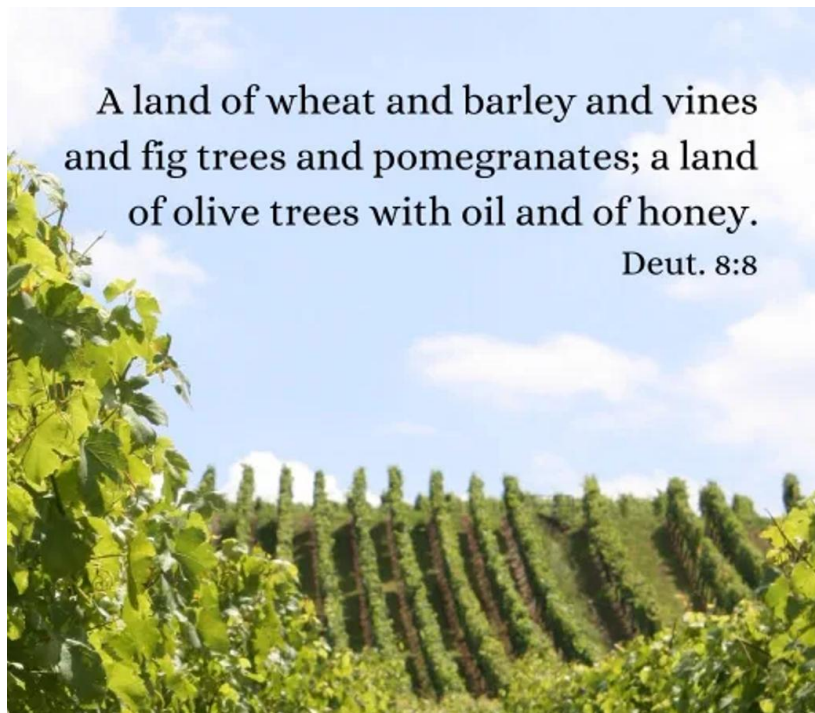


Thursday Bible Law Class

Observe All Commands

Deuteronomy 8

6th May 26



It seems that the lesson of this chapter, which stands out among others is to

Remember!

Memory is a precious gift, and is not appreciated until old age comes upon us, and the memory begins to decline. Hopefully

by then, we would have developed good enough habits and patterns of behaviour to make up for this loss. In this case, of the nation of Israel, they had a collective poor memory, which is why the Lord God continually had to remind them through the man Moses.

This chapter begins with a simple exhortation: Keep my commandments! ... *that ye may live...* Life was dependant upon it, not just naturally speaking, but of course spiritual. This same exhortation though, is also given to spiritual Israel – see Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2: *Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.*

With this in mind, we do well to take all of what is written aforetime and apply it to ourselves! See Romans 15:4.

And so to remind them to keep the commandments, and learn and know the way their previous experiences had seen what happened when they obeyed or disobeyed – they had to **remember** the last forty years during the wilderness journey, and how all that had happened was to

- Humble them
- Prove them
- Know them

It was a testing time, and a time of probation. The whole exercise had been to teach them that

Keeping God's commandments = LIFE

Of course, God knows all things from the beginning, (Isaiah 46:10) and knows those who are His (2 Timothy 2:19). Thus the testing process of learning was for their benefit, forming characters, fit for the Kingdom of God.

So verse 3 – *he humbled thee...* how He did this, was making them realise how dependant they were upon Him. They could not survive without Him. It was tempting for them to think they had escaped the mightiest army of the then known world, and now had their own life of freedom ahead of them, free from the shackles of Egypt, and their destiny was in their own hands, but quickly such thoughts of pride were destroyed as they thirsted and grew hungry. Yet bread from heaven miraculously appeared! Yet in the collecting of it many did not obey, but stored it up, and tried to collect on the sabbath – not believing God, even though so many miracles had happened right in front of their faces. Such is human nature. It was humiliating to be constantly reminded of this. It still is. Death was the result of disobedience.

Quickly people learned - to obey meant life, and this happened in a literal way. But it was the spiritual that was more important. If

they understood the reasons and learned to love God, and believed in Him, they could live – for ever in the Promised Land. So

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.

Immediately these words remind us of the wilderness experience of another Firstborn. Matthew 4:4 records the Lord Jesus quoting these words to combat the desire to disobey God, and use the power of the Holy Spirit to fulfil his own lust. The Words of God are more life affirming, and life sustaining than bread we eat, which satisfies but for a moment. No doubt Jesus in quoting these words, recalled the way Israel – his people were so tempted also, but because of disobedience, their carcasses fell in the wilderness, so many of them without hope. Because they wanted to satisfy their own lusts at the expense of keeping the commands of God. They got distracted. Don't we all?

Jesus didn't. But he reminds: Matthew 6:33: *But **seek ye first** the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.* All material things, food, water included will all be provided – but put God first. It is contrary to human nature, no wonder it is so humiliating.

So Moses was caused to remind the people, of the loving kindness of God, not just in providing for His people, all that life requires, but **evidence** before their eyes of His nearness, and care for them. Miraculously they were provided with the bread from heaven but also miraculously their clothes never seemed to grow old or wear out, they stayed in remarkable good health despite the privations of being continuously on the move, even for forty years. They were to think about this, and see how they were cherished and cared for, but also chastened just as a father does

his son. Yes, God was telling them they were His children. Did God not state that clearly before – Exodus 4:22, 23. (See Jeremiah 31:9) as well) The Apostle picks up on this and teaches in Hebrews 12: 5-11 all of which is relevant, but for brevity: *...For whom the Lord loveth he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives....Now no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.* Looking back then, the nation of Israel were encouraged to view the tough experiences as a sign of kindness, necessary to shape, guide and teach them through discipline the true value of obedience, and the purpose of God with them.

But now came a warning, looking to the future.

Despite their previous collective murmurings, backslidings, disobedience and unbelief, God would still remember – His Covenant. His people.

He would bring them into a good land of plenty. Verse 7 *... a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills;* No Rock that had to follow them, gushing out water on command, because in the New Land there would be water everywhere – Of course, prefiguring the Kingdom Age of the future, when *earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea* (Habakkuk 2:14). This same land would be full of the fruits and produce of much loved and tended soil. *A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey;* Fruits produced by hard work, subject to the laws of weather, and rain! Fruits which God gave to encourage His people to provide Fruits of the Spirit - Galatians 5:22-23: *but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.* There is no need or cause to restrict or limit or tithe any of these fruits, which are

indicators of fertile minds, cultivated faith and a carefully pruned way of life. It would be a land where no longer would they need to collect the light bread which they loathed so much, which lay on the ground like the dew, the hoar frost. That daily provision for the generation under probation, would stop, bread would be in abundance always readily available. The same land which would yield great riches from its soil, such as iron and copper. This last aspect was routinely denied by so called experts, who claimed that the land of Israel had no natural supply of metallic ore. Subsequent discoveries reveal workable iron ore deposits (up to 80% iron) in the Galilee (Ramim-Manara Ridge), the Ramon Crater in the Negev, and the Ajlun region of Jordan. That this was known in ancient times is proven by evidence of production at sites like Tel Beth-Shemesh that show that 9th-century BCE smiths used local iron oxide concretions.

This would all add to the general ability to be self sufficient, gain in comfort, contentment and riches. Then the warning, that in prosperity they were to remember where all this abundance came from, and to remember them as the blessings of God, and to remember to praise God.

They were to beware, that the comfortable life style, instead of being used as a vehicle to greater production of the Fruits of the Spirit, would turn to be a snare a distraction, to produce greed, avarice, selfishness and possessiveness – in short cause them to Forget God, and his commandments and His Word. Verse 14 describes this danger, as the condition: *Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God*. The lesson cannot be wasted. Prosperity, and relative success in the world of commerce tends to pride and arrogance, the belief in self sufficiency. Not that the blessings are themselves wrong – obviously not, as God provided them all in the first place. But human nature tends to take all the credit, - verse 17 *And thou say*

in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. - and simply over time forgets to thank God, and forgets that being self-sufficient is in fact a delusion. The Apostle confessed ***Thy grace is sufficient for me.*** He added - *for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

It was vital for the nation to look back and remember whence they had come, just as it is vital today, to be ever aware of the fragility of life, the weakness of human nature, and how dependant we are upon God everyday. For those of natural Israel, their prosperity was down the love of God, and His purpose with them, to bring about a Godly Seed, which is why He sustained them, and blessed them abundantly, despite their repeated failings. It was not down to any input from their side! That is a lesson for Spiritual Israel, those small blessings of life, - such as memory, eyesight health and – the knowledge of the Word of God, are not given to satisfy the flesh, but to contribute towards the establishment of the Covenant of God. How easy it is to forget as the challenges of life overtake. How easy to be distracted, side tracked and become deceived as to the source of life's blessings. The worship of self is idolatry. In verse 19, God warned Israel, that if this took place they would surely perish. Their end would be just the same as the nations that would be evicted from the land. Luke 8:14 and Revelation 3:3 is the message to Israel after the Spirit.

Brother Terry