

A WARNING AGAINST THE SIN OF SELF-EXALTATION

BIBLE TEXT : Deuteronomy 9:1-29; 10:1-22

LESSON 124 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "What doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (Deuteronomy 10:12).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Deuteronomy 9:1-29

¹ Hear, O Israel: Thou *art* to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven,

² A people great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and *of whom* thou hast heard *say*, Who can stand before the children of Anak!

³ Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God *is* he which goeth over before thee; *as* a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee.

⁴ Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the LORD thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee.

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.

⁶ Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Israel to Pass over Jordan

1 Israel is told that they are soon to pass over Jordan and that the Lord will go before them and that they will be able to drive out quickly the inhabitants, Deuteronomy 9:1-3;

Joshua 3:16

¹⁶ That the waters which came down from above stood *and* rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that *is* beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, *even* the salt sea, failed, *and* were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho.

Joshua 4:19

¹⁹ And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth *day* of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho.

2 They are cautioned to remember that not for their own righteousness the Lord hath given them the land, but for the wickedness of those nations the Lord doth drive out the inhabitants, Deuteronomy 9:4-6;

Exodus 32:9

⁹ And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it *is* a stiffnecked people:

Exodus 34:9

⁹ And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it *is* a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.

Titus 3:5

⁵ Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

II Reminiscences

1 They are not to forget how they provoked the Lord to wrath in the wilderness and also in Horeb, Deuteronomy 9:7-9, 22-24;

Exodus 14:11

¹¹ And they said unto Moses, Because *there were* no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?

Exodus 16:2

² And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:

Exodus 17:2

² Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?

Numbers 11:4

⁴ And the mixt multitude that *was* among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?

Numbers 20:2

² And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron.

Numbers 25:2

righteousness; for thou *art* a stiffnecked people.

⁷ Remember, *and* forget not, how thou provokedst the LORD thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the LORD.

⁸ Also in Horeb ye provoked the LORD to wrath, so that the LORD was angry with you to have destroyed you.

⁹ When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, *even* the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water:

¹⁰ And the LORD delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them *was written* according to all the words, which the LORD spake with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly.

¹¹ And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights, *that* the LORD gave me the two tables of stone, *even* the tables of the covenant.

¹² And the LORD said unto me, Arise, get thee down quickly from hence; for thy people which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt have corrupted *themselves*; they are quickly turned aside out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten image.

¹³ Furthermore the LORD spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and, behold, it *is* a stiffnecked people:

¹⁴ Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven: and I will

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

Psalm 106:19

¹⁹ They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image.

2 They are reminded that they quickly turned aside and made a molten calf and that Moses was angry with them and broke the two tables of stone, Deuteronomy 9:10-21. (See Lesson 67, Book 6.)

3 The Lord would have destroyed them had not Moses interceded, Deuteronomy 9:25-29

4 Moses rehearses that the tribe of Levi was separated unto the Lord for an inheritance, and how long Moses stayed in the mount the second time, Deuteronomy 10:8-10

III The Ten Commandments

1 At the Lord's command, Moses makes an ark of shittim wood and hews out two tables of stone like the first, Deuteronomy 10:1-3

2 The Lord writes on the stones the Ten Commandments; the Israelites journey from Beeroth to Jotbath and Aaron dies on the way, Deuteronomy 10:4-7;

Exodus 20:4-17

⁴ Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of *any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth:

⁵ Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me;

⁶ And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

⁷ Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

⁸ Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

⁹ Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

¹⁰ But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates:

¹¹ For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

¹² Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

¹³ Thou shalt not kill.

¹⁴ Thou shalt not commit adultery.

¹⁵ Thou shalt not steal.

¹⁶ Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

¹⁷ Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.

Numbers 20:23-29

²³ And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in mount Hor, by the coast of the land of Edom, saying,

²⁴ Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah.

²⁵ Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto mount Hor:

make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they.

¹⁵ So I turned and came down from the mount, and the mount burned with fire: and the two tables of the covenant *were* in my two hands.

¹⁶ And I looked, and, behold, ye had sinned against the LORD your God, *and* had made you a molten calf: ye had turned aside quickly out of the way which the LORD had commanded you.

¹⁷ And I took the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands, and brake them before your eyes.

¹⁸ And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

¹⁹ For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the LORD was wroth against you to destroy you. But the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also.

²⁰ And the LORD was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time.

²¹ And I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burnt it with fire, and stamped it, *and* ground *it* very small, *even* until it was as small as dust: and I cast the dust thereof into the brook that descended out of the mount.

²² And at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibrothhattaavah, ye provoked the LORD to wrath.

²³ Likewise when the LORD sent you from Kadeshbarnea, saying, Go up and possess the land which I have given you; then ye rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God, and ye believed him not, nor hearkened to his

²⁶ And strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son: and Aaron shall be gathered *unto his people*, and shall die there.

²⁷ And Moses did as the LORD commanded: and they went up into mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation.

²⁸ And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there in the top of the mount: and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount.

²⁹ And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, *even* all the house of Israel.

IV A Circumcised Heart, the Lord's Requirement

1 The Lord required of Israel a heart to love, fear, and serve Him, for He had chosen them above all people, Deuteronomy 10:12-16;

Matthew 22:37

³⁷ Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

2 The Lord is a great God, mighty and terrible; He executes judgment for the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger in giving him food and raiment, Deuteronomy 10:17-20;

Leviticus 19:34

³⁴ *But* the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.

Psalm 68:5

⁵ A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.

Psalm 146:9

⁹ The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.

James 1:27

²⁷ Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world.

3 God is to be praised for the great things He has done, Deuteronomy 10:21, 22;

1 Samuel 12:24

²⁴ Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great *things* he hath done for you.

2 Samuel 7:23

²³ And what one nation in the earth *is* like thy people, *even* like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, *from* the nations and their gods?

NOTES:

Inherited Sins

Unbelief, pride, and self-exaltation were the main sins the devil injected into the heart of man when man fell. Those sins are closely related and seem to go hand in hand with one another. "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18). God is sovereign over all; and when man tries to exalt himself, sooner or later the fall is coming.

At Mount Sinai Israel had failed to press in and let the Lord sanctify them. One cannot refuse to walk in the light and retain

voice.

²⁴ Ye have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you.

²⁵ Thus I fell down before the LORD forty days and forty nights, as I fell down *at the first*; because the LORD had said he would destroy you.

²⁶ I prayed therefore unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, destroy not thy people and thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed through thy greatness, which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

²⁷ Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin:

²⁸ Lest the land whence thou broughtest us out say, Because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land which he promised them, and because he hated them, he hath brought them out to slay them in the wilderness.

²⁹ Yet they *are* thy people and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest out by thy mighty power and by thy stretched out arm.

Deuteronomy 10:1-22

¹ At that time the LORD said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto me into the mount, and make thee an ark of wood.

² And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest, and thou shalt put them in the ark.

³ And I made an ark of shittim wood, and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in mine hand.

⁴ And he wrote on the tables,

the blessing he does have. Israel's sin was continually getting them into trouble. Moses reminded them of their past sins and warned them against such sins.

Border of Canaan

Israel is now right on the border of Canaan. This is the second time they have come up to the border of Canaan. Because of unbelief they did not enter in the first time. For forty years the Lord let them wander around. They learned many lessons in those forty years of wandering. Now the Lord has brought them up to the border of Canaan again, and this time He is going to take them over into the Promised Land.

Fatherly Advice

As a father would admonish a son, so Moses is admonishing them concerning their shortcomings and failures of the past, and exhorting them to walk humbly with their God.

Canaan was inhabited by nations greater and mightier than the Children of Israel were, but the Lord was going before them as a consuming fire to drive out those nations. When Israel was settled in the land, they were not to pride themselves and speak in their hearts and say that for their own righteousness the Lord had driven out these nations. But because of the wickedness of those people the Lord drove them out. He wanted Israel to remember that they were a stiff-necked and rebellious people: they had openly rebelled against the Lord many times. Here we find Moses warning them against thinking that for their own righteousness the Lord had driven out the nations before them. "For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (Galatians 6:3).

This shows us that the unregenerated heart is the source of evil thinking and speaking. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7). The heart must be changed, and it takes the new birth to change it.

Examples

We have examples among the Children of Israel of those who exalted themselves and how quickly they were abased.

When Miriam and Aaron murmured against Moses and said, "Hath he not spoken also by us?" the Lord called them to task at once, and Miriam became leprous, as white as snow. The desire to be a leader is another way that self has of exalting itself. The Lord had used Miriam and Aaron, but He did not want them to set themselves up as equal to, or above, Moses.

One day Herod, a king in New Testament days, arrayed in his royal robes and sitting on his throne, made an oration to the people. "The people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately, the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory" (Acts 12:21-23). "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom" (Jeremiah 9:23).

It is believed that Satan at one time was one of the archangels, but he wanted to exalt his throne equal with the throne of God. Jesus said, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10:18).

In the Sermon on the Mount the Lord tells us that when we pray we are not to be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets that they may be seen of men.

In the parable of the Pharisee and the publican who went up to the Temple to pray, the Lord gives us a true picture of self-exaltation. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners,

according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me.

⁵ And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the LORD commanded me.

⁶ And the children of Israel took their journey from Beeroth of the children of Jaakan to Mosera: there Aaron died, and there he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered in the priest's office in his stead.

⁷ From thence they journeyed unto Gudgodah; and from Gudgodah to Jotbath, a land of rivers of waters.

⁸ At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister unto him, and to bless in his name, unto this day.

⁹ Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD *is* his inheritance, according as the LORD thy God promised him.

¹⁰ And I stayed in the mount, according to the first time, forty days and forty nights; and the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also, *and* the LORD would not destroy thee.

¹¹ And the LORD said unto me, Arise, take *thy* journey before the people, that they may go in and possess the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give unto them.

¹² And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy

unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess" (Luke 18:11, 12). Jesus concludes the parable by saying, "For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased."

Humble Spirit

"And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul?" (Deuteronomy 10:12).

This is the portion of Scripture that Jesus quoted to the lawyer who came to Jesus and wanted to know which was the great commandment in the Law. Supreme love for God is what God wanted of the Israelites; it is what Jesus called the great commandment; and it is the rule for our lives today. What less could the Lord have asked of a people whom He had redeemed from the hand of the enemy, from the bondage of Egypt, and had led out with a high and mighty hand, and to whom he had given manna to eat in the desert and water to drink out of the flinty rock? What less could the Lord ask of us, who have been redeemed from the bondage of sin and made new creatures in Christ Jesus?

It is the humble, trusting heart that finds a refuge under the wings of the Almighty. We know the trust and confidence a little child puts in its parents. Jesus says, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." The Lord longed to find that trust and confidence in Israel. Had it been in their hearts they would have entered the Promised Land years before they did.

May the Lord help us to guard the door of our heart, that we may retain that meek and quiet spirit that Jesus gives, which, the Word tells us, is in the sight of God of great price.

The Pride of Life

God hates pride. "These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:16-19).

Pride is here classed with the most subtle and most hateful of sins. Pride proved the downfall of Lucifer, one of the beautiful archangels of Heaven. "How art thou fallen from heaven, **O** Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!" (Isaiah 14:12). And it is believed that Lucifer, through his pride, was changed into Satan — changed from an archangel into the archenemy of God and man.

We are repeatedly warned in Scripture, as were the Israelites, against this deceptive sin of pride. In the First Epistle of John are two familiar verses which it will do us well to remember: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (I John 2:15, 16). Out of these three evils — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — proceeds the whole category of sin. Yet the men of the world look upon pride as something essential to manhood, a virtue to be cherished in the heart. But "that which is highly esteemed among men is

soul,

¹³ To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?

¹⁴ Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens *is* the LORD'S thy God, the earth *also*, with all that therein *is*.

¹⁵ Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, *even* you above all people, as *it is* this day.

¹⁶ Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.

¹⁷ For the LORD your God *is* God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward:

¹⁸ He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment.

¹⁹ Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

²⁰ Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name.

²¹ He *is* thy praise, and he *is* thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen.

²² Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons; and now the LORD thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude.

abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15). And there is probably no sin which is shutting more people out of the Kingdom of Heaven than pride. A proud heart will not repent.

But the sin of pride is not limited to the men of the world. It has also invaded religious circles, and is more glaring in some churches than in the world. Unbelief and pride go hand in hand, and the Pharisees were Jesus' bitterest enemies, not only because they did not believe Him to be the Son of God, but through their pride they despised and rejected Him as their Messiah on account of His lowly associations. He was known as the "Galilean," the "carpenter's son," the "friend of sinners."

Today Jesus' humble environments have lost their humiliating aspect. He is no longer despised as the lowly Galilean or as the humble carpenter's son. Great numbers still profess to be His followers, but the Gospel which Jesus and His Apostles preached can scarcely be recognized any longer in their religions. In an attempt to have an "up-to-date" religion which will not require the humble walk, the self-denial, and self-sacrifice which His Gospel requires, His teachings have been revised and toned down. The "strait and narrow way" which He taught has been discarded.

The Modernists too are attempting to meet the demand of the age. They have denied Jesus' Deity, His Atonement, and His Resurrection. The Blood He shed has no place in their theology. Every cardinal doctrine of the Bible, which once constituted the bulwark of the Christian religion, has been cast to the winds. Christ has been dethroned and man exalted. And back of all this movement is the pride of the human heart.

Timely Warnings

These are timely warnings that Moses gave to the Children of Israel. As we study them may they be warnings to us to keep humble and not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. Let us pray that the Lord will help us all to reach the place where Christ is our all in all, and we will obey the exhortation that James gives, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (James 4:10). Only the Lord can lift man up, for "promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another" (Psalm 75:6, 7).

QUESTIONS

- 1 Against what sin is Israel warned in this lesson?
- 2 For what reason did the Lord drive out the nations of Canaan?
- 3 Who were the Anakims?
- 4 What kind of people did the Lord say Israel was?
- 5 Can you repeat all the commandments the Lord wrote on the two tables of stone?
- 6 What priest died on this trip?
- 7 What does the Lord require of His people?
- 8 What attitude should we take toward strangers?

