

Deuteronomy Chapter 8

Verses 1-9: Obedience must be:

- (1). Careful, observe to do;
- (2). Universal, to do all the commandments; and
- (3). From a good principle, with a regard to God as the Lord, and their God, and with a holy fear of him.

To engage them to this obedience, Moses directs them to look back. It is good to remember all the ways, both of God's providence and grace, by which he has led us through this wilderness. That we may cheerfully serve him and trust in him. They must remember the straits they were sometimes brought into, for mortifying their pride, and manifesting their perverseness. To prove them, that they and others might know all that was in their heart. And that all might see that God chose them, not for any thing in them which might recommend them to his favor. They must remember the miraculous supplies of food and raiment granted them. Let none of God's children distrust their Father, nor take any sinful course for the supply of their necessities. Some way or other, God will provide for them in the way of duty and honest diligence, and verily they shall be fed. It may be applied spiritually; the word of God is the food of the soul. Christ is the word of God; by him we live. They must also remember the rebukes they had been under, and not without need. This use we should make of all our afflictions; by them let us be quickened to our duty. Moses also directs them to look forward to Canaan. Look which way we will, both to look back and to look forward, to Canaan. This will furnish us with arguments for obedience. Moses saw in that land a type of the better country. The gospel church is the New Testament Canaan, watered with the Spirit in his gifts and graces, planted with trees of righteousness, bearing fruits of righteousness. Heaven is the good land, in which nothing is wanting, and where is fullness of joy.

Deuteronomy 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."

It is repeated over and over again, to impress it on their minds, and to show the importance and necessity of it. How greatly it was expected from them, and how much it was incumbent on them.

"That ye may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers": For their temporal life, and the mercies and comforts of it. The multiplication of their offspring, and of their substance. Their entrance into the land of Canaan, possession of it, and continuance in it. All depended on their obedience to the commands of God (see Deut. 19:20).

This seems to be a continuation of our last lesson. We see again, the importance of keeping God's commandments. Notice the word "all". We see to keep part of the commandments, is not enough. They must keep all of them to live. This land is theirs, but they must go in and possess it.

Deuteronomy 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."

“Remember”: The people were to recall what God had done for them (compare 5:15; 7:18; 8:18; 9:7; 15:15; 16:3, 12; 24:9, 18; 25:17), and not forget (compare 4:9, 23, 31; 6:12; 8:11, 14, 19; 9:7; 25:19; 26:13).

“To know what was in thine heart”: Israel’s 40 years in the wilderness was a time of God’s affliction and testing so that the basic attitude of the people toward God and His commandments could be made known. God chose to sustain His hungry people in the wilderness by a means previously unknown to them. Through this miraculous provision, God both humbled the people and tested their obedience.

“Humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart”: The 40 years were a time of testing and discipline, to discover what Israel’s real motives were. The trials were designed to get them to trust God (Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4).

Now we see these 40 years were a time of testing. God must humble these proud people. Their hearts must be made pure, and they must conform to the will of God in their lives. The lesson in this for us, could be that trials are more easily understood after they are over. When we are in the midst of a problem, it is seldom easy to see the benefit of it.

Romans 5:3-5 "And not only [so], but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;" "And patience, experience; and experience, hope:" "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

Deuteronomy 8:3 "And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knowest 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."

“Manna, which thou knowest not”: God sustained the people in the wilderness with a food previously unknown to them. See (Exodus 16:15), for the beginning of the giving of the manna and (Joshua 5:12), for its cessation.

“Man doth not live by bread only”: Israel’s food in the wilderness was decreed by the Word of God. They had manna because it came by God’s command; therefore, ultimately it was not bread that kept them alive, but God’s Word (compare Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4).

Jesus quoted these words to the devil in His temptation: man “live ... by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD” (Matt. 4:4).

We find that they were taught that God is their source. When they hungered, He fed them. They did not know what the manna was, just that it kept them from starving. They soon found that God was their provider. The statement, in the verse above, is in the New Testament, too.

Matthew 4:4 "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

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

“Raiment waxed not old”: This miraculous provision is also mentioned in 29:5.

This is a tremendous miracle in itself. Ordinarily, clothes do not last 40 years without wearing out. The even greater miracle is that these old people did not have swollen feet from this journey.

Verses 5-6: One implication of having God as one’s Father is in this passage is God “chastened” His children so that they will walk in His ways (Heb. 12:7). Christian parents must discipline their children for the same reason (Prov. 3:11-12).

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

“The LORD thy God chasteneth thee”: Israel’s sojourn in the wilderness was viewed as a time of God’s discipline of His children. He was seeking to correct their wayward attitude so that they might be prepared to obediently go into the Land.

Those the LORD loves, He chastens.

Hebrews 12:6-7 "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?"

Chastening is for a moment to correct error.

Psalms 94:12 "Blessed [is] the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law;"

1 Corinthians 11:32 "But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

Verses 6-10: An extensive description of God’s abundant blessings for Israel in the Land (compare 7:7-9). This is a very important passage on the abundance of the land and its produce.

Canaan was a “good land”, well suited for the agrarian and pastoral lifestyle of the Hebrew people.

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

Not only because they are the commands of God, and of a covenant God and Father, which are reasons sufficient for the observance of them. But because the Lord had dealt so bountifully with them, in providing food and raiment for them in the wilderness, which always continued with them. And because, when he afflicted them, it was a fatherly chastisement, with great tenderness and compassion, and for their good. All which laid them under obligations to keep the commands of God, whatsoever he had enjoined them, whether of the moral, ceremonial, or judicial kind.

"To walk in his ways, and to fear him": To walk in the ways he directed. To be under an awe of his majesty, a fear of offending him, and a reverential affection for him, such as children have to a father.

Exodus 18:20 "And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do."

Psalms 128:1 "Blessed [is] every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways."

Deuteronomy 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;"

“A good land”: In contrast to the desolation of the wilderness (verses 7-9), describe the abundance of Israel’s new Land.

Now Moses is describing the beautiful land of promise to them. This is preparing them to receive the blessings God has for them. This would mean so much to them, because they have just come out of a desert with very little water.

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

There were two harvests in it. One a barley harvest, which began at the Passover, and the other a wheat harvest, which began at Pentecost. Instances of the great plenty of these might be observed in the vast quantities consumed in the times of Solomon, in his household, and in the yearly distribution he made to Hiram (1 Kings 4:22). Yea, there was such plenty of wheat in this land, that it not only supplied the inhabitants of it, but even furnished other countries with it. With this the merchants of Israel and Judah traded at the market of Tyre (Ezek. 27:17). According to the Jewish writers, the best fine wheat flour was at Mechumas and Mezonichah, and the next to them was Chephraim, or Ephraim, in the valley.

"And vines": With which this land abounded everywhere. The places most noted were Lebanon, Eshcol, Engedi, Ashkelon, Gaza, and Sarepta. According to the above writers, Cerotim and Hatolim were the first for wine. And the second to them were Beth-Rimah and Beth-Laban in the mountain, and Caphat Sigmah in the valley. The wine of Sharon is also highly commended by them.

"And fig trees and pomegranates": According to Josephus, the country of Gennesaret furnished the best grapes and figs for ten months without intermission, and the rest of fruits throughout the whole year. Figs and pomegranates, the spies brought with them when they returned from searching the land, as well as grapes, are a specimen of the fruits of it (Num. 13:23).

"A land of oil olive": The mount of Olives was famous for olive trees, and had its name from there. The whole land abounded with them, and though oil was so much in common use with the Jews, they supplied their neighbors with it (see 1 Kings 5:11). It was usual also, as we are told, for the ten tribes to send oil into Egypt. According to the Jewish doctors, Tekoah was the first place for oil, and the second, Ragab, beyond Jordan. Very probably the same with Argob (Deut. 3:4).

"And honey": Besides the great quantities of honey produced by bees in this country, there was much of another sort that dropped from trees, called wild honey. The food of John the Baptist in the wilderness (Matt. 3:4).

Palestine is a fertile land where much food grows. This land is fertile, and with plenty of water and can grow all of the things mentioned above in abundance. This would be a welcome change to the limited diet they had coming across the desert.

Deuteronomy 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."

"Iron ... brass": The mountains of southern Lebanon and the region east of the Sea of Galilee and south of the Dead Sea contained iron. Both brass and iron were found in the Rift Valley south of the Dead Sea.

These very metals have been found here. There will be no lack of food. This is a breadbasket for this part of the world.

Verses 10-20: Moses directs to the duty of a prosperous condition. Let them always remember their Benefactor. In everything we must give thanks. Moses arms them against the temptations of a prosperous condition. When men possess large estates, or are engaged in a profitable business, they find the temptation of pride, forgetfulness of God, and carnal-mindedness, very strong. And as they are anxious and troubled about many things. In this the believing poor have the advantage; they more easily perceive their supplies coming from the Lord in answer to the prayer of faith. And, strange as it may seem, they find less difficulty in simply trusting him for daily

bread. They taste a sweetness therein, which is generally unknown to the rich, while they are also freed from many of their temptations, forget not God's former dealings with thee. Here is the great secret of Divine Providence. Infinite wisdom and goodness are the source of all the changes and trials believers experience.

Israel had many bitter trials, but it was to do them good. Pride is natural to the human heart. Would one suppose that such a people, after their slavery at the brick-kilns, should need the thorns of the wilderness to humble them. But such is man! And they were proved that they might be humbled. None of us live a single week without giving proofs of our weakness, folly, and depravity. To broken-hearted souls alone the Savior is precious indeed. Nothing can render the most suitable outward and inward trials effectual, but the power of the Spirit of God. See here how God's giving and our getting are reconciled, and apply it to spiritual wealth. All God's gifts are in pursuance of his promises. Moses repeats the warning he had often given of the fatal consequences of forsaking God. Those who follow others in sin, will follow them to destruction. If we do as sinners do, we must expect to fare as sinners' fare.

Deuteronomy 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."

For as the Lord would furnish them with plenty of food, they might eat of it liberally. Provided they did not indulge to intemperance, as everyone may whom God has blessed with a fullness of good things. And this shows that we are to return thanks to God for a plentiful meal, as well as to ask a blessing on it.

"For the good land which he hath given thee": Which supplied them with such plenty, that they enjoyed full meals every day.

The practice of thanking God for the food we eat has been evident in Israel, since these very days mentioned here. We are told that anything we pray over before we eat it is clean to us.

Verses 11-20: The God who blesses and sustains life was setting before Israel the choice: "forget the LORD thy God" and "perish", or "remember" Him and live (Psalms 119:83, 109, 141, 176).

Deuteronomy 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:"

"Forget not the LORD thy God": Sufficient food would lead to the satisfaction of Israel in the Land (verse 10, 12). This satisfaction and security could lead to Israel forgetting God. Forgetting God means no longer having Him in the daily thoughts of one's life. This forgetfulness would lead to a disobedience of His commandments. Whereas, in the wilderness, Israel had to depend on God for the necessities of life, in the rich land there would be a tempting sense of self-sufficiency.

All of these wonderful blessings showered upon them are conditional. They must remember their LORD. They must keep His commandments to keep these blessings.

Deuteronomy 8:12 "Lest [when] thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt [therein];"

Not only once and again, but continually, day after day, being indulged with great plenty.

"And hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein": Who for forty years had only dwelt in tents, moving from place to place in the wilderness.

When we are full, it is easy to forget to be thankful for what we have. We all seem to remember to pray, when we are in need.

Deuteronomy 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;"

Having good pasture for them in so fruitful a land.

"And thy silver and thy gold is multiplied": By trading with other nations.

"And all that thou hast is multiplied": Children, servants, and substance.

This is speaking of a time of prosperity. When all our needs are taken care of, it is easy to forget God who furnished all of it for us. We only appreciate the water, when the well runs dry.

Deuteronomy 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;"

"Then thine heart be lifted up": Pride was viewed as the root of forgetfulness. In their prosperity, the people might claim that their power and strength had produced their wealth (verse 17).

It is so easy to forget the bad times, when they are gone. They must remember where they came from, and how they got where they are. God wants them to remember, He delivered them.

Deuteronomy 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;"

The wilderness of Paran, which was great and large, reaching from Sinai to Kadesh, eleven days' journey, and terrible to the sight. Nothing to be seen but dry rocks and barren mountains (see Deut. 1:19). And especially for what follows: wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions. Fiery serpents, such as bit the Israelites (see Num. 21:6). And scorpions, a kind of serpents, venomous and mischievous, which have stings in their tails they are continually thrusting out and striking with, as Pliny says. And have their name from their great sting; for Aristotle says, this alone of insects has a large sting.

"And drought where there was no water": A dry and barren place where no water was to be had (see Psalm 63:1). Or it may be rather another kind of serpents may be meant, which is called "dipsas"; and so the Vulgate Latin, Septuagint, and Samaritan versions render it. The biting of which produces such a thirst as proves mortal, and which must be intolerable in a wilderness where no water is. And from whence it has its name, which signifies thirsty, as does the Hebrew word here used.

"Who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint": Which was done both at Horeb and Kadesh (Exodus 17:6), and was very extraordinary. By striking flint, fire is ordinarily produced, and not water. Dr. Shaw observes, that it may be more properly named, with other sorts of graphite marble here to be met with, "the rock of amethyst", from their reddish or purple color and complexion (compare Numbers 20:9-13).

They must look back and remember the hardships, so they can remember to be thankful to God for bringing them this far.

Deuteronomy 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;"

"To do thee good at thy later end": God designed the test of the wilderness so that Israel might be disciplined to obey Him. Through her obedience, she received the blessing of the Land. Thus, God's design was to do good for Israel at the end of the process.

The ultimate purpose of God's discipline and testing is expressed in this phrase. After it was all over, they would enter the Promised Land if they lived by faith and trusted God.

The LORD had miraculously fed them these 40 years with that heavenly Bread, which symbolizes the Lord Jesus.

John 6:50-51 "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die." "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Verses 17-18: Here, Moses warns against remembering the Lord when times are bad and forgetting Him when times are good. His people "remember" Him through thankfulness and generosity in His name (1 Cor. 16:2).

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

These words are in connection with the former part of the (Deut. 8:14).

"And thou forget the Lord thy God": That is not only as if convinced; but, whether or not thou said this expressly with thy lips. Thou feels and practically behaves as if "thy own power and might had gotten thee this wealth."

My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth": So ascribing that to themselves, their labor, and diligence, which ought to be ascribed to the bounty and blessing of God (see Hosea 12:8).

When they remember the miraculous Bread from heaven, they will know the wealth they have now, is also a gift from God. They must never forget that all they have is because God gave it to them. It is not their own doing.

Verses 18-19 (see note on 4:25-31).

Deuteronomy 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."

"God ... he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant": Yahweh alone gave Israel the ability to get wealth, and the blessing the nation enjoyed was the result of His covenant with the people and was the outcome of His promise to their forefathers.

They must not think their own ability got them this wealth. They must remember God gives all good gifts to those who love and obey Him.

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."

Deuteronomy 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."

"If thou do at all forget": Forgetting God would lead to worshiping other gods, which in turn would result in certain destruction. As God destroyed the Canaanites for their idolatry, so also would He judge Israel.

Moses reminds them over and over, that they must not get filled up with pride, because God has blessed them so greatly. The next thing after pride is to forget God. To forget God who blessed them, would bring certain disaster. To walk after false gods, is to commit spiritual adultery. That is not only being unfaithful to God, but shaming Him as well.

Deuteronomy 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."

Be cut off by the sword, or cast out as they were. The same sins, particularly idolatry, being committed by them. This is to be understood of the seven nations of the land of Canaan, which the Lord would gradually destroy when Israel came into the possession of their land. And they might righteously expect the same treatment, should they be guilty of the same sins.

"Because ye would not be obedient to the voice of the Lord your God": Expressed in his law, especially in the two first precepts of it. Which require the worship of one God, and forbid the worshipping of idols. Or to the Word of the Lord, as the Targum of Jonathan. Christ, the essential Word, in whom the name of the Lord was, and whose voice Israel was to obey (Exodus 23:20).

If they act like the heathens, they will be treated like the heathens. God destroyed the nations before Israel, because they worshipped false gods. It would be no different for them, if they turn away from the Living God.

Deuteronomy Chapter 8 Questions

1. Why is it important for them to keep the commandments?
2. How many are they to keep?
3. What was the purpose of the 40 years of wandering?
4. How had God fed them?
5. Why were they fed this way?
6. What was miraculous about their clothing, and their feet on this journey?
7. Those the LORD loves, He _____.
8. We are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be _____ with the world.
9. Blessed is every one that _____ the LORD.
10. What kind of land has God given them?
11. Why will there be no lack of food for them?
12. What metals will be found there?
13. What did Moses tell them to beware of?
14. We all remember to pray when we are _____.
15. What is speaking of prosperity?

16. When is it easy to forget where the blessings come from?
17. What does verse 15 say was in the wilderness?
18. In verse 17, they think what has gotten them this wealth?
19. If they worship false gods, what will happen to them?
20. To walk after false gods, is to commit _____.
21. If they act like heathens, they will be _____ like heathens.