

Deut. 8:1 All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers.

This is the fifth time that Moses has referenced the need for keeping “all” the commandments of God. The human tendency is to want to choose for oneself the laws that will govern one’s life according to one’s own desires. This is such an obvious truth as one looks at how those in the church today seek to manipulate scripture to suit their own purposes. One way they corrupt God’s word is to use it out of context. Another way is to argue that the Word is to be applied differently today than it was in times past. Others tend to think that God won’t notice if we withhold submitting to Him in some areas of our lives as long as we are submissive in “the main things” or at least appear to be submissive before others.

Moses is emphatic concerning the importance of the “whole word of God.” Moses clearly tells the people that these are the commands that are to govern how they live. Obedience to these commands is key to their taking possession of the land and growing as a mighty nation.

This is the fourth time so far that Moses has reminded the people that the land God is giving them is in accordance with the covenant He made with their fathers—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In other words, their inheritance of the land is an act of God’s faithfulness to His word—not something they deserve.

Deut. 8:2 And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what *was* in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

Deut. 8:3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every *word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

Deut. 8:4 Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years.

As they prepared to face the challenges that would confront them in the process of taking possession of the land, Moses instructs them to “remember” all the ways that God had showed up for them during their time in the wilderness. Though condemned to wander for 40 years as part of God’s judgment for the unbelief of their parents, God had consistently guided them and provided for them. During that time His purpose was three-fold:

- ❖ To humble them. – God wanted this to be a time of destroying the pride of the people. A time of recognizing that His desires for them would bring blessing and that following their own desires would bring judgment.
- ❖ To prove them. – The Hebrew for *prove* made reference to *testing*. This would explain why He allowed them to face thirst and hunger—to give them the opportunity to trust Him in spite of the circumstances and to instill confidence that He could and would provide their every need.

- ❖ To know what was in their hearts regarding submitting to Him in obedience.
 - Did God not already know the answer to this? Yes, He did. But the people needed to know; they needed to experience the rewards of obedience and the consequences of disobedience. This experience would be most valuable in preparing them to face the challenges of taking possession of the Promised Land.

Moses reminds them that when they faced hunger, God provided manna from heaven to nourish them. He made them dependant upon Him for their daily physical sustenance as they obeyed His instruction regarding the gathering of that provision. This provided a daily object lesson regarding the importance of obeying God's word. Without His provision they would have perished. Not only did God provide their food, He also caused their clothes to remain durable and strong and He strengthened their very feet to endure the rigors of all their travels.

I couldn't help but think of these verses from the Sermon on the Mount.

Matt. 6:25-30 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith?

Deut. 8:5 Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee.

Deut. 8:6 Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him.

Moses now asks the people to consider God's actions toward them in light of their actions toward their own children. Why do they chasten or punish their own children? The obvious answer—Because they love them and want to teach them to do what is right. Why do they establish rules for their own children? Again, the obvious answer--Because they love them and want to protect them. If they would just look at the commands of God with that same understanding, they would understand the importance of obeying God's commands and giving Him the reverence He deserves.

Deut. 8:7 For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills;

Deut. 8:8 A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey;

Deut. 8:9 A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any *thing* in it; a land whose stones *are* iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.

Moses encourages them by giving them a description of the land that God is giving them. It is a good land with lots of water, abundant with brooks, wells and springs. It is a land of abundant crops, including wheat, barley, vines, fig trees, pomegranates and olive trees. It is also a land abundant with honey. There will be plenty of food for everyone, and they will lack nothing they need. The land will also supply them with the iron and brass/copper they need for cooking utensils, tools, etc.

Deut. 8:10 When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee.

Moses is basically saying that once you enjoy the abundance of God's provision for you in your land, you will be ready to praise YHWH for His wonderful gift.

Moses is reminding the people that the abundant provision of the land isn't to be taken for granted. God specifically chose this land for His people; and as the Creator, He had prepared it to supply their needs.

Deut. 8:11 Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day:

Deut. 8:12 Lest *when* thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt *therein*;

Deut. 8:13 And *when* thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied;

Deut. 8:14 Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; Moses goes on to warn the people against becoming complacent and taking their blessings for granted. It is so in our nature to take the credit for our achievements and the material wealth we have accumulated as a result of our prowess and hard work. It's that spirit of pride that prompts us to forget that everything we have is from the hand of God. We may have been blessed with a good mind, creative abilities and strong bodies—but they are all gifts to us from our Creator. Whatever we reap from the utilization of those gifts would not have been possible without His first having blessed us with those capabilities.

I couldn't help but think of a verse from James as I wrote this.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Deut. 8:15 Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, *wherein were* fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where *there was* no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint;

Deut. 8:16 Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end;

Deut. 8:17 And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of *mine* hand hath gotten me this wealth.

Again Moses reminds them of how Almighty God has taken care of them already. He led them safely through a wilderness full of poisonous snakes and scorpions. He gave them water from a rock when there was no water to be found. He fed them with manna from heaven as discussed in the verse above. They should realize that only through God's provision would they be so blessed. They, better than any other people, should recognize that everything they have is a gift from God.

Deut. 8:18 But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for *it is* he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as *it is* this day.

This verse reiterates the truth of all that has been said before. They are to remember that their ability to get wealth comes from God. They are also to remember that these gifts from God are theirs because of the faithfulness of His covenant to their fathers—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

I almost missed this. God wants to “establish” the covenant that He made with their fathers. He wants the people to accept Him as Lord and experience the blessings that are part of that covenant forever. But....

Deut. 8:19 And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.

Deut. 8:20 As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.

Moses is reminding the people that although they are being blessed according to God's covenant with their forefathers, their continued blessing is conditional upon their keeping their covenant with Him as established at Sinai. If they decide to forget about God and turn to serve and worship “other gods,” they will perish as a nation. Just as He is empowering them to destroy the nations now inhabiting the land, He will see to it that they are destroyed if they choose to continue in disobedience to Him.

I thought it was interesting that the Hebrew for “other” gods made reference to *strange*, which Webster defines as foreign or not pertaining to one's self. In other words, the Hebrew people were singled out as belonging to God and He to them.