

# (Through the Bible) Deuteronomy 1-4

by Chuck Smith

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith and trust in God, and the struggle between the flesh and the Spirit, highlighting the need to take a position of faith and recognize the old nature as dead with Christ.*

**Duration:** 1:04:53

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 1:2-4, Revelation 22:18-19

**Topics:** "Idolatry", "Spiritual Growth"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of serving the true and living God and warns against idolatry. He references the story of Moses and the Israelites at Mount Sinai, where the people were fearful of God's presence and created idols to worship. The speaker encourages listeners to have faith in God's power to overcome obstacles and to walk in the Spirit. He also reminds them of Moses appointing seventy rulers to help bear the burdens of the people. The sermon concludes with a call to possess the promises of God and to move forward in spiritual development.

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## Transcript

Let's turn to Deuteronomy. The word Deuteronomy means the second law. It is really sort of Moses' final address to the people.

It probably covers the last month and a half of Moses' life. So he's getting up there now. He's about 120 years old.

His eyesight is still keen. He can still hear very well. And he is addressing these people, rehearsing for them the work of God in their past history because many of them were born while in the wilderness.

Many of them did not see the miracle of the Red Sea being parted. They did not have a personal memory of the horrible bondage in Egypt. And growing up as children, they weren't as aware of the hazards of the wilderness.

And so Moses is sort of recounting for them. And though he recounts the 40 years from Egypt to coming into the land, yet we are told that these things came in the 11th month, in the first day of the 40th year. In the 10th day of the first month of the 41st year, they crossed Jordan into the Promised Land after mourning the death of Moses for 30 days.

So all of these things transpired in Deuteronomy as far as Moses was concerned in the last 40 days of his life. His final exhortations to the people prior to their crossing and entering into the land. So they are words of encouragement.

As he is recounting that which God has done, he is encouraging them to go in and to take the land that God had promised to them. So these are the words which Moses spake unto all of Israel on the side of Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain over against the Red Sea. And in verse 2, it's a little commentary.

It says, There are 11 days' journey from Horeb by way of Mount Seir to Kadesh Barnea. And it came to pass in the 40th year, in the 11th month on the first day of the month, that Moses spake unto the children of Israel according to all that the Lord had given him in commandment unto them. So, there's an 11-day journey from Horeb to Kadesh Barnea to the beginning of entering into the promised land.

But they have been journeying for 40 years and 11 months on an 11-day journey. About 126 miles from Mount Horeb to Kadesh Barnea. We recognize that a part of the wilderness experience was legitimate.

To get from the Red Sea into the promised land, it was necessary to go through the wilderness. An 11-day journey. But, most of the wilderness experience was illegitimate.

Now, I feel that the history is a typical history. That there are spiritual analogies to be made to the children of Israel coming out of Egypt, passing through the wilderness into the promised land. And I feel that the analogies that are to be made are that of the Christian walk and life and experience.

For Egypt, the area of bondage, slavery, hardship, is a type of the life of the world, in the world. Slaves are flesh to Satan. And so, it is typical of our old life.

The promised land into which God was bringing them is typical to the glorious life and victory in the Spirit. The life that God wants you to live. A life of victory.

A life of overcoming. Now, there is the coming out of the old life, being delivered from the old life, and this new relationship that we experience with God. Learning to walk by faith.

As we are setting aside the things of the flesh life and are beginning this new walk in the Spirit. There is a time in our Christian experience of growth and development. And there is sort of the legitimate wilderness experience.

But God surely does not want you to spend your whole life in the wilderness. God wants to bring you on into the walk of the Spirit and the life of the Spirit, and a life that is dominated by the Spirit. Now, the life of the Spirit begins with the death of the old nature, the old man, which is a position that we must take by faith.

Reckon ye your old man to be dead with Christ. Know ye not that the old man was crucified with Christ. Paul the Apostle said, I am crucified with Christ.

There is a warfare that goes on in our lives. The flesh warring against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these two are contrary. They are each of them seeking supremacy.

They are each of them seeking to rule our lives. And if we yield to the flesh, the flesh will govern and rule our lives, and we will have the resultant mind of the flesh. Our mind will be upon the fleshly things continually.

What shall we eat? What shall we drink? What shall we wear? These kind of things. And in that we differ nothing from the heathen, from the animals. For their lives are spent in seeking to satisfy their physical appetites and needs.

But God wants us to not be governed by the flesh, but to be governed by the Spirit. And thus, there is this spiritual warfare, seeking the dominancy in your life. And we are told that we are not to yield to the flesh, or give place to the flesh to fulfill its desires, but to walk after the Spirit.

And that our warfare is actually a spiritual warfare. And in it, I must recognize that this old body of flesh, with its desires, has been crucified. That it should no longer rule over me.

But that I now can be ruled by the Spirit of God. Now, Paul describes his wilderness experience in the seventh chapter of Romans. As he talks about seeing the law of God, consenting that the law of God was good, and determining to fulfill the law of God.

But he found that there was another law, a perverse kind of a law, for whenever he would do good, evil was present with him. And so often, the good that he wanted to do, he couldn't do. And the evil he didn't want to do was the thing that he was doing.

Till he found himself in just a miserable, wretched state. A desire to obey God and to keep the law of God. Consenting that it's good.

That's the right way. That's the way I want to live. Seeing the divine ideal.

Being attracted by the divine ideal. And desiring, longing after it. And yet, the inability to bring the flesh into conformity with the Spirit of God.

And so, Paul speaks of this frustration. Oh, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this bondage to my flesh? But then as he moves into the 8th chapter of Romans, he found the answer to his cry. Now, the cry almost indicated the answer itself.

Who shall deliver me? It was no longer, How shall I free myself? He's looking now outside of himself for the help. Now, the wilderness experience is where I am trying to bring my flesh into conformity to the will of God. And I am promising God that I'm going to do better, that I'm not going to fail next time.

And I'm making all of these vows. And I'm doing my best to bring my flesh in conformity to God and to God's will. But I find this perverse law that Paul found working.

The good that I would, I do not. The evil that I would not, that I do. And I cannot bring my flesh into conformity unto God.

God's solution is death to the flesh. Crucified with Christ. Therefore, I must take a position of faith and recognize that the old nature, the life of the flesh, was crucified with Christ in order that I might now live after the new nature, the nature of Christ, and living now after the Spirit.

But the cry must come, who shall deliver me? I must have to come to the place where I despair of freeing myself or despair of my own righteousness or despair of ever being righteous in the eyes of God by my own works and my own efforts. I must despair of all of these self-improvement programs. And I must cry out for help outside of myself, for therein is the power of the Spirit manifested and He comes to help me and do for me what I can't do for myself.

O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me? Oh, I'm getting close. Because I realize now I can't deliver myself. For so long I tried to deliver myself.

Ended in failure. Now recognizing my weakness, I'm crying for power outside of myself. Who shall deliver me? And God's answer then comes, I am delivered by the power, that dynamic of the Spirit, for ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost comes upon you.

And that which I could not do because of the weakness of my flesh, I find that God has done for me and has made provision for me through the power of the Holy Spirit. And so it is glorious to come in to the walk and the life of the Spirit, to enter in to that life that God wants you to live as a child of God, as His child. Now it was God's desire all along to bring them into the land.

It was not God's desire that they perish in the wilderness. That was a tragedy of failure on their part, and it was a failure of faith. They failed to enter in by faith to that which God had promised to them.

God had laid it out and said, here it is. It's yours. But they saw the giants in the land in the high-walled cities instead of God.

They got their eyes upon the obstacles rather than the power of God to remove the obstacles. And this is the mistake that we so often make as we look at our own lives and we look at the dominion that our flesh has had over us. We are prone to look at the obstacles.

We say, oh, but I'm so weak and I've tried so hard, and you don't know how long I've been struggling with this thing. And we're looking at the obstacles rather than the power of God to deliver us from those obstacles. And so it is important that we not fail where they failed, but that we by faith take this position of victory, of power, of strength, of walking in the Spirit, reckoning the old man, the old nature to be dead with Christ.

So, that which should have taken 11 days took them 40 years. Actually, 41 years to be exact, because it wasn't until the 41st year on the 10th day that they entered in to the land that God had promised. Crossed over Jordan finally and began the conquest of the land.

So, an interesting little commentary. There are 11 days' journey from Horeb to Kadesh Barnea. And in the 40th year, the 11th month, on the first day of the month, Moses spoke to the children of Israel according to all that the Lord had given Him commandment unto them.

After they had slain Sihon, the king of the Amorites, which dwelled in Heshbon, and Og, the king of Bashan, on the east side of Jordan, Moses began to declare this law. So, this is where the word Deuteronomy comes from. And Moses began to declare this law.

It is a reiteration, really, of the law of God. The Lord our God spake unto you in Horeb, saying, you have dwelt long enough in this mount. Turn and take your journey and go to the mount of the Amorites and so forth and take the land that I have promised.

Behold, I have set the land before you. Go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give to your fathers. So, the commandment of God.

You've been here long enough. You've circled this mountain long enough. God is saying to you tonight, hey, you've been there long enough walking in circles.

Hey, it's time to go in and begin to possess that which God has promised unto you. Begin to move forward in your spiritual development, in your spiritual life. You've encompassed this mount, God said, long enough.

Now get moving. Go in. And the key, of course, is to possess the land which the Lord has sworn to your fathers.

And so Moses sort of rehearses for them some of the problems that he had as God was dealing with him. He said, how can I myself alone bear your cumbrance or your burdens or your strifes? So he appointed the 70 to be rulers over them, the chief men. And he charged them to hear the causes of the people and to judge among the people.

And when they had situations that were too difficult for them to handle, that Moses would handle those cases. And so they departed from Horeb. They came to Kadesh Barnea.

And he speaks again of the tragic failure at Kadesh Barnea. Verse 21, Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee. Go up and possess it as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee.

Fear not, neither be discouraged. And you came near to me, Moses said, and you said, let's send spies into the land in order that they might find out which cities we'll be facing and the directions by which we should go into the land. Now in Numbers, it doesn't tell us that they came to Moses to request these spies.

But in Deuteronomy, it's adding a little bit more detail than he gave in the book of Numbers. Here we find out that the request for the spies actually came from the people. And that it seemed good unto Moses and so they chose one from each tribe to go in and to spy out the land.

Coming to the valley of Eschol, searching it out, and taking the fruit and bringing it back. Notwithstanding, Moses said, you rebelled against the Lord and you murmured in your tents. And listen to the horrible things they were saying about God.

They said, because the Lord hated us, He has brought us forth out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites and to destroy us. What a horrible thing. What a horrible thing to say about God and against God.

God hates us. That borders on blasphemy. Because God hates us, He brought us out here to kill us in the wilderness.

When in reality, God loved them and wanted to give them a land that they might dwell in, that it might be their land. God wanted to free them from the horrible bondage of Egypt. Yet now they are accusing God of hating them.

You remember the case of Job. It said, and in all of these things, that is the loss of his family and his wealth and all, he did not curse God, neither did he charge God foolishly. Now this is a foolish charge that they brought against God, and it is something that we oftentimes are prone to do.

When things aren't going right, I hear people sometimes make very foolish charges against God. Nothing irritates me more than to have people make foolish charges against God. I had a young man come in when we were back over in the little chapel, and he was, you know, God led me to do this, and God led me to do that, and God led me here, and then God led me out there, and I almost starved to death, and

God told me to go here, and it was just really horrible and all.

And all this stuff, and he's saying God led him to do this, and God led him to do that. And then he really started getting on God's case. Why would God lead me there, and then dump me and all this kind of stuff? Well, it was obvious God didn't lead him.

He was just being led by his own mind. And he started complaining so much about God, I grabbed hold of him and I said, hey, you shut up and get out of here. I'm tempted to smack you in the mouth talking about God that way.

I can't stand that. Now shut up. To hear someone, you know, making all these accusations against God.

Horrible things. It's tragic. And here the people were making this blasphemous accusation because God hates us.

He brought us out here. Oh, what a horrible thing to say. So, the people were discouraged, and they said the people are greater and taller than we are.

The cities are great and walled up to heaven. And we have seen the sons of the Anakims. Now the Anakims were giants.

And we have seen the sons of the Anakims there. So, their fear was inspired because of the cities that were high and walled and because the people, the inhabitants, were large, gigantic kind of people. And I said unto you, dread not, neither be afraid of them, for the Lord your God which goes before you shall fight for you according to all that He did in Egypt before your eyes.

And yet in this thing you did not believe the Lord your God. The tragedy of unbelief. Verse 32.

I love this. He points out how that God had been with them through the wilderness experience. And the beautiful thing is that God is with you even in the wilderness experiences.

You may not enter into the best that God has. You may not possess all of your possessions. And yet, if you spend your life roaming in the wilderness, it's not God's will, it's not His desire, but He will be with you there and help you there.

God will lift you to the highest level that you will allow Him to lift you and do the best for you on that level. But the work of God in our life is always limited by us. We are always the one that put the restrictions upon what God can do for us.

We are the ones that place the limits on God's work. In Psalms it says, And they limited the Holy One of Israel by their unbelief. And it is always our unbelief that places the limitations upon the work that God is seeking to do in our lives.

Listen, God will take you all the way if you'll just believe Him and trust Him for it. But you are the one that puts the limitations on what God wants to do. But God will lift you to the highest level you will let Him.

And there in the wilderness He speaks of the Lord your God who went in the way before you to search you out a place to pitch your tents in the fire by night to show you by what way you should go in the cloud by day. In other words, He is saying that God went before you through the wilderness to search for the best place for you to pitch your tent. And then led you by the fire and by the cloud.

Oh, if we only realized how all-encompassing the work of God is that surrounds our lives. God went before you to find the place for you to pitch your tents. They came to a place and said, Oh my, this looks like a good place to pitch our tents.

Of course it is. God went before you and prepared you that place and then led you to it so that they could say, All the way my Savior leads me. What have I to ask beside? But the Lord heard the words of your complaining.

He was angry and said you're not to go in. But then Moses reminds them how they got together and said, Oh, we've sinned against God. We'll go in.

We'll take the land. And Moses said, No, don't. God said that He's not going to deliver them into your hand.

And how they armed themselves anyhow and went up against the hill of the Amorites and were pursued by them and some of them were slain because they presumed to go without the presence of God. So they began the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness which Moses begins to rehearse for them in chapter 2. So we turned and took our journey by way of the wilderness back toward the Red Sea And the Lord spake unto me saying, You've compassed this mountain long enough. Go north.

And He commanded the people saying, You are to pass through the coast of your brethren, the children of Esau which dwelt in Seir. But don't meddle with them for I have not given you their land. Not as much as a foot in it because I've given Mount Seir unto Esau for his possession.

So you're to buy your meat and your water but you're only to pass through. For the Lord God has blessed thee in all the works of your hands and He knows that thy walking through this great wilderness for these 40 years that the Lord thy God hath been with thee you have lacked nothing. And therein is a miracle of over a million people 40 years and yet not lacking in that wilderness.

And when you pass by our brethren the children of Esau which dwelt in Seir you came to the plains of Esion-Geber and turned and passed by the way of the wilderness of Moab. And the Lord said, Don't distress the Moabites. Neither contend with them in battle for I will not give you their land as a possession because it's given to the children of Lot.

Now He is pointing out something. This area of Moab was once inhabited by the Emans. And the Emans were relatives to the Anakims who were giants.

Now, their fear of going into the land was because there were giants there. Now He's really seeking to build up their faith in God. Look, you don't have to worry about the giants.

God can deliver the giants in your hands. They're not supermen. The Emans used to dwell in this area of Moab until the children of Lot moved in and took it and they drove the Emans out because God had promised this area to the children of Lot.

So He's pointing out that these giants had been driven out of other territories. And one of them, of course, was the territory of Moab which was inhabited by the descendants of Lot. And the Horems also dwelt in Seir before time.

But the children of Israel succeeded them and destroyed them and dwelt there in their stead. And so the space that we came from Kadesh Barnea until the Brook Zered was 38 years. It took them 38 years to make that short journey.

Until all of the generation of the men of war were wasted as the Lord had sworn unto them. For indeed, the hand of the Lord was against them to destroy them. And so He said, you're to pass through Moab this day and when you come near against the children of Ammon, don't distress them or meddle with them.

For I will not give thee the land of the children of Ammon in any possession because I've given it to the children of Lot. That also was a calendar, the land of giants. For giants dwelt there in old times and the Ammonites called them the Zamzumim.

Even their name strikes terror in the hearts. Can't you imagine the guys talking around the fire at night and saying, well, the Zamzumim are over there. But again, he's pointing out the fact that you don't have to worry about giants.

The report was there are giants in the land. You don't have to worry about these giants. These giants were existing here in this land that God gave to the descendants of Lot in Moab, in Seir, and in the area of Ammon.

Giants were there, but God delivered them. And so rise up. Take your journey.

Pass over the river Arnon. And behold, I have given into thy hand Sihon the Amorite, the king of Hezzbollah, and his land, and so begin to possess the land. So north of the area of Jabok they began to possess the land and they began to destroy the kings.

Sihon, king of Hezzbollah, would not let us pass by him. For God hardened his heart, made his heart obstinate, that He might deliver him into your hand as He has done. So Sihon came out with all of his people to fight at Jahaz.

And the Lord delivered them and smote them and we began to take the land. In chapter 3, So we turned and went by the way of Bashan unto Og, the king of Bashan, who came out against us with all of his people. And the Lord said unto me, Don't fear him, for I will deliver him and all of his people and his land into your hands.

And thou shalt do unto him as you did unto Sihon, the king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon. So the Lord our God delivered into our hands Og also, the king of Bashan, and all of his people. And we took all of his city.

There was not a city of them that was not taken, some sixty cities. Now, he points out, all of these cities were fenced with high walls, gates, and bars. And besides that, we took a lot of unwalled cities.

In other words, they had conquered sixty walled cities from Bashan. Now you're going to go in and you got the reports, and you remember the report that struck fear in the hearts was that there are high walled cities and giants. And that was the thing that struck terror and fear into their hearts that destroyed their faith, caused them to turn away.

So now Moses is pointing out, look, it is nothing with God. You don't have to worry about the walled cities. You don't have to worry about the giants.

If God be for us, who can be against us? And God has promised to go before you and to drive out your enemies. And thus, these things that cause terror and fear in your hearts that destroy your faith do not need to stop you now. Go in.

And he's seeking to build up their faith in God. Venture out. Let God have an opportunity to work.

And so he's careful to point out that they'd already conquered walled cities, the areas of the giants. And so in verse 11, "...For only Og the king of Bashan remained of the remnants of the giants." Og himself was a giant. He had a bed that was 13 feet long, king-sized bed, and some 6 feet wide.

He was a big guy. He needed a big bed. He was the last of the giants in that area.

And God delivered him into your hands. And you possessed his land. And it was given to the Reubenites and to the Gadites.

And then the other area northward was given unto Manasseh, clear enough to Mount Hermon. That whole area of the Golan was conquered. And so he declares unto them, verse 21, "...Your eyes have seen all that the Lord your God has done unto these two kings, and so shall the Lord do unto the kingdoms where you are passing." You've seen what God can do.

And so He is going to do in these kings where you're going to be coming. Don't be afraid. Don't stop.

Don't quit now. "...Ye shall not fear them, for the Lord your God shall fight for you. And I besought the Lord at that time, saying, O Lord, Thou hast begun to show Thy servant Thy greatness in Thy mighty hand, for what God is there in heaven and earth but can do according to Thy works and according to Thy might.

And I pray Thee, let me go over and see the good land which is beyond Jordan and the goodly mountains and Lebanon." Oh, Moses, though he was 120 years old, he was ready for it. Lord, come on, please let me go in. I've seen, Lord, You're beginning to wipe out the enemies.

Oh, this is exciting, Lord. I love this. And Lord, I just love to see that land.

I'd like to see the mountains of Lebanon. I'd like to see this land that You've promised. Lord, won't You let me go in? And Moses here is praying, asking God to allow him to go in.

Now, when they had come in the wilderness and were needing water, they had said to Moses, Give us water to drink. We're perishing. Moses went in before the Lord and said, Lord, these people are ready to kill me.

They want water. And God said, Go out and speak to the rock and water will come forth. The first time, God said, Smite the rock and water will come out.

The second time, God said, Speak to the rock. But Moses was angry with the people. And he went out from before the Lord and he said, Must I smite this rock again to give you water? And he took his rod and he smote the rock and water came out.

But God said, Moses, come here, son. Moses, you blew it. You did not properly represent me before those people.

Now, Moses was God's representative. And God wasn't angry with him, but Moses was. And Moses, as God's representative, represented God as being angry with him.

And he did not properly represent God before the people. And God said, Moses, that's a serious error. And because you have not properly represented Me before the people, you cannot go into the land.

God wanted to impress upon the minds of the people the importance of obedience. The importance of our being proper representatives of Him. For you are God's representative in the world today.

Jesus said, Ye are My witnesses. You are to be representing Jesus before the world. Now, the question is, are we representing Him properly? What concepts are people getting of Jesus as they look at us? As we are God's representative in the world today, what concepts are people getting of God? Do they really know that God cares? Do they really know that God is love? How do I represent God? Very important that we properly represent God.

And God is stressing and seeking to stress the importance that we recognize that we are His representatives and that we represent Him faithfully and truthfully before the world. Moses failed. He represented God as being angry.

God wasn't angry. And so God said, Moses, because you failed to represent Me before the people, you cannot go into the land. Now, Moses has seen some of the enemies conquered.

He sees them beginning to take the land. Adrenaline is flowing. This is exciting.

Oh, Lord, please. I'd love to go in and see the mountains of Lebanon. I'd like to see those valleys and the rivers and all that are there.

Lord, I'd love to see the land. Let me go in, Lord. Lord, I want to see You, you know, smite the enemies there.

I want to see the people. And the Lord said to Moses, let it suffice thee, don't speak to Me anymore of this matter. Moses, don't talk to Me about it.

You can't go. Now, here's a case where God did not answer Moses' prayer in the affirmative. He answered the prayer.

He said no. And God always answers prayer. Sometimes the answers are yes.

Sometimes the answers are no. But this is the case where Moses' request was not granted by God in order that God might teach the nation the importance of obedience. And in the years to come, as the Jewish mothers would hold their babies upon their laps and tell them the glorious stories of how God used a man by the name of Moses who as a child was protected by God and taken out of the bulrushes by the princess of the land of Egypt when it was ordered that all of the children should die.

And how he grew up in the Pharaoh's court. And how he made his decision to align himself with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. And how God brought through him the plagues upon the Egyptians and spoiled the Egyptians.

And how he led the people out of Egypt and out of their bondage. And how the Red Sea was parted by the rod that he lifted. And how God brought the water out of the rock and then their voices would hush.

And with whispered tones they would say, but Moses was not allowed by God to fulfill the dream of his life and to go into the land because he failed to properly represent God. He disobeyed God at the waters of Strife, Meribah. And it became a lesson deeply embedded upon the minds of the nation of the importance of obedience unto God.

And thus, for the sake of a nation, God withheld the desire of a man. God said, look, don't talk to me about this again. The answer has been given.

But charged Joshua, encourage him and strengthen him for he shall go over before this people and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see. So we abode in the valley over against Beth-peor. So God said to Moses, you can't go in.

But I will let you go up to the top of Mount Pisgah. There you can look over the land. From Pisgah, just take a look at the land that I've promised.

And then you charge Joshua and encourage Joshua and strengthen him because he will lead the people in. Now therefore, Moses is now making application. Now therefore, hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and to the judgments which I teach you to do them that ye may live and go in and possess the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given to you.

For ye shall not add unto the word which I commanded neither shall ye diminish from it that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." So forbidden to add or to take away from the commandments, from the word that God had spoken through Moses. When we get to the book of Revelation, again there is a prohibition to adding to or taking away from the words of that prophecy. It is interesting how people like to mess around with the Word of God.

Adding or taking away. But that is something that we have been forbidden to do. Not to add or to diminish from that which God has declared.

Behold, he said, I've taught you the statutes and judgments the Lord commanded me. Now keep them and do them. For this is your wisdom and understanding.

For what nation is there that is so great who hath a God that is so near to them as the Lord our God is in all of the things which we call upon Him for? For what nation is there so great that has the statutes and judgments that are so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day? Only take heed to yourself and to keep thy soul diligently lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life. But teach them to your sons and to your sons' sons. Teach them to your children, to your grandchildren.

These commandments, these statutes. There's no nation in all the world that has had the privileges that we have had. God being so near to them and giving them such a righteous law.

And then he speaks about how the law came there on Mount Sinai. And how the people were fearful because of the thunder and the lightning. And Moses said, Now you heard the words, but you did not see any similitude.

Only you heard a voice. And the voice declared unto you the covenant. And he commanded you to perform the Ten Commandments.

He wrote them on two tables of stones. Verse 15, Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves, for you saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb in the midst of the fire, lest you would corrupt yourselves and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of any male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flies in the air, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth, unless thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, when you see the sun and the moon and the stars and the hosts of heaven, and you be driven to worship them. Now he points out the fact that when they heard the voice of God, they didn't see any form at all.

Deliberately so. For God did not want them making any kind of a representative likeness of God. Now in all of the nations around them, they had all of their little carvings, all of their little idols that were representing their gods.

Some of them were female idols with multi-breasts. Some of them were male type idols. Some of them were weird wings.

Some of them looked like fish. Some of them looked monstrous, gargoyle kind. This is God.

This is what God looks like. He said, not so. God doesn't want you making any graven image.

God doesn't want you making any kind of a representative likeness of Him. It's not to be done. Now there is a compelling force within man to worship.

It's a part of human nature. And here He has said, lest when you look at the stars and the moon and the host of heaven, that you be driven to worship them. There is something within man that drives him to worship.

You've got to worship something. It's like Bob Dylan says, you've got to serve somebody. And that's true.

You're driven to serve somebody. There's a driving, compelling force for you to serve somebody. And it is always tragic when men leave the worship and serving of the true and the living God, the Creator and the Sustainer of the universe in all life and life forms, and they begin to make a likeness of God like a man or like a woman or like an animal.

And they begin to bow down and worship these little likenesses. They begin to offer their prayers before these likenesses. There's something within man that compels him to worship.

But God doesn't want you worshiping before any altar. When the woman of Samaria said unto Jesus, Our fathers say that we're to worship God in this mountain. You say that we're to worship Him in Jerusalem.

Where do we worship God? Jesus said, the day is coming and now is. When they that worship God will neither worship Him in this mountain nor in Jerusalem. For God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

And God is seeking such to worship Him. God cannot be localized. Nor should we try to make any kind of a representation of God.

I personally have great problems with any pictures of Christ. I really don't care for them. That's personal.

That's with me. That's something personal. I'm not telling you to go home and get rid of all the pictures.

It's just something personal within me. I don't care for any pictures of Christ. God didn't want man making any kind of representation of Himself.

So they heard the voice, but they didn't see any likeness. They didn't see any form. Lest they would create some form and begin to worship it.

Men are driven to worship. Furthermore, the Lord was angry with me. He said, for your sakes.

And He swore that I should not go over Jordan, that I should not go in unto the good land, which the Lord God gives to you for an inheritance, but I must die in this land and I must not go over Jordan, but you shall go over and possess the good land. For your sakes. You see, Moses recognizes that it was for their sakes that God was sticking to His Word.

Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant. Now the danger of forgetting, the peril of forgetting, which God made with you. And you make a graven image or a likeness of anything that the Lord thy God has forbidden you.

For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God. And people say, oh, there we go. The Old Testament concept of God.

A consuming fire. A jealous God. The book of Hebrews in the New Testament declares, for our God is a consuming fire.

It is interesting that fire is used as a figure for God because what can you say about fire? It's everywhere. The scientists have a word, aramachysis, which refers to the slow-burning fire of nature. And it's everywhere.

It's in all of the material universe. There is that slow-burning fire which is gradually destroying everything. We no sooner put this building up before we got the last nail in, the slow-burning fire had begun to deteriorate it.

Before we could cover the roof with the roofing materials, some of the nail heads began to oxidize. What was it? Slow-burning fire of nature. It's everywhere.

Isaiah records how that at one time the Assyrians had invaded the land. And the people called upon the Lord and an angel of the Lord went through the camp of the Assyrians and in one night destroyed 185,000 front line fighting troops. And when the children of Israel woke up in the morning and looked out upon the camp of the Assyrians, there were nothing but corpse.

And it said, and fear gripped the hearts of the sinners in Zion. Terror took hold on the hypocrites and they said, Who among us can dwell in the devouring fire? They saw the fire of God and its effect upon their enemies and a fear gripped their hearts. They said, Who amongst us? And the word dwell can also be translated approach or flee from the devouring fire.

And in reality, there's no place that you can flee from the presence of God. If I ascend into heaven, Thou art there. If I descend into hell, Thou art there.

And the same fire of God that burns in heaven is the same fire of God that burns in hell. It isn't who can escape it, who can flee from it. In reality, you are in the fire of God.

You can't escape it. The question is, what is it doing to you? And that all depends on what you are. For you see, fire can, in the case of steel, transmit into permanency as it is forged in the fire, tempered by the fire, transmitting it into permanency.

But that same fire can absolutely destroy and consume a piece of wood. The Bible says that our works are one day going to be tried by fire. And some of our works, like wood, hay, and stubble, are just going to go up and smoke.

Those that can endure, those that last through the fire, you'll be rewarded for. Our God is a consuming fire. Our God is a jealous God.

Very interesting figure that is used of God. But, let's jump down for a moment to verse 31. For the Lord thy God is a merciful God, and He will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which He swore unto them.

Yes, He's a consuming fire. And those enemies of God shall be destroyed by that consuming fire. Consuming is just a qualifying word.

And that is a word that qualifies really the enemies of God, that which the fire will do to the enemies of God. But that same fire transmits us into permanency because from us it consumes the dross and the impurities of our life. It's the refining fire of God burning within our hearts.

Consuming dross. Transmitting into permanency. So when you beget your children and children's children, and ye shall have remained a long time in the land, and corrupt yourselves... Now, this is almost a prophecy.

He lapses into a prophetic thing here. So, in generations to come, your children's children all, you're in the land, they're going to start making graven images. You shall do evil in the sight of the Lord your God, and you'll provoke Him to anger.

I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto you are going over Jordan to possess it. And ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed. And the Lord shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen whether the Lord shall lead you." And so here he is prophesying the failure of the nation and of the fact that they would be driven out of the land and dispersed into all the world.

And yet, you will be left though few in number. The remnant. Now, the interesting miracle of history is that even though the Jews were driven from the land as was prophesied here, yet they were left a nation.

They were left an ethnic group of people. And this is unparalleled in history. No other ethnic group has been able to maintain a national identity without a homeland outside of the Jew.

And yet, they have maintained that national identity. And then, there you will serve the gods, the work of men's hands, of wood and stone and so forth. And when you are in tribulation and these things come upon you, even in the latter days, thou shalt turn to the Lord and thou shalt be obedient to His voice.

For the Lord thy God is a merciful God. He will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the coming of your fathers. For ask now of the days that are past.

Look back in your history books, He is saying, and see since God created man upon the earth, whether there has been any such thing as this great thing or has been heard like it. Did ever the people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of fire as you have heard and still live? Or has God ever taken a nation like He has taken you from another nation by the great signs and all that He brought against the Egyptians and made you to hear His voice? And because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their seed after them. Now, He said He didn't do this because of your greatness or because of your goodness, but because of His love for your fathers.

To drive out the nations and to give you a land. Know therefore this day, consider it in your heart that the Lord He is the God of heaven above and upon the earth beneath there is none else. And so again, the exhortation to keep His statutes and commandments.

Now, they appointed the three cities of refuge that should be on the east bank of the Jordan River where those who were guilty of manslaughter could flee and be protected from the manslayer.

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