

Deuteronomy 4:29-5:10 - Thursday, May 12th, 2011

(29) But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find *Him* if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. (30) When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice (31) (for the LORD your God *is* a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.

- These three verses are amongst the most encouraging and hopeful passages in all the Bible, the nexus of which is the first three words in v.29:
- "But from there..." Lest I preach a whole sermon on just these three words, let me hasten to say this becomes that which can open hopes door.
- So, when I've closed that door by sinning against God, or turning my back on God, or even the worshipping of another god, "But from there..."

- But from there, no matter where; no matter how grievous my sin, I can seek the Lord with all my heart and soul and in so doing find Him there.
- When I'm in distress, the trials in and of the last days, I can turn to the Lord, obey the voice of the Lord, knowing I'll receive mercy from the Lord.
- If and when I humble myself and do this, He will in turn stay His hand, and He will not forsake me, destroy me, nor forget His covenant with me.

(32) "For ask now concerning the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and ask from one end of heaven to the other, whether *any* great *thing* like this has happened, or *anything* like it has been heard. (33) Did *any* people *ever* hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and live? (34) Or did God *ever* try to go and take for Himself a nation from the midst of *another* nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?

- This is sort of humorous in the sense that Moses asks them if they'd ever heard of any god doing for another what their God has done for them.
- In case you're wondering, though the question is rhetorical, the answer is; "no," they had not because this simply has not happened nor would it.
- It's almost as if Moses is preaching to them in such a way so as to lead them to acknowledge; "there is none who is like unto the Lord our God."

(35) To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD Himself *is* God; *there is* none other besides Him. (36) Out of heaven He let you hear His voice, that He might instruct you; on earth He showed you His great fire, and you heard His words out of the midst of the fire. (37) And because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them; and He brought you out of Egypt with His Presence, with His mighty power, (38) driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land *as* an inheritance, as *it is* this day. (39) Therefore know this day, and consider *it* in your heart, that the LORD Himself *is* God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; *there is* no other. (40) You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong *your* days in the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time."

- This is another one of those "why" behind the "what's." The reason "why" we keep His statutes is because of "what" He will do, when we do.
- "What" is it that God will do? "He will make it go well for me and my children after me, and that the days of my life will be good for all time.
- It's so simple, it may be too simple. Consider this; my life will go well if I'm obedient to God, but my life will not go well if I'm disobedient to God.

(41) Then Moses set apart three cities on this side of the Jordan, toward the rising of the sun, (42) that the manslayer might flee there, who kills his neighbor unintentionally, without having hated him in time past, and that by fleeing to one of these cities he might live: (43) Bezer in the wilderness on the plateau for the Reubenites, Ramoth in Gilead for the Gadites, and Golan in Bashan for the Manassites.

- This may sound familiar because we had just recently studied about these cities of refuge when we were in the book of Numbers chapter 35.
- It's here again mentioned for what are considered pragmatic reasons, in that only three of the six cities of refuge could be appointed at this time.
- While they could not yet appoint the other three, on the other side of the Jordan, they could at least see to it that these three on this side could.

- I would suggest that there is a valuable life lesson for us in this seemingly nebulous detail of at least getting started with three cities of refuge.
- Here it is; "if you are simply unable to carry out all that God has called you to do, at least you can carry out and do, what you are able to do."
- Another way to say the same thing is; "just because you can't do everything God has told you to do, doesn't mean you sit idly by until you can."

- We do this to our own peril in the sense that waiting for all our ducks to be in a row excuses our laziness in being busy about the things of God.
- This plays out in our lives in a myriad of ways the most common of which is as it relates someone going into what's known as "full time ministry."
- They will say; "when I'm financially able, or when I'm a little more stable, then I will serve the Lord in the ministry so I'm able to support myself."

(44) Now this *is* the law which Moses set before the children of Israel. (45) These *are* the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which Moses spoke to the children of Israel after they came out of Egypt, (46) on this side of the Jordan, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon, whom Moses and the children of Israel defeated after they came out of Egypt. (47) And they took possession of his land and the land of Og king of Bashan, two kings of the Amorites, who *were* on this side of the Jordan, toward the rising of the sun, (48) from Aroer, which *is* on the bank of the River Arnon, even to Mount Sion (that is, Hermon), (49) and all the plain on the east side of the Jordan as far as the Sea of the Arabah, below the slopes of Pisgah.

- I cannot think of a better way to close, as we land the plane of this fourth chapter of Deuteronomy, on the plain of the east side of the Jordan.
- Here's why; in what is really a matter of about 30 days now, this generation will enter in, and take possession of, the Promised-Land real-estate.
- It's for this reason that I sort of see Moses as the closing attorney, in this the signing of closing papers, if you will, before they take possession.

- While God's law, statutes, judgments and covenant with them, is not signed by them, it will most certainly need to be understood by them.
- Should they fail to observe the statutes that are laid out in the covenant they'll be evicted from that which they are about to take possession of.
- Conversely, if they observe all that God has given them in this covenant, then they will enjoy what I will call "the abundance of their obedience."
- I've heard it said that we will win or lose by how we choose. If I choose obedience, I win God's abundance. Choose disobedience, and lose it.

Deuteronomy 5 - (1) And Moses called all Israel, and said to them: "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them.

- Now in what some see as the beginning of the second sermon that Moses preaches to the children of Israel, the same theme carries over here.
- Notice that Moses calls all Israel together and says to them; "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today."
- There's a couple of things here that are easily missed at first glance, the first of which is that, while the message is the same, it's on a new day.

- Sometimes, we need to hear the same message we've heard before on a different, and new day, because we're in a different place spiritually.
- Also, we're more apt to hear and learn, and be careful to observe that which is spoken into our hearing, because it speaks to where we're at.
- This explains why it is that when we read a passage of scripture we've read prior, it just seems to leap off the pages, packing a powerful punch.

(2) The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. (3) The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who *are* here today, all of us who *are* alive.

- This is interesting because the covenant was actually made with their forefathers, but what Moses is saying here is that it's their covenant now.
- The reasons for this is found at the end of verse three when he says that it's for; "those who are here today, and all who are still alive today."
- I suppose you could say that it's a covenant of the living and for the living, and not the dead, in that, the baton is passed to this next generation.

(4) The LORD talked with you face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire. (5) I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up the mountain. He said: (6) 'I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

- Here, Moses is preaching to them, in order to both remind them, and warn them, about that which was spoken to their forefathers before them.
- The key to understanding the why behind the what of this warning, and that which follows, is that God says; I brought you out of Egypt's slavery.
- The key word is; "I." "I" am your God. No other god, of which there were many, and of which all were false gods, brought them out of Egypt.

(7) 'You shall have no other gods before Me.

- This is why we have this first commandment which sets first things first; "You shall have no other gods before Me." "I am the Lord your God."
- It's important to note that the Egyptians worshipped some 3,000 different gods, and for the most part, the Israelites were very familiar with them.
- While we may not know those god's by their name, they are still alive and well today, just under a different name, or a.k.a. if you will.

ANCIENT NAMES OF SOME FALSE GODS	CONTEMPORARY NAMES OF THE SAME GODS
The god Baal.	The god of power.
The goddess Ashtoreth.	The goddess of sex and fertility.
The god of Mammon.	The god of money, and financial success.
The god of Molek. (2 Kings 23:10)	The god of practicality and prosperity.

- Baal, the god of power, Ashteroth, the goddess of sex, and Mammon, the god of money are all very much the gods the world worships.
- God is a jealous God! He's not jealous of us or the other gods before us rather, He is jealous for us because those gods can't love us.
- Not only are we to not have other gods before Him, the fact of the matter is that no other gods can actually stand before Him.

1 Samuel 5:1-5 1 After the Philistines had captured the ark of God, they took it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. 2 Then they carried the ark into Dagon's temple and set it beside Dagon. 3 When the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the LORD! They took Dagon and put him back in his place. 4 But the following morning when they rose, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the LORD! His head and hands had been broken off and were lying on the threshold; only his body remained. NIV

- You could sort of sum up the first commandment this way: "have no other gods before me because they can't take care of you."
- Actually, not only can't they take care of you, you will have to take care of them. You may love them, but they can't love you.
- Do you see God's love in this commandment? God says, I love you, and I will take care of you, because I am jealous for you.

(8) 'You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; (9) you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, (10) but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

- While the first commandment forbids the worship of false gods, this second commandment forbids the false worship of the true God.
- God forbids the use of images or icons as objects of worship. He doesn't forbid images and icons, just the idolatry of worshipping them.
- It's as if God is saying; "don't make an idol of your god in any image, because I created you and am conforming you into My image."

- In other words, I cannot make God into my image because I am made in His image. I cannot depict Him. To do so is to replace Him.
- If God is made in my image, I make my image my God, and begin to worship the image as God, which is why this is forbidden by God.

- We again have the mention of God being a jealous God. This doesn't mean that God is jealous of us, it means that God is jealous for us.
- Notice that we also have mentioned here how God visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation.
- This commandment has been the source of much controversy, and has led to a very dangerous, and even blasphemous false teaching.
- It's the teaching that there are "generational curses." This is the third time we have this mentioned in these first five books of Moses.