

AN EXHORTATION TO OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S LAW

BIBLE TEXT : Deuteronomy 4:1-13, 32-40; 5:1-5, 23-33

LESSON 118 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "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" (Revelation 22:19).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Deuteronomy 4:1-13 (KJV)

¹ Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do *them*, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you.

² Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

³ Your eyes have seen what the LORD did because of Baalpeor: for all the men that followed Baalpeor, the LORD thy God hath destroyed them from among you.

⁴ But ye that did cleave unto the LORD your God *are* alive every one of you this day.

⁵ Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it.

⁶ Keep therefore and do *them*; for this *is* your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people.

⁷ For what nation *is there so great*, who *hath* God *so nigh* unto them, as the LORD our God *is* in all *things that* we call upon him *for*?

⁸ And what nation *is there so great*, that hath statutes and judgments *so righteous* as all this law, which I set before you this day?

⁹ Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons;

¹⁰ *Speciallly* the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and *that* they may teach their children.

¹¹ And ye came near and stood under the

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I The Necessity for Obedience, and the Resultant Blessings

1 God's first requirement of the Israelites was that they hear His words, to know His will, Deuteronomy 4:1;

Psalm 89:34 (KJV)

³⁴ My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.

Ecclesiastes 5:1 (KJV)

¹ Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil.

Revelation 2:7 (KJV)

⁷ He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Romans 15:4 (KJV)

⁴ For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

2 The words of God were to be held inviolate by the Israelites, Deuteronomy 4:2;

Psalm 19:7 (KJV)

⁷ The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple.

Luke 21:33 (KJV)

³³ Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

Revelation 22:19 (KJV)

¹⁹ And 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.

3 The examples of others who disobeyed God, contrasted with those who obeyed God, proved the value of obedience, Deuteronomy 4:3, 4;

Numbers 25:1-13 (KJV)

¹ And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.

² And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.

³ And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.

⁴ And the LORD said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel.

⁵ And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baalpeor.

⁶ And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and

mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness.

¹² And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only *ye heard* a voice.

¹³ And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, *even* ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.

Deuteronomy 4:32-40 (KJV)

³² For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and *ask* from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been *any such thing* as this great thing *is*, or hath been heard like it?

³³ Did *ever* people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?

³⁴ Or hath God assayed to go *and* take him a nation from the midst of *another* nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?

³⁵ Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he *is* God; *there is* none else beside him.

³⁶ Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire.

³⁷ And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt;

³⁸ To drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou *art*, to bring thee in, to give thee their land *for* an inheritance, as *it is* this day.

³⁹ Know therefore this day, and consider *it* in thine heart, that the LORD he *is* God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: *there is* none else.

⁴⁰ Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong *thy* days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, for ever.

Deuteronomy 5:1-5 (KJV)

¹ And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes

brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who *were* weeping *before* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

⁷ And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw *it*, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand;

⁸ And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel.

⁹ And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand.

¹⁰ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

¹¹ Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.

¹² Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace:

¹³ And he shall have it, and his seed after him, *even* the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.

4 Their obedience would insure their well-being and cause them to be highly esteemed by the nations, Deuteronomy 4:5, 6;

1 Samuel 15:22 (KJV)

²² And Samuel said, Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams.

James 1:25 (KJV)

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.

John 14:23 (KJV)

²³ Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

II Israel's High Calling

1 God's nearness to Israel was the first mark of their high calling, Deuteronomy 4:7;

Deuteronomy 7:6-8 (KJV)

⁶ For thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that *are* upon the face of the earth.

⁷ The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye *were* the fewest of all people:

⁸ But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

1 Samuel 12:22 (KJV)

²² For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people.

and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them.

² The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.

³ The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, *even us*, who *are* all of us here alive this day.

⁴ The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire,

⁵ (I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to shew you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount;) saying,

Deuteronomy 5:23-33 (KJV)

²³ And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, (for the mountain did burn with fire,) that ye came near unto me, *even* all the heads of your tribes, and your elders;

²⁴ And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath shewed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth.

²⁵ Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die.

²⁶ For who *is there* of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we *have*, and lived?

²⁷ Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear *it*, and do *it*.

²⁸ And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the LORD said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken.

²⁹ O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!

³⁰ Go say to them, Get you into your tents again.

³¹ But as for thee, stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which thou shalt teach them, that they may do *them* in the land which I give them to possess it.

³² Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye

Romans 11:28 (KJV)

²⁸ As concerning the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, *they are* beloved for the fathers' sakes.

Psalm 4:3 (KJV)

³ But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him.

2 The pure and holy law of God, as given to Israel, was another mark of their distinction, Deuteronomy 4:8;

Deuteronomy 26:16-19 (KJV)

¹⁶ This day the LORD thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments: thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.

¹⁷ Thou hast avouched the LORD this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice:

¹⁸ And the LORD hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that *thou* shouldst keep all his commandments;

¹⁹ And to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the LORD thy God, as he hath spoken.

3 The fact that God spoke to them as a nation was an unusual exhibition of His love for them, Deuteronomy 4:9-13

4 A recounting of all God's workings reminded Israel of their great privilege, Deuteronomy 4:32-34; Psalm 78:1-72

5 God's purpose in calling Israel was that they might be His own peculiar treasure, to know His glory and power, Deuteronomy 4:35-40;

Deuteronomy 9:5 (KJV)

⁵ Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Exodus 19:3-6 (KJV)

³ And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;

⁴ Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how* I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

⁵ Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

⁶ And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

III The Covenant Between God and the Israelites

1 The covenant of the Law was made with Israel specifically as a nation, Deuteronomy 5:1, 2;

Exodus 20:1-2 (KJV)

¹ And God spake all these words, saying,

² I *am* the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

³³ Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and *that it may be well with you*, and *that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess*.

2 The covenant of the Law was not made with the Israelite fathers, but with the nation as they stood before Mount Sinai; Deuteronomy 5:2-5;

Galatians 3:16-19 (KJV)

¹⁶ Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

¹⁷ And this I say, *that* the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

¹⁸ For if the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promise: but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

¹⁹ Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator*.

3 The Israelites drew back from God because of fear in their hearts, when they saw the manifestations of His power, Deuteronomy 5:24-27;

Exodus 20:18-21 (KJV)

¹⁸ And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw *it*, they removed, and stood afar off.

¹⁹ And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

²⁰ And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.

²¹ And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God *was*.

4 God granted them their request, but showed a great yearning to have them draw near to Him, Deuteronomy 5:28-31;

Deuteronomy 32:8-14 (KJV)

⁸ When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.

⁹ For the LORD'S portion *is* his people; Jacob *is* the lot of his inheritance.

¹⁰ He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.

¹¹ As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings:

¹² So the LORD alone did lead him, and *there was* no strange god with him.

¹³ He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock;

¹⁴ Butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape.

5 The final analysis was an exhortation to obedience, Deuteronomy 5:32, 33;

Ecclesiastes 12:13 (KJV)

¹³ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is*

NOTES:

At the Borders of the Promised Land

In our present lesson we find the Israelites at the borders of the Promised Land, the place toward which they had looked for many long, weary months and years. Sin, rebellion, and disobedience had caused them untold suffering. They had wandered in the wilderness until everyone who had come out of Egypt at the age of 20 years or over, with the exception of Joshua, Caleb, and Moses, had died. We have seen that the causes of Israel's delay in entering into their inheritance were disobedience and rebellion against the Word and commands of God. The rebellious had said, when they came to the borders of the land many years before, that the young ones would die in the wilderness; but now these young people were ready to enter the Promised Land and the older ones were gone, having fallen short of the blessings that God would have had them receive.

Disobedience and Rebellion

Disobedience is a terrible sin. We are told in I Samuel 15:22, that it is better to obey God than to offer sacrifices. And the sacrificial worship eventually became one of the most important things in the lives of the Israelites. Rebellion is also a grievous sin. This same passage of Scripture tells us that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. The Law stated that anyone guilty of witchcraft was to be put to death.

To disobey a command of God is to say that our mind is greater than God's mind, that we know more than He, that we can see the far-reaching effects of our act where He cannot. It is denying His omnipotence, or almighty power. It is setting aside the fact of His omnipresence, or the attribute of His being in our midst at all times. It is denying His omniscience, or infinite wisdom.

When we disobey we say, in fact, that God does not mean what He said, that He does not know what He said, that He cannot know the effects of what He said, that He is not able to sustain or carry us through when we do what He said we should do, or that He is not interested in us at all. It is saying that He does not regard His own Word.

But the Bible tells us that God's Word is forever settled in Heaven and that not one portion of it will pass away until it is all fulfilled. It is a fearful thing to trifle with, or disobey, even one command of God, for to do so is to be guilty of them all (**James 2:10** ¹⁰ For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all). Those who do will most surely be compelled to wander in a spiritual wilderness until they have repented of their disobedience, or until they have expired, never having come into the land that God had promised them.

There is a great deal of rebellion in disobedience, and almost invariably there is disobedience in rebellion. It is possible to disobey and not be aware of the fact that we are, in fact, rebelling against God. The distinction between the two is very fine, and either one will cause us to lose the love of God out of our hearts and be lost eternally unless we repent and seek God's forgiveness again. Wilful ignorance of God's law does not excuse anyone from the penalties imposed by the law. The sin of presumption on God's mercy is often classed as the great transgression (**Psalms 19:13** ¹³ Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous *sins*; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright,

and I shall be innocent from the great transgression). Wilful ignorance and presumption are but rebellion, in the final analysis.

It is pointed out that there are two stages of apostasy. The first is that stage where a man or a nation rejects God. The second is where God rejects that man or nation. Rebellion can be the seed-root of the first stage of this damning condition, and apostasy can lead to a condition in which God no longer deals with the individual, when it is impossible for that person to find God's favor again.

God has given us the written history of the Israelites, together with the admonitions of His prophets, Apostles, and ministers of all ages, to remind us of the serious danger of either of these two grievous sins: disobedience or rebellion. We stand in great light, knowing what the effect will be if we either disobey or rebel. As time passes, our light becomes greater; therefore, our judgment will be the more severe and our condemnation inevitable if we refuse to profit by the admonition.

The Blessings of Obedience

What joy there is for the person who will obey God's Word! What a satisfaction is given to each one who honors God enough to follow His will! What rich blessings are in store for everyone who trusts God for everything, who takes God into consideration in every plan of life! The world cannot duplicate those blessings. Houses, lands, friends, wealth, prestige, and power cannot give one small fraction of the reality that simple obedience to God's Word gives most copiously.

Those of the Israelites who disobeyed, died before they reached their inheritance; but those who obeyed entered the land that flowed with milk and honey, where they could eat bread to the full and be satisfied. Let us not stop short of spiritual Canaan! Let us not let the prize for which we have labored, contended, and hoped, pass from our grasp at the last moment, as we stand on the very borders of our inheritance, by failing implicitly to obey God's simple commandments or His revealed will for us!

The Covenant with Israel

When the Israelites stood on the side of Mount Sinai, and heard the voice of God from the mountain, they fully understood what God's requirements were and freely subscribed to all that He asked of them (**Exodus 19:3-9** ³ And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; ⁴ Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how* I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine: ⁶ And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. ⁷ And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. ⁸ And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD. ⁹ And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD. **Exodus 20:18-21** ¹⁸ And all the people saw the thunders, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and

when the people saw *it*, they removed, and stood afar off. ¹⁹ And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. ²⁰ And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. ²¹ And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God *was*. (Deuteronomy 5:1-5). This constituted a covenant between them and God, the covenant of the Law or the Old Covenant (Deuteronomy 4:13; **Jeremiah 31:31-34** ³¹ Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: ³² Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: ³³ But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more).

This covenant demanded the utmost of them; and no unregenerated or unsanctified person could, in his own strength, fulfill its demands. They could, in a form, offer up sacrifices, attend the morning and evening periods of prayer, and be seen at each of the three annual feasts when all the Israelites came to the House of God. But they could not love the Lord with all their heart, soul, mind, and body, and their neighbor as themselves so long as sin existed in their hearts.

Israel, as a nation, failed because they did not obey the provisions of the covenant. They failed because they did not let God write His Law on their hearts. They failed because they fell short of all His blessings and provisions for them. We cannot say that they sinned in ignorance, for they had heard the voice of God and knew all that He demanded of them.

God's covenant at this time was not the first covenant that had been made with man. We read, in (**Galatians 3:16-17** ¹⁶ Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. ¹⁷ And this I say, *that* the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect), of a covenant made with Abraham (because of Abraham's faith in God) that this Old Covenant could not disannul, or cancel. This covenant that was made with Abraham was a prophetic covenant, an anticipation of the New Covenant fulfilled by Jesus Christ — the One who alone had power to purchase man's redemption because He secured it with His own Blood. But this Old Covenant was a great upward step in God's dealings with mankind. It was a school-master to bring every man who would walk in it to the Christ who would come to take away our sins. It pointed to Christ in all its provisions, and was fulfilled by Him when He came to earth to live and die, our Great Paschal Lamb and Perfect Sacrifice.

Therefore we know that salvation from sin was provided from the very moment that Adam sinned in the Garden, and the promise of a Redeemer was first given. The provisions of Calvary, which were to be made many centuries after sin entered the world, were in operation from "the foundation of the world." They, in those early days, could know the joy of sins forgiven, of

transformed lives, and of reconciliation with God, the same as we, if they came in faith and sincere repentance (**Hebrews 4:1-2** ¹ Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. ² For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.). But this great covenant made on Mount Sinai was to point them all the more clearly to the way God would have them live, and **to** the Sacrifice that was to be made, so they, through the shed Blood, could fulfill the Law's exacting requirements.

God's Yearnings for Israel and for Us

God loved Israel. He has also loved every man, woman, and child who has ever walked on this earth. It is not His pleasure that men should die and be eternally lost. He has great pleasure in the death of His saints, but none at all in the death of the wicked. He gave the most priceless Jewel of Heaven to make provision for our justification, and chose the nation of Israel, because of the righteousness of their earthly father, Abraham, to be the means by which the Gospel would come to all mankind.

His heart must have been grieved beyond measure when He was forced to acquiesce to their wishes to have the Law given to them through the mouth of Moses, and not written on their hearts as He desired it should be. God had given man a sovereign will and even He, in His omnipotence, could not violate that will, nor cause Israel to receive the Law in their hearts when they drew back from it. He cried out in great yearning when He said: "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" (Deuteronomy 5:29).

Jesus told us of this yearning when He likened us unto sheep that are lost, for whom the Great Shepherd searches. He told us of the prodigal son, who wandered far away from home and returned after many days of sin and riotous living to find his father looking for him, eager to restore to the wayward boy the authority, affection, and security of the family home. He told us that we were as branches, nourished by the Vine, that we depended entirely upon Him for life and strength. He also told us of a Home that He has gone to prepare for us, that we might dwell forever with God, enjoying the fellowship and favor purchased for us at such infinite cost.

The High Calling of Israel

Israel was given a high calling. They were separated by God from the other nations that dwelt upon the earth, because of Abraham's faith in God, that they might be His own peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. In Scripture they are often called God's elect.

How sad it is to see that so few of the Israelites lived up to God's requirements and entered into the rest that He provided for them, not only the visible Promised Land but the heavenly rest that would be theirs if they continued in His Word and obeyed His commandments. But they failed because of disobedience, because of rebellion, and because of lack of faith. Is it any wonder that so much of the Book of Deuteronomy, the last words and exhortations of the godly man, Moses, is devoted to admonitions lest they repeat their former errors and disobey, rebel, and turn

QUESTIONS

- 1 Of what two great sins did Moses warn the Israelites in our lesson?
- 2 Why are these particular sins so dangerous?
- 3 What had happened to those who had previously indulged in those sins?
- 4 Where were the Israelites, in respect to their 40-years' journey, at this time?
- 5 Quote the verse in our lesson text that parallels the memory verse.
- 6 What was to be Israel's attitude toward the Word of God?
- 7 What does our lesson teach regarding the practice of family worship?
- 8 Tell about the different covenants made between God and man which are referred to in the study of this lesson.
- 9 Did the Israelites who were present at Mount Sinai have first-hand knowledge of the Law that was written upon the tables of stone?
- 10 Why was a repetition of the Law necessary at this time?

back to Egypt?

Here is given us the secret of success in the Christian life: complete obedience. One cannot be a Christian unless he obeys what God tells him to do. One cannot continue in God's favor if he refuses to walk in the will of God and rebels at the command of God. Obedience is the keystone of it all, the one requirement which, if we carefully heed, will not only bring us to the "borders of the land" but will take us on over that we might enjoy the blessings abiding therein.

**"Trust and obey,
For there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus,
But to trust and obey."**