

Deuteronomy Chapter 4

V: 1 **Hearken:** (H-8085). shama', hear intelligently, attention combined with obedience, give ear, hear, listen, be obedient, obey (81x's).

- Statutes: 7x's. judgments: 5x's. commandments: 9x's. These are clues as to what this chapter is really all about.
- "Listen carefully, understand, and be obedient..."
- Why? "... *that ye may live...*" getting the land is great, but first things first!

V: 2 "Shall" = **commandment:** do not to add to the word of God, nor to take away from it.

- Sadly many, many churches, denominations, and individuals have ignored this commandment.
- Some like the Mormons add entire books and give them greater authority than the word of God. Others like the JW's add doctrines like Jesus is really the arch angel Michael or that they are the 144,000 spoken of in Revelation, or like the RCC that adds doctrines and traditions to the word of God taking the place of and the authority of God in people's lives.

Mark 7:7 "Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

- Other's take away from the word of God: Seemingly this is mainly from those who claim to be Christians; when churches indicate that they will as an example condone and accept homosexuality they are taking out Leviticus Chapter 18, Romans chapter 1, 1 Corinthians 6, and Revelation 22. When they say that it's ok for women to teach from the pulpit they're tossing out 1 Timothy chapter 2. Taking away from the word of God.
- So much of this is done by supposed "Scholars" and "higher critics" who determine what is and what isn't really the word of God; in so doing they take the authority that rightly rests upon and is vested in the Word of God itself, and they transfer it to themselves. They become the final authority, not the Word of God.
- That is why you have so called "scholars" who remove the virgin birth of Christ, the sufficiency of Christ, and even the very deity of Christ – it gets to the point of why bother!

Paul said it:

Galatians 1:6 "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

Paul said it, but Jesus is going to enforce it:

Revelation 22:18-19 ¹⁸“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: ¹⁹and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

V: 2b Why? So that we can understand God correctly – and keep His commandments.

- Then He gives us some examples.

V: 3 You saw what happened!

- When the soothsayer Balaam couldn't curse Israel (Numbers 25), he counseled king Balak to send in the women of Midian to entice the children of Israel to sin.
- They first had to dis-regard God's commandments to commit their sin.
- What was the result? Death!

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death...”

- They saw with their own eyes as 24,000 men died because of disobedience.

V: 4 Contrast: Those that stuck close to the Lord – obedience – are alive to this day.

John 15:5 “I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing.”

V: 5 “I've done my job – now it's up to you.

- Ministry: I've learned something in ministry that I never considered before I entered into ministry.
- I've grown to love you not just as a fellowship, but as individuals.
- Just like with my own walk, and that of my family – the ups and downs have had a powerful and un-expected impact upon my life.
- Parents can easily relate to this.
- Hard times when some seemingly turn away from the authority of God's word – and suffer the consequences; it breaks my heart!

- Other times when I see those that are whole heartedly committed to keep God's word, abiding in Him – the blessings that result – we rejoice at times with joy inexpressible!

V: 6 Exhortation / encouragement: Keeping God's word is wisdom.

- Keeping God's word will cause Israel, any nation for that matter to be great among the nations.

Psalm 19:7-11 “⁷The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. ⁸The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. ⁹The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. ¹⁰More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. ¹¹Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.”

V: 7-8 Good question! What nation is so near, so close, that they can call upon God?

- This is a rhetorical question: there is no other nation so blessed!

Psalm 33:12 “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom He hath chosen for His own inheritance.”

V: 9 Exhortation to obedience.

- Don't forget! Teach God's statutes and judgments to your sons, and to your grandchildren.
- You can't teach them if you don't know them yourselves.

V: 10-13 Especially teach them about that day they were gathered before Mt. Sinai and I came down in fire – and the top of the mountain was burned with fire – they feared Me that day – teach that to your children.

Proverbs 9:10 “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”

- There is also this first mention of something that will become a recurring topic:
- They heard the voice of God, but there was no image or similitude to connect that to, they only heard His voice.
- This means that they couldn't make an image of anything and or worship it.

- Anything they / we could possibly make would fall so far short of the real thing and thereby profane or degrade the true image of God to some relic of man's imagination. All we can do is mess it up.

V: 14 The purpose of the instruction is to equip those being instructed to do the word of God.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 ¹⁶“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: ¹⁷That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

- Call to action.

James 1:25 “But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”

V: 15-19 A direct admonition not to make any graven images of men or women, animals, birds, reptiles, fish – the sun, moon, and stars: lest you should be driven to worship them.

- This is a current list of what is worshipped in our culture and society today:
- Elvis Presley, Michael Jordan, Justin Beiber – American Idol.
- The spotted owl, the red legged tree frog – the Zodiac
- We were created to worship God, the true and living God: if we don't worship Him, we will end up worshipping something, something else because it is our nature.
- There is no such thing as an Atheist – they all worship something.

This is what Paul was talking about:

Romans 1:21-23 ²¹“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²²Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, ²³and changed the glory of the un-corruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things.”

V: 16 This is all a warning against corrupting ourselves.

Psalms 119:9, 11 ⁹“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.” – ¹¹“thy word have I hidden in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”

V: 19b “... *which the Lord thy God hath divided / provided unto all nations under the whole witness.*”

- God provided these things as a witness, a testimony – because they point to the One who created them.

Romans 1:20 “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.”

V: 20-22 God brought them out of bondage to be a special people unto Himself, His inheritance.

- He brought them out of the “iron furnace” – what comes out of an iron furnace? Steel. How does that happen, lots of heat, melting, refining, being poured into a mold – it’s a process, God is really into process.

The church of Jesus Christ is part of that inheritance as well:

Ephesians 1:17-18 “¹⁷That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: ¹⁸The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,”

- Again Moses mentions that he was used as an example for the need to be obedient to God’s word.

V: 23 Take heed – be careful – watch yourself – don’t forget. (1st & 2nd commandments.)

- Don’t make any graven images! 3rd time He’s warned them in this chapter.
- The first step in back sliding is to allow some other interest or object to take that preeminent place of God in our lives.

V: 24 Describing God’s character: He is a consuming fire (passion), and He’s jealous.

- 1st time God is described as a “fire”.

Hebrews 10:31 “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

- The children of Israel would later learn this lesson:

2 Kings 19 – Reign of king Hezekiah, Senecherib / 185K Assyrians slaughtered.

Isaiah 33:14 “The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?”

- Jealous: (H-7067). qanna', kan-naw';
- Intolerant of unfaithfulness or rivalry (competing for one's love and affection.)
- Jealousy involves a 3rd party.
- My experience in life with jealousy has been primarily violent, blood, rage – often times ending in great injury or death.
- God isn't given over to rage, He's simply using a term or emotion that we can relate to that describes His passion for us and for our relationship with Him.

V: 25 Moses has moved from priest & teacher to prophet. Now he's prophesying.

“When” as opposed to *“if”*.

V: 26-28 Heaven and earth will be called as witnesses:

Deuteronomy 30:19 “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.”

- When you do these things, when you rebel against the word of God – and provoke Him to anger.
- Utter destruction – scattered – desolate.
- The result of serving “other” gods.

Psalms 115:4-8 “⁴Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. ⁵They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: ⁶They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: ⁷They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. ⁸They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.”

V: 29-31 Contrast: If we seek after God with our whole heart we will find Him!

- True forgiveness and restoration always involves repentance, it is conditional.

“^{30b}... **if** thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto His voice.”

- Why? - God's character: He is merciful, He is faithful, He keeps His word.

Micah 7:18 “Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy.”

V: 32 Speaking to this new generation; ask me about the old days, since the beginning of time has there been anything like this “great thing” that God has done with the children of Israel?

V: 33 Has any other people or nation heard the voice of God as you have and lived?

V: 34 Has God ever tried to take any other nation out of the midst of a nation through these things - by His mighty hand – which He has done for you before your very eyes?

V: 35 Only you have had this privilege – that you might know that the Lord, He is God; there is none else beside Him.

V: 36 **We were made, we were designed to hear His voice!**

Isaiah 30:21 “And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.”

John 10:27 “My sheep hear My voice, I know them, and they follow Me.”

Colossians 1:16 “...all things were created by Him, and for Him:”

Revelation 4:11 “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”

- It would stand to reason that if we were created for his good pleasure that God would give us the ability to hear or understand Him so that we could learn what it is that pleases Him, and what doesn't.

V: 37-39 Because God loved your fathers – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – and their seed after them. He did all these mighty works.

V: 40 Exhortation to obedience.

- Not just the reward of a long life, but “that it may be well with thee...”
- And with your children.

V: 41-43 Three cities of refuge on the east side of the river Jordan.

V: 44-49 This is the law.

Proverbs 14:34 “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.”

Psalms 46:10 “Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.”