

3/12/95

No Substitute For Obedience
Deut. 4:1-8

Do you remember your father or mother out of concern for you, communicating to you that obedience to their instructions would benefit you?

Such is the case with Moses, he is like a father who is concerned for the best of his children knowing that he will not be with them in the future and therefore he exhorts them to obey the word of God given to them in order that they may experience all that God had for them.

Moses tells the children of Israel five things that the word of God would do for them if they obeyed it. Deut. 4:1-8

- I.** The word of God would allow them to live. vs. 1
- II.** The word of God would be self sufficient. vs. 2
- III.** The word of God would means what it said. vs. 3-4
- IV.** The word of God would transform them. vs. 5
- V.** The word of God would make them examples. vs. 6-8

I. The word of God would allow them to live. vs. 1

- A.** The people being instructed were the nation of Israel. vs. 1a-b
 - 1.** They had been slaves for 430 years. Ex. 12:40
 - 2.** They were a murmuring people. Deut. 1:27
 - 3.** They were a stiff-necked people. Deut. 9:6
 - 4.** They were a rebellious people. Deut. 9:7
 - 5.** They did not have a heart to obey. Deut. 5:29

B. The proclamation was to listen to the statutes and judgments not just hear them. vs. 1c

- 1.** The word "listen" appears 20 times in Deuteronomy.
- 2.** The person who hears is one who comes to know what is right and wrong but doesn't necessarily obey what they hear to be right.
- 3.** The person who listens is one who hears and obeys.
 - a.** He is instructed and is made aware of right and wrong.
 - b.** He understands the difference and understands the outcome of the instruction.
 - c.** He make the right decision based on the instruction.

C. The purpose of the instruction was three-fold. vs. 1c-e

- 1.** That the instruction be observed.
 - a.** Taught.
 - b.** Honored.
 - c.** Obeyed.
- 2.** That they may live.
 - a.** To live in a physical sense, God's judgment not falling on them.
 - b.** To live in fellowship with God, having atonement and access to Him.
 - c.** To live abundantly enjoying the blessings and protection by following God's will.
- 3.** That they may go in to possess the land given to them.
 - a.** The land was a gift.
 - b.** The land was their inheritance.
 - c.** The land was a land of milk and honey.

Illustration

Joshua's exhortation to the second generation as they were ready to enter the land was that the book of the law should not depart from their mouth but that they should meditate on the word day and night and then they would be prosperous and have good success. Josh. 1:8

Application

1. Have you ever considered how much your life has changed and how much more you experience life than before you were a Christian?
 - a. The way you view people and life itself.
 - b. The number and type of people who are your friends.
 - c. The things you do for fun and enjoyment.
2. Have you ever noticed the financial improvement in your life once you came to the Lord?
 - a. You no longer are spending all kinds of money on cigarettes, alcohol and partying.
 - b. You have re-focused your priorities and do not spend your money as foolish as you used to.
 - c. You are more ready to help others without expecting to be repaid than before.
3. Have you observed the number of meaningful relationships you have with other families that are lasting and wholesome?
 - a. Your relationships with other men or women.
 - b. Your relationship to married couples.
 - c. Your relationship to singles.
4. Have you realized the purpose of life that you have now, compared to the endless searching for meaning before Christ?
 - a. You used to wonder what you were here for.
 - b. You used to wonder if there was a God and if there was, how could He allow all the injustices?
 - c. You used to wonder if there was someone for you and if you could ever love and be loved?

II. The word of God would be self sufficient. vs. 2

- A. They were not to add to the word entrusted to them.
 1. The addition of any human words pollute the purity of God's word.
 2. The addition of any human words confuses the clear counsel of God's word.
 3. The addition of human words competes with God's word.
- B. They were not to take away from the word entrusted to them.
 1. The subtracting from God's word presumes on correcting God's word.
 2. The subtracting from God's word violates the full counsel of God's word.
 3. The subtracting from God's word compromises God's word, removing holy living, consequences and punishment.
- C. They were not to add or take away from God's word in order that they keep the commandments of the Lord their God.
 1. The word instructed them.
 2. The word exhorted them.
 3. The word admonished them.
 4. The word warned them.
 5. The word Judged them.
 6. The Lord one day sent Jeremiah to stand in the court of the house of the Lord and to speak to all the cities of Judah who had come to worship and God said, "Do not diminish a word ", the reason being that perhaps everyone will listen and turn from their evil way and He would not bring the calamity on them. Jer. 26:2-3

Illustration

Thomas Jefferson declared, "And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with His wrath? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that his justice cannot sleep forever. (Myth Of Separation, Barton, P.P.176)

Application

1. The principle of adding and subtracting from God's word is found throughout the Bible.
 - a. Proverbs is the next appearance declaring that every word of God is pure or tested and that if one adds to His word, God will Himself reprove him and he will be found a liar. Prov. 30:5-6
 - b. The book of Revelation declares that if anyone adds to the book to them will be added the plagues that are written in the book and if anyone takes away from the book, God will take away his part from the book of life. Rev. 22:18-19
2. The teachings of man will always make the commandments of God of no effect. Mk. 7:13
 - a. Man's teachings place a heavy burden on man.
 - b. Man's teachings enslave man and turn man away from God.
 - c. Man's teachings benefit man, not the individual or God.
 - d. Man's teaching and traditions are not equal in authority with the word of God.
3. The tolerance of adding and taking away from God's word was not even permitted by apostles or angels. Gal. 1:6-9
 - a. True apostles will only hand down the gospel given to them.
 - b. True angels sent by God will only confirm His word as Michael or Gabriel.

- III. The word of God would mean what it said. vs. 3-4
 - A. They had witnessed personally the judgment that fell on those who were ensnared by the counsel of Balaam. vs. 3, Num. 25
 1. The prophet Balaam knew he could not curse Israel so he told Balak that if they could be enticed to their idolatrous worship, that God Himself would destroy them. Num. 31:16
 2. The Moabitish women cause the men of Israel to commit harotry in the groves. Num. 25:1-2
 - a. They invited them to the sacrifices of their gods.
 - b. They ate and bowed down to their gods.
 3. The rites were sexual. Num. 25:6-7
 - a. The Lord's anger arose against Israel. Num. 25:3
 - b. The Lord commanded that the leaders who were guilty be hanged. Num. 25:4-5
 - c. Twenty-four thousand people fell that day by the plague. Num. 25:9
 - B. They who were present and alive had held fast to the Lord. vs. 4
 1. The leader Moses and the judges. Num. 25:5
 2. Phinehas who entered the tent and ran through the Jewish man and Moabitish woman as they were having sex. Num. 25:8

Illustration

One day King Uzziah presumed on the priesthood and thought he could offer incense and God struck him with leprosy. 2Chron. 26:19

Application

1. You and I have and will witness God's chastening and even His judgment on people that refuse to obey His word.
 - a. Some have lost their mates.
 - b. Others have lost their children.
 - c. Still others have lost their health.
2. You and I have and will see those who have held fast to the Lord despite the difficulties and hardships and they have reaped to obedience.
 - a. Some have had their marriages restored.
 - b. Others have been released from a marriage in God's perfect time and blessed in their next, due to obedience.
 - c. Still others have been sustained by God and made to grow, develop and mature as examples of obedience.

IV. The word of God would transforms them. vs. 5

- A. The mode of communication is teaching.
 1. Moses had taught them statutes and judgments.
 2. God had commanded Moses, he was a mere instrument.
- B. The aim and goal was that they should act according to the instruction.
 1. Their obedience was in recognition of God's person, their Creator.
 2. Their obedience was in acknowledgment of God as their deliverer.
 3. Their obedience was in understanding that He was all knowing.
- C. The locality was to be in the land they would possess.
 1. Their nation would be the recipient of blessings.

2. Their social standards would produce a healthy society.
3. Their unity would be their strength.
4. Their identity would be distinct from the nations around them.

Illustration

John Newton who lived a life of a slave and delivered to a life of the lowest was laid hold by a missionary and became a sea captain, a minister and a hymn writer. In the church of London of which he pastored there still remains an epitaph which John Newton wrote himself., "Sacred to the memory of John Newton, once a libertine and blasphemer and slave of slaves in Africa, but renewed, purified, pardoned, and appointed to preach that Gospel which he had labored to destroy. # 3863

Application

1. The minute I am born-again I am a new person, old things are passed away and all things become new, the word of God helps me to change my life-style. 2Cor. 5:17
 - a. I don't think the same.
 - b. I don't see the world the same.
 - a. I know the difference between right and wrong.
 - b. I have the potential to make the right choices.
 - c. I am willing to do the will of God.
2. The transformation takes place in the most particle way. Rom. 12:1-2
 - a. I present my body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God.
 - b. I recognize that it is my reasonable or rational service in the worship to God
 - c. I no longer fashion myself to the world order but transformed by the renewed of my mind, in order that I may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

- V. The word of God would make them examples. vs. 6-8
- A. Their lives would be looked upon by others as wisdom. vs. 6a-b
1. It would be through careful observation of the laws.
 2. It would be their wisdom and understanding to observe all in the sight of the people of the land.
- B. Their lives would expose the people of the land to their statutes. vs. 6c
1. They would see their lack of crime.
 2. " " " " " " of disorder.
 3. " " " " " " of immorality.
 4. " " " " " " of diseases.
- C. Their lives would be responded to. vs. 6c-8
1. Nations would say surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. vs. 6c
 2. Nations would say, "For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, that they can call on Him any time. vs. 7
 3. Nations would say, "And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law. vs. 8

Illustration

In 1946 a young man named Czeslaw Godlewski along with other roamed the German countryside to sack it. On an isolated farm they gunned down ten members of one family, only one survived. When Godlewski completed the 20 year sentence for his crime, the state would not release him because he did not have a place to reside. The surviving member of the family heard of his release and that he had nowhere to go, he asked the authorities to turn Godlewski to his custody. He wrote in his

request, "Christ died for my sins and forgave me. Should I not then forgive this man? # 1772

Application

1. Your life and mine are a spectacle to the world that even in their mockery they would be exposed to the wisdom of God.
 - a. How we raise our children.
 - b. How they turn out.
 - c. How we treat our husbands and wives.
 - d. How we make discisions and why we decide that way.
 - e. How we can have peace in impossible situations
 - f. How we know that our sins are forgiven.
 - g. How we know that if we die we are instantly present before the Lord.
2. Your standard is a light to the non-believer much like a lighthouse to save ships from destruction.
 - a. It is a constant reminder of God.
 - b. It is a constant reminder of absolute right and wrong.
 - c. It is a constant reminder of true happiness.

Conclusion

Moses told the children of Israel five things the word of God would do for them if they obeyed it.

- I. The word of God allow them to live.
- II. The word of God would be self sufficient.
- III. The word of God would mean what it says.
- IV. The word of God would transform them.
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