

- ***Read Deuteronomy 6:4-25*** The book of Deuteronomy is a very interesting book because it is essentially a book of sermons. Some refer to it as the crown jewel of the Pentateuch because it is full of real life practical writings by Moses telling the people exactly how God expects for them to live as His special chosen people. Others have even referred to it as the Israelites 30 day revival. This revival was needed because many changes were about to take place among the people. A new generation was rising up and they needed to know of God's expectations. The people were moving into the promised land where they would encounter new peoples with new gods. And then there was of course the fact that a new leader would be raised up for them. Moses's time was quickly coming to an end. The teachings of this book were certainly needed at this point in the story of Israel. They would be the people's final preparations before they entered into the promised land.
- The book opens up with quite a sad realization...In **vv. 2,3**, we find out that what should have only been an 11 day journey was stretched out to 15 years because of the poor decision making of the people and their leaders. Nonetheless, the people finally arrive at the door step of the promised land, and Moses sits them down to lay upon their ears these much needed words that would help them to prosper if they would heed them.
- The text we read just a few moments ago is one that ought to be quite familiar to us. It is a text that we often consider when we discuss how we as parents might raise our children in the correct manner before the Lord. Even before this, we find in **chapter 5** where Moses reiterates the 10 commandments. Moses truly wanted to drill into the minds of the people the necessity of following after God. Towards the end of this **chapter 6**, we find some very interesting words spoken by Moses. In **vv.24,25**, we find out that God is commanding the people to observe these statues and commandments because it would be good for the people. The people would benefit by following the commandments of God. God had commanded them in such a way for their good! In fact, God continues to command us for our own good, as well.
- This is important for us to recognize because there are many in our world who see God's commandments as restricting and suppressive, yet Moses says that they are for our good. This evening, I would like to take just a few minutes and consider how it is that God's commandments were for the Israelites good, and then I would like to consider how it is that God's commands are for our good, as well.

I. God wants what is best for His creation.

- A. The fact the Moses says that these commands of God are for the good of the people ought to make us realize that God truly wants what is best for us. Even just considering the fact that we are the crown jewel of His creation must help us to realize that we hold a very special place in the eye of God.
- B. These people, the Israelites, at this time held a very special place in the eye of God. Consider what is said in **vv.10-12**. God had made special promises to the forefathers of these people, and He surely would come through on those promises. These were not just any sort of promises, but they were promises of great things that would be obtained by the people.
- C. The people would be able to go into these great and splendid cities that they had not built. They would be able to go into houses which were full of goods that they had not stored. They would be able to drink from cisterns that they had not dug. They could then turn around and eat from grape vines and olive trees that they had not planted. Then to top all of this off...they were no long in slavery thanks to the goodness of God! God had given these people these best of this earth.
- D. Above all else, though, consider the fact that these people could claim to be the people of God. All of these things were good and great, but nothing could top being able to say that they were God's people. However, this required that they remember who God was and in remembering who He was they would recognize the necessity of following and keeping His commandments.
- E. The same is true for us within the Lord's Church. We are blessed beyond all measure in so many different ways, yet nothing tops the fact that we have all been adopted as sons. That is truly the greatest blessing that comes from our God. The many benefits that come from our adoption cannot be compared with anything else. **(Eph. 1:3-8)**

II. God's perfect wisdom give him the ability to know what is best for us.

- A. Moses stresses to the people that it is God who truly knows what they need and what is best for them. It was God alone who they should serve and fear. They were sternly warned to not follow after the gods of the people around them for Yahweh is a jealous God who does not take too kindly towards His chosen people going after other Gods. **(Deut. 6:13-15)**

- B. That jealousy of God was not a passive jealousy, for God was not afraid to show His jealousy for His people by destroying them from the earth. Moses doesn't try to beat around the bush, but was very plain in detailing for the people the jealousy of God. Basically, Moses tells the people that they don't need another episode like they had back at Massah. **(Deut. 6:15,16 & Exod. 17)**
- C. Back in **Exodus 17**, the people complained against God and Moses because they did not have water. They complained at God and disrespected Him by saying that He should have just left them in Egypt where they had plenty of water instead of bringing them out into the wilderness to thirst to death. God's anger was raised against them, yet He provided for their needs as He always did.
- D. The people thought that they knew better than God at times, but He constantly showed them that their thoughts and wisdom were nothing compared to His. They really thought that they would have rather stay in Egypt with their food, but still be in slavery?? Let's be honest...that is just plain foolishness. The people were much better off doing as God had commanded.
- E. We must never get into the habit of thinking that we know better than our God. The all knowing God is much more capable of knowing what is best for His people who He created. He knows what is best for us, and He knows how it is that we can achieve what is best for us. Sadly, man continues to think that He knows best in certain areas, yet time and time again we find out that the end of our wisdom is ruin and that God's way works best.

III. We prosper when we obey what God has commanded.

- A. The future of these people depended on their ability to heed the wisdom of God and obey it. Consider what good Moses says would happen if they diligently kept the commandments of the Lord in **Deuteronomy 6:17-19**.
- B. Time and time again in the story of Israel's conquest we find that when they honored God through obedience to His commandments and instructions...good things happened! Jericho was a success when they followed God's instructions for the marching and the shouting. **(Joshua 6)** Joshua had success at Gibeon when he followed God's commandments. **(Joshua 10)** Then craziest of all might be Gideon's victory over Midian with only 300 men. **(Judges 7)**
- C. Conventional wisdom wouldn't have allowed for any of this to happen, but with God all things are possible...even things that ought not happen. Let it be shown though that as long as the people followed God's instructions then good things happened.
- D. Many thousands of years hasn't changed this fact. Today, we have a choice of either following God's instructions and being blessed or not. When we follow God instructions...when we teach the Gospel in its purity, people are converted and the church grows. When we honor authority and follow God's pattern then the church operates smoothly and unity is had. When we honor God's moral laws then our relationships with our fellow man are able to flourish. It cannot be denied that God's way works and people are bettered when they follow His commandments.

IV. We suffer when we fail to obey what God has commanded.

- A. On the other side of this is the discussion we must have about not obeying God's commands. When we fail to honor God then we will not be blessed, but we will suffer because of our disobedience. This story of obedience=success and disobedience=failure is scattered all throughout the history of the conquest and rule of Israel within Canaan
- B. Consider the sin of Achan. Right on the heels of their success over Jericho, the people then go up against Ai. Joshua's forces are defeated because Achan had taken some of the spoils from Jericho. God would not be with the people as long as sin was in the camp, so the sin had to be atoned for and Achan and his family were put to death. **(Joshua 7)** Consider the people's desire to be like the people around them and have a king. God told them that as long as He ruled as king then good things would happen, but if they chose to have an earthly king then he would make life more difficult for them. The king would use the people and take part of their possessions. The people wouldn't accept only God and those they had their king and the difficulties that came along with it. **(1 Samuel 8)**
- C. The instructions of the Lord were for the good of the people. It would keep them pure, and they would prove their love and respect for God through their obedience. However, when they sinned against God, they were punished and not blessed. The same pattern continues to show itself even in our day.

D. When men fail to respect God's laws, they usually find themselves in difficulty. When we fail to emphasize the Gospel but instead focus on fun and games, then we see our churches dwindle or the people are shallow in their faith and easily fall away. When we fail to respect God's moral laws then we find ourselves at odds with our fellow man and we get into trouble. When we indulge in alcohol or drugs or other immoral behaviors that go against God's commandments then we can see the bad consequences that follow all around us.

If we want to live a life that avoids many of the self inflicted struggles and worries of this world then we will rely on God and His wisdom. Our God wants us to be blessed. He wants what is best for us and that is why He commands us in the way that He does. It is the reason that He laid down the many commandments of the Law of Moses and it is the reason why He continues to command us through His Word as He does today. May God help us to be humble and accept His wisdom as being good for us, and may we reap the benefits of being obedient to His wise commandments that are given down to us for our own good.