, there was a lot of laws concerning cleanliness. The washing of yourself. After touching certain objects, make sure you wash yourself. And that was important. We know the importance of washing, filth breed dirt, and filth breed germs. So it’s important to be clean. It’s important to eat right. So, God said, “If you keep these laws”. Now there is an interesting book, Dr. Maxwell, it’s called, “None of These Diseases”, and he takes the Mosaic code, the dietary and the sanitation codes, and shows how efficient they are in the modern days, in the preventing of disease. So, this goes along, God said, “If you obey, and do, and keep my commandments, then none of these diseases that came upon the Egyptians, will come upon you”. God is interested in your physical well-being. God wants you to be healthy, God wants you to be strong. He’s interested in your physical well-being. And again, the commandment...

*You shall destroy all of the people which the Lord your God shall deliver to you; you eye shall have no pity on them: nor shall you serve their gods; for that will be a snare to you. If you say in your heart, These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them? You shall not be afraid of them (7:16-18):*

Now again, these orders to destroy. People have problems with them. We get into the New Testament, and Jesus said, “I say to you, love your enemies. Do good to those that hate you”, and so forth, now how is it that God then would order them to utterly destroy? “Don’t have pity on them.” Somehow we have a rather weakened concept of God.

In our concepts of God, we have a difficulty believing in a God who is stern enough to judge the guilty. We think that somehow God can overlook the sin of man, and that somehow God will let a person off the hook. We have a hard time even conceiving even of that eternal punishment that God has ordered for the ungodly and the unrighteous. Thus we have a difficulty in this concept of God ordering them to utterly destroy.

In so doing, God was using Israel as His instrument of judgement against these nations that had turned their hearts so totally against Him, and had gone into such vile practices, in rebellion against God, that they were going to destroy themselves. But God is using now, His people, to be His instrument of judgement. Now, God destroyed the whole world, at the time of Noah, with the exception of Noah, and his

immediate family. God brought judgement on the whole world! People have a hard time with God having judgement on the whole world, but He did!

Now, God is bringing judgement on these nations. Rather than sending a flood, He is sending the nation of Israel to go in there as His instruments of judgement, to bring His righteous judgement against these sinful people. God wiped out the whole cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The whole cities were wiped out, and God brings His judgement upon cities, upon nations, and He will bring it again upon the world.

Now these are just the instruments of God's judgement upon these seven nations, that were in the land, that were overripe for the judgement of God. So they are to be God's instruments of judgement, and that's why the judgement is to be complete, and without pity. God had pronounced the sentence, "These are not worthy to continue to exist upon the earth. They are to be wiped out".

Now, we have a problem today in our society, because of the leniency of our courts. Because so many people, who should have been judged, according to the law, were not judged, according to the law. We have a tremendous problem, sociological problem. You go down the street, and you see houses barred. You see gated communities. You see armed patrols. Why? Because of the failure to bring forth judgement. So many people who should be behind bars, are not behind bars and thus it makes it dangerous for those who seek to live a peaceable, righteous life. You never know when your home is going to be invaded, and assaulted. Thus you have to take protective measures, because of the laxity of judgement. There's always a breakdown in the society, when there's a laxity of judgement.

Now, God ordered the judgement upon these people. He wanted the sentence of judgement to be carried out. Israel was to be the instrument of God's judgement, and they were to be destroyed. Now the Lord said, "If you get worried and think, 'Man they're bigger than we are and stronger than we are, how can we dispossess them?'" All you have to do is remember what God did to Egypt. Just remember, how He wiped out the Egyptians, then you'll remember how that your God is big enough to do the job, and He's big enough to wipe them out for you.

*The great trials which your eyes saw, the signs, and the wonders, the mighty hand, the outstretched arm, by which the Lord your God brought you out: so shall the Lord your God do all to the people of whom you're afraid (7:19).*

"You're afraid of these people, but God's gonna wipe them out!"

*Moreover the Lord your God will send the hornet among them, until those who are left, who hide themselves from you, are destroyed (7:20).*

"So God will use even nature to fight for you. The guys are holed up in there, you wonder how you're going to get them out. God will send a bunch of hornets in there, start stinging them, the guys will start running, you catch them." There's a song that used to be sung years ago, especially down in the southern part, how that, "He does not compel you to go, He does not compel you to go, He does not compel you to go against your will, but He just makes you willing to go". And in that song, there is a verse concerning the Canaanites who were dwelling in the land, and how God sent the hornets in, and they began to sting the people, as they were hiding out and it says, "He did not compel them to go. He just made them willing to go". So, "Nature will be fighting for you. The hornets, among them".

*You're not to be terrified of them: for the Lord your God, the great and awesome God is among you (7:21).*

"God is with you." In the New Testament, Paul said, "And if God is for us, who can be against us?" "You're not to fear them. When you go in the great and awesome God is with you, He's among you. So don't be afraid." God said, in the time of Isaiah, "Fear not, for I am with you. Be not dismayed for I am your God, and I will help you and I will strengthen you. Yea I will uphold you with my right hand of righteousness".

*And the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you little by little: [one at a time, God will drive out those nations before you], you will be unable to destroy them all at once, lest the beasts of the field multiply and be too numerous for you. But the Lord your God will deliver them over to you, and you will inflict defeat upon them, until they are destroyed. And he will deliver their kings into your hands, and you will destroy their name from under heaven: no one shall be able to stand against you, until you have*

*destroyed them. And you shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire: you're not to covet the silver or the gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it, because it's an abomination to the Lord your God (7:22-25).*

Now here's Moses, the old man, he's talking to the people. He's saying, "Hey, you're gonna go in, now don't be afraid. Just because they're bigger nations, don't be afraid. God's gonna be among you. God's gonna destroy them before you. God's gonna wipe them out". And these words of encouragement and exhortation as they are getting ready to go into the land.

They failed once before. Why? Because they got fearful. They started looking at the odds, they started looking at the situation. Looking at the enemy, fear gripped their heart, and they failed to go in. Now, what is Moses trying to do? He's preparing their hearts, "Don't look at the enemy! Look at your God! Don't look at the power of your enemy. Look at the power of your God!" What good advice this is! Because, you see we are so prone to get our eyes upon the problem, and it's so big! "It's too big for me, I don't know how I'm going to handle it"! Get your eyes off your problem, and get your eyes on God. That's the secret of success every time! That's the secret of victory! You're eyes on the Lord, not on the situation. Your heart will just collapse within you if you look at the situation. "I'm not strong enough. I'm not great enough. They're too mighty for me, no way I can do it!" You get in that mood, and man, you just, you just, without even fighting, you go under. You know, you don't even make it to the battle line, you just collapse before you can get there. But if you keep your eyes on God, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me". "If God is for me, who can be against me?"

And the glorious thing to know is that God is for you. He's for you a hundred percent! He will not let you go. He will not let you fall. He will help you, He will sustain you. He will strengthen you. Keep your eyes on Him. He is the secret of our victory, for He goes before us, and wipes out the enemies before us. Keep your eyes on God. That's basically what Moses keeps telling them. "Look, get your eyes on God now. Look to God! Keep your eyes on God, it's God who's going to deliver you. It's God that's going to bring them into your hands, and all. Keep your eyes on him."

*You're not to bring an abomination into your house, [That is any of their idols, or little gods that they made.] lest you be doomed to destruction like it: but you shall utterly detest it, utterly abhor it; for it's an accursed thing (7:26).*

## Chapter 8

*Now every commandment which I command you today, you must be careful to observe, [That's again, the secret. The obedience to God, loving God, and then God will guide you, and He will be for you, and He will help you.] you must be careful to observe that you may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to your fathers. And you shall remember [Remember what? First of all,] that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness (8:1-2),*

Remember how God has led you. He led you with a pillar of fire and a cloud. For forty years, God has led you all the way in the wilderness. Now they were led into some pretty spooky places. They were led to the bitter waters of Marah. They were led to the barren wilderness where there was no water. They were led to the desert, where there was no food. God led them into these places, in order that they might come into a fuller understanding of God, and the purposes of God. God led them to the bitter waters, in order that they might discover, that by the tree, thrown into the waters, those bitter waters could be made sweet.

The Lord leads us to bitter experiences in our lives, but God is able to bring the sweetness out of those bitter experiences. It is in those experiences where we learn to trust God, and where we learn to grow, and where we see the power of God, and the love of God manifested. It's there where we really come into a deeper relationship with God, as we learn to trust Him. Remember God led you all the way, and if God has led you this far, He's not going to let you down now. He's not going to let you go now.

I, often in looking at the world's scene, and see how far God has brought things along. How far God has progressed in the whole prophetic picture. I see how things are lining up in the world today, just according to the prophecies that relate to the return of Jesus Christ. It's ridiculous to think that God would come all the way along in the prophetic picture, and then just say, "Oh well, let's just dump it. Let's forget

it". No! He has brought it along this far, and you can be sure, that He's going to carry it right on to the second coming of Jesus Christ, and the gathering of the church unto the Lord, in the glorious kingdom age. He's not going to give up on His program, or His plan. God's kingdom shall come, and His will shall be done on this earth, even as it is in heaven! God shall give unto Jesus, the kingdoms of this world, and He shall reign where, "Ere' the Son, doth her successive journeys run". That day isn't far off. Lift up your heads! You're redemption is so close. "You shall remember that the Lord led you all the way."

You know, in looking back at my own life, I can testify, the Lord led me all the way. Now, that's in looking back. Many times, as I was on the way, I questioned whether or not the Lord was leading. I thought, "Man, I've really blown it this time. Surely this can't be God's will for my life. Surely I've made a mistake someplace". In the midst of the trials, it's awfully hard to realize that God has led me into this situation. But I'll tell you, as you go through it, and as you see the full plan, as you see the full picture unfold, then you begin to understand this little bit of a puzzle, that was so puzzling to me, and so difficult for me. But that little crazy thing fits perfectly, and look how those colors blend into the whole picture. The picture wouldn't be complete without it. So, God leads us step by step. "And all the way, my Savior leads me, what have I on earth beside. Can I doubt His tender mercies?" "And so remember, He led you all the way these forty years."

Now, the purpose, to humble you. I don't like that. But I need that, as we all need that. If I am going to be continued to be used by God, I cannot allow pride to rule in my heart. "Pride comes before destruction, a haughty spirit before the fall." Pride is a great enemy to you. It can destroy you! God hates the proud! God resists the proud! "Six things, doth God hate, yea seven are an abomination unto Him." One of those seven things is that proud look, that haughty attitude in spirit. "Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord and He will exalt you, He will lift you up." How important that we be humbled by God. In order that God might use us as His instruments. Then also...

*He wanted to test them, to know what was in their heart. Whether you would keep His commandments or not (8:2).*

Now the testing, to know what was in their heart, was not that God might know what was in their heart. He knew what was in their heart all the time! The scriptures testified of Jesus that He did not need that anyone should tell Him about some other person, "For He knew men, and he knew what was in man." The problem is, I don't know what's in my heart. I may think that you know, that area of my life is okay. There's no problem there. And God will lead me into a test, and suddenly God will lead me into a test and I'll realize, "Hey, I've got a problem here!"

A couple of times this afternoon, as a situation arose. My wife says, "Is this a test?", and it was. Prove what's in our hearts. Prove how I will react when something doesn't go my way, and someone is just poking up Fairview street, and tying up traffic, and it's a test of my patience. When you read some crazy crack pot theory in the paper, and you think, "Oh they're crazy!" It's just a test, to show what's in your heart. To help you see the truth about yourself.

There are so many things that are in my heart that God needs to deal with. He cannot deal with them until they are surfaced, until I can see that it is there. Because I would deny it's existence if you would ask me. Because, in reality, I, myself don't even know it is there, because my heart is deceitful, and desperately wicked, and I don't really know it. I don't know my heart completely. I don't know what I would do. I know what I think I would do in given situations, but then God allows me to get in those situations, so that I can see what I would really do. He reveals the truth to me, in order that He might deal with those areas of weakness, those flaws that are still within my life. So, in love, He leads us through the wilderness, He leads us to those bitter places. He leads us to those barren places. He leads us to those desolate places, in order that He might test us. Show what's in our hearts, whether or not we're gonna really trust Him. Whether or not we're gonna really have faith in Him, or whether or not we're going to turn against Him in those situations. So, He led us, in order that he might find out, or that we might find out really, whether we would keep the commandments or not.

*So he humbled you, and he allowed you to hunger, [God allowed them to hunger. He allowed them to become very hungry, in order] that He might give them the manna, and that they might learn through it, that man doesn't live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Father (8:3).*

So there were things that they needed to know. They needed to know what was in their hearts. They needed to know that man's life is not consisting in the abundance of the things he possesses. Man's life does not consist in the material realm, it consists really, in the spiritual realm. There's where your true life is. "Man doesn't live by bread alone." You can be dead, spiritually, if you're just involved in the material world, bread alone, but we live true life, by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. During this time that God was leading them, God was also providing for them. He provided the manna, He also provided ...

*Their garments that they did not wear out on you, [Now of course, I know that a lot of you would find that rather detestable, that your garment would last for forty years. I'm sure that if you went to the closet, and opened it, and saw that garment hanging there, you'd say, "I don't have anything to wear today. Been wearing this dumb thing for forty years". Now the question in some people's minds is whether or not this is a blessing or a curse, but their garments did not wear out.] nor did their feet swell, [Now that's hot desert sand! Have you ever walked across the hot desert in the daytime? Get those swollen feet? But their feet did not swell] for forty years (8:4). So then you should know in your heart, [The third thing that they really needed to know.] that as a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you (8:4-5).*

So you need to know what's in your heart. You need to know that the real life is spiritual. You don't live by just bread alone. You need to know that God, as your loving Heavenly Father, chastens you even as a earthly father chastens his son, so your Heavenly Father chastens you, and that is because He loves you. He will stop you from doing those things that can be destructive to you. He chastens you because He loves you, and because He is your Father.

*Therefore [because you know these things, because God has led you, therefore] you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him (8:6).*

Notice how, over and over, and over again, he comes back, the whole thing is, keeping the commandments of the Lord, walking in fear before Him, therefore you shall keep the commandments. And he'll go and he'll take another theme, and he'll go out on it, but then he comes back to the main theme, keep the commandments of God. Obey the commandments of God. Follow, and do, the things of God, and it always comes back to the central theme.

*For the Lord your God is bringing you into the good land, a land of brooks of water, fountains and springs that flow out of the valleys and hills; A land of wheat and barley, of vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of olive oil, and honey; ["Ah you're coming into a great land!"] A land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron, and our of whose hills you can dig copper (8:7-9).*

"The great land that God is bringing you into! It is a fruitful land, it is filled with resources!"

*And when you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which he has given you (8:10).*

And of course, this is sort of the basis for our thanksgiving. The good land. So when you eat and are full Thanksgiving Day, you're supposed to give thanks. You're supposed to bless God for His goodness and for His blessings. And so, Moses is instructing the people that their times of eating should be times of blessing God, times of remembering the goodness of God, in bringing them into this land that does produce so abundantly. These things should be the reminders to them to praise God, and to thank Him, when you eat and are full.

*Now beware [beware!] that you do not forget the Lord your God, by not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which command you today (8:11):*

"Beware!" Warning, again, this is the very area where they failed. They did forget God. They did begin to disobey God. The very thing that he warned them against, is the very thing of which they were guilty.

*Lest when you have eaten [And these are the very things that can cause forgetfulness. A full stomach. "You've eaten,] and you're full, and you have built beautiful houses, and you're dwelling in them (8:12);*

In times of prosperity, we don't have to pray, "Give us this day, our daily bread". We don't have to

look to God for the daily manna. Our barns are full. There is a dangerous time. Really, one of the most dangerous times of your life is not when you're going through a severe trial, but when everything is going great, and you're really blessed greatly. That is the time of great danger. Because that is the time when a person is prone to forget God. To become involved in the material things. God has blessed me materially. I have so many things now. Got a beautiful house, and now I want to fix up the house, and I want to redecorate the house, and I want to do this, and that, and the other. And we get so involved in the material things that we begin to neglect our walk, and our fellowship, and our relationship with God. "Beware, that you not forget God. When you come into the prosperity, you've eaten and you're full, you've built yourself beautiful houses."

*And when your herds and your flocks are multiplied, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied (8:13);*

The time of material prosperity is a time of great danger, because it can, if you're not careful, take your heart and your mind away from the Lord. So you've gotta watch it. You've gotta be careful.

*When your heart is lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; Who led you through that great and awesome wilderness, in which there were fiery serpents, and scorpions, the thirsty land, where there was no water; who brought water for you out of the rock of flint; Who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that he might humble you, and that he might test you, to do you good in the end (8:14-16);*

The whole purpose is that in the end, God might work in you. Having dealt with those issues of your heart. Having cleared up this area of the inner man. Now God can really do you good. "But beware that you don't say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand has gained me all this wealth.' you begin to attribute the success to yourself, to your own power, to your own abilities, to your own capacities". God wants to work in your life, but when He works in your life, He wants the glory for the work. God doesn't want you taking credit for the work that He has done.

When the Midianites had come into the land of Israel, and they had oppressed them, they were stealing their crops. As soon as they would thresh their wheat, the Midianites would move in and take their wheat from them. They were in the land, covering the land like grasshoppers. A hundred and thirty five thousand of them! Gideon, who was threshing wheat on his father's threshing floor, an angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said, "Gideon, thou mighty man of valor, go and this your might and deliver the children of Israel from the hand of the Midianites". And Gideon said, "Check your orders fellow, you've got the wrong address! I'm nobody. My family is nothing. We're an insignificant family, I'm a nobody. Surely God isn't calling me. You've made a mistake." And Gideon was assured by the angel that God had called him and was wanting him to deliver the people, and told him to make a call, among the Israelites. To gather an army, to go against the Midianites, that God might deliver them into the hand of Israel. So Gideon said, "I want proof on this man. I just don't want to do it without, I really know". You know the fleets that he put out in that whole thing.

So he called an army, said, "Come on! We need some volunteers to drive these Midianites out!" Hundred and thirty five thousand of them, and twenty thousand men volunteered. Twenty two thousand volunteered. The Lord spoke to Gideon, and said, "Gideon, you've got too many men! I know the hearts of these people. If I would deliver the Midianites into the hands of the twenty two thousand, they would boast and they'd tell how tough they were, and all that they had done. So, you go out and tell all those guys, 'If any of you are afraid to fight, you go on home'." So Gideon went out and he said, "Okay troops line up. If any of you guys are afraid to go out and fight against these Midianites, then you can go home". Well, who wouldn't be afraid, with those odds? You've got a hundred and thirty five thousand Midianites out there, well armed, and then you've got twenty thousand guys here with shovels and spears and pitchforks, you know. Twelve thousand of them were afraid, and turned and went home. He lost over half of his army.

Now he's got ten thousand men, and the Lord looks at the whole scene and He said, "Gideon, you've got too many men! I know the hearts of these people. If I would deliver the Midianites into the hands of the ten thousand, they'd go around boasting at how tough they are, and they'd brag of what they had done. Take them down to the stream at Harod and let them drink the water, and you watch as they drink. If they

get down and put their face in the water, send them home. But if they'll take the water, and cup it in their hands, and lap it as a dog, then those are the men I want. And with those, I will deliver the Midianites".

Gideon took them down to the stream that comes out of the spring of Harod, and he watched the fellows drink, and ninety seven hundred of them got down upon their knees and put their face in the water, and three hundred guys picked it up and lapped, and God said, "Take the three hundred, and with these I will deliver the Midianites into your hand". Three hundred against a hundred and thirty five thousand? Are you kidding!

But you see, God knows the tendency in man's heart, to boast. To glory in himself. God wants the glory for the work. God wants to work in you. God wants to work in your life, but He's got to take care of these issues first. These issues that you don't even know are there! So He brings you into places of testing, to reveal what is in your heart. In order that He might deal with it. The whole end of the purposes of God, is the blessing that He wants to bestow upon you.

So, we find, that God, with Israel, is wanting to bless them, He wants to bring them into the land, but, don't forget that it was God who did it. Don't say in your heart, "Well, our power, and our might, the strength of our hand, we've gained this wealth."

*You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant (8:18).*

It's not that you're shrewd, it's not that you're smart, it's not that you're above anybody else. God has blessed you! It is God that has given you the capacities. It is God who has given you the talents. It is God who has given you these things by which you've been blessed! It isn't you. It isn't yourself, it is God's work in you, and you're to remember that.

*Then it shall be, that if by any means you forget the Lord your God, [If by any means you can actually turn your heart away, forget Him,] and you follow other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish. As the nations which the Lord destroys before you, so you shall perish; because you would not be obedient to the voice of the Lord your God (8:19-20).*

So, hey here it is. He lays it out straight. "I testify, I bear record today, mark it down", well it's marked down!, "if you forget God, and serve these other gods, you're gonna perish". And hey, it came to pass! It was true. Just as he said, it happened. And just as it says it will happen to you, if you forsake Jesus Christ, if you turn away from Him, you will lose those blessings of God, and the consciousness of the presence of God in your life. You'll go out and destroy yourself. You will surely perish. Don't forget God. Don't turn your back on Him, keep pressing on towards the mark for the prize of the high calling.

Next week, we'll take chapter nine, and see how far we can go. Starting with nine. The problem is, you see I'm having too much time to study these chapters, going slower. This is the third week I've studied chapter eight, so I've already studied chapter nine for two weeks. One neat thing about the bible, you know, the more you dig, the more you find! Man what a rich book! What a glorious treasure you cannot exhaust the treasure that is there. Glorious.

May the Lord be with you and bless you this week. May indeed, God work in your life, whatever is necessary, testing, chastening, in order to reveal to you what is in your heart. To help you to know those things you need to know. The truth about yourself. The truth about life, that you don't live by bread alone. Your life is in the realm of the Spirit. That you might know the truth about God and His relationship to you. He is a loving Heavenly Father, that wants you to be His child, in order that He might guide you, save you, keep you from destruction. As you just yield your life to Him. So, may God bless you this week, and may you be enhanced in your walk and your relationship with Him, as He ministers to you of the things of the Spirit. In Jesus' name.