

Day 186 - WEDNESDAY: June 21st

Deuteronomy 4

Deuteronomy 4:1-49 NKJV

"Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you. You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Baal Peor; for the LORD your God has destroyed from among you all the men who followed Baal of Peor. But you who held fast to the LORD your God are alive today, every one of you. "Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' "For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day? Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren, especially concerning the day you stood before the LORD your God in Horeb, when the LORD said to me, 'Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and

that they may teach their children.' "Then you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire to the midst of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness. And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; you only heard a voice. So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone. And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that you might observe them in the land which you cross over to possess. "Take careful heed to yourselves, for you saw no form when the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, lest you act corruptly and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of any figure: the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any animal that is on the earth or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground or the likeness of any fish that is in the water beneath the earth. And take heed, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the LORD your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage. But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be His people, an inheritance, as you are this day. Furthermore the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, and swore that I would not cross over the Jordan, and that I would not enter the good land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance. But I must die in this land, I must not cross over the Jordan; but you shall cross over and possess that good land. Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of anything which the LORD your God has forbidden you. For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God. "When you beget

children and grandchildren and have grown old in the land, and act corruptly and make a carved image in the form of anything, and do evil in the sight of the LORD your God to provoke Him to anger, I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you will soon utterly perish from the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess; you will not prolong your days in it, but will be utterly destroyed. And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you. And there you will serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice (for the LORD your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them. "For ask now concerning the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and ask from one end of heaven to the other, whether any great thing like this has happened, or anything like it has been heard. Did any people ever hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and live? Or did God ever try to go and take for Himself a nation from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD Himself is God; there is none other besides Him. Out of heaven He let you hear His voice, that He might instruct you; on earth He showed you His great fire, and you heard His words out of the midst of the fire. And because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them; and He brought you out of Egypt with His

Presence, with His mighty power, driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land as an inheritance, as it is this day. Therefore know this day, and consider it in your heart, that the LORD Himself is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other. You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time." Then Moses set apart three cities on this side of the Jordan, toward the rising of the sun, that the manslayer might flee there, who kills his neighbor unintentionally, without having hated him in time past, and that by fleeing to one of these cities he might live: Bezer in the wilderness on the plateau for the Reubenites, Ramoth in Gilead for the Gadites, and Golan in Bashan for the Manassites. Now this is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel. These are the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which Moses spoke to the children of Israel after they came out of Egypt, on this side of the Jordan, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon, whom Moses and the children of Israel defeated after they came out of Egypt. And they took possession of his land and the land of Og king of Bashan, two kings of the Amorites, who were on this side of the Jordan, toward the rising of the sun, from Aroer, which is on the bank of the River Arnon, even to Mount Sion (that is, Hermon), and all the plain on the east side of the Jordan as far as the Sea of the Arabah, below the slopes of Pisgah.

Daily Deep Dive:

We'll begin with the UCG reading plan: "Moses cautions Israel not to "add to" nor "take from" God's commandments

(verse 2), but, rather, to "carefully observe" them and to "act" in accordance with them (verses 2, 14, 5–6).

To *know* God's Word is not enough—indeed, it is quite useless unless one *acts* on it and *does* His will (see Matthew 5:19; Matthew 7:24–27; James 1:22–25). If Israel does this, then they will be recognized by others as a great, wise, understanding, righteous and God-fearing nation (verses 6–8). But since such recognition could be a source of pride, Moses warns them to *not forget* God and His wonders (verses 9–10). He reminds them that *God* was the originator of this wise law—that *He* appeared to them on the mountain to proclaim *His* Ten Commandments (verse 10). At that time, the people did not see a "form" of God (verse 12). He points this out to dissuade the people from crafting any images of Him. However, as a consequence of this statement, some believe that God is formless and shapeless. Yet this is emphatically false, as the fact that God does have form is clearly stated in Numbers 12:6–8. In fact, God created man in His image, in accordance with His likeness (Genesis 1:26), as Adam's son Seth was in the image and likeness of Adam (Genesis 5:3). Moreover, God revealed His glorified form to Moses (compare Exodus 33:18–23). Both the Father's and the Son's glorified

appearance are described in the Bible (compare Daniel 7:9, Daniel 7:13; Ezekiel 1:26–28; Revelation 1:12–16; Revelation 4:2–3; Revelation 5:1), clearly proving that God has form. Further, although the people as a whole did not see any form when God spoke to them from the mountain, Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and the 70 elders of Israel clearly did see a form shortly thereafter (Exodus 24:9–11). Nevertheless, in no encounter did *anyone* see the *full* glorified appearance of the Almighty. And not only can no image truly capture God's glory, but any image would limit Him in people's minds.

In Deuteronomy 4:13, we read that God "declared...His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone." Some have taken this passage to mean that the Old Covenant was the same as the Ten Commandments, and that when the Old Covenant was abolished, so were the Ten Commandments. This understanding, however, is not correct—since a covenant is a contract or an agreement, which is *based on* law but not *identical to* the law. For instance, we read in Exodus 24:8 that God made a covenant with Israel "according to all these words." The Revised English Bible renders this, "on the terms of this book." In

Exodus 34:27, it is again explained that a covenant is made based on law, as we read, "Write these words, for according to the tenor of these words I have made [or, better, I will make] a covenant with you and with Israel." Again, the Revised English Bible states that "the covenant I make with you and with Israel is on those terms." We have already seen that the Ten Commandments were in force long before Moses lived, so the Old Covenant did not bring them into existence—nor was it identical to them. What the Old Covenant did not bring into force could not be abolished when that covenant ended at the time of Christ's death. The reason that the Ten Commandments are especially emphasized in Deuteronomy 4:13 is that they are the *heart and core* of the law on which the Old Covenant was based (compare Deuteronomy 5:22)—but they are not *all the law* on which the covenant was based (compare Deuteronomy 4:14).

Moses begins to admonish the Israelites again not to make any carved images, in whatever form, to portray or picture God as an aid to worship (verses 15–18, 23–25). Further, he warns them not to worship anything else in place of the true God (verse 19). Earlier, in Exodus 32, God had condemned Israel for making a golden calf *representing* Him

(Exodus 32:8). Rather than using physical pictures, portrayals or representations of God in our worship of Him, we are to worship God "in spirit and truth" (John 4:24)—not with idolatrous images and practices adopted from false religions. Moses warns the Israelites that if they would not obey God's commandments, God would scatter them among the nations so that only few would survive (verses 26–27). The fulfillment of this prophecy lies ahead of us, as it was meant for the end time or the "latter days" (verse 30). A hint of man's amazing destiny is given in verse 19, where it says that "the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven" are for "all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage." Thus, though mankind was only given dominion over the earth in Genesis 2, we are to ultimately inherit the entire universe. This is the same incredible message conveyed in Romans 8:16–25 and Hebrews 2:5–11.

Deuteronomy 4:29 is a wonderful comfort. It assures us that we *will* find God if we search for Him with all our heart and soul (compare Jeremiah 29:13). Indeed, God wants not just *part* of our affections but our *entire being* devoted to Him (compare Romans 12:1–2; Matthew 22:37)." [END]

Verse 3 – This is when the people of Israel committed harlotry with the women of Moab and they worshiped their gods (see Number 25:1–9).

Verse 6 – The NKJV is translated as: “Be careful to observe them”. In the Strong’s Dictionary it states: “properly to hedge about (as with thorns), that is, guard, generally to protect, attend to, etc...”

Where do we get wisdom and understanding? It doesn’t spring out of us as if we are the source of true wisdom and understanding. Our wisdom and understanding come from God’s laws, statutes, and judgments, and to whatever degree we appropriately apply them, some may attribute to us wisdom & understanding but again, we know where it really comes from.

Verse 9 – Both the words “take heed” & “keep” (KJV/NKJV) are both again the same word “to hedge about with thorns” as discussed in verse 6.

Israel, and by extension all of us, are told that to avoid God’s way from departing from our hearts, it takes focus and diligence, otherwise, we can lose it. God’s way and the

understanding of it, is not something we should take for granted.

Further, we have the responsibility, the command by God, to teach His way to subsequent generations. It is their choice whether to respond, but we have the command to ensure it is diligently taught and modeled.

Verse 28 – This is the reality of mankind’s gods. They are simply wood, rock, etc...and they don’t do anything (hear, see, smell).

Verse 30 – In life, all of us get off course and fail. The answer is always the same, turn back to God, repent, and obey, because we serve a very merciful God.

Verse 34 – What God had done for the nation of Israel was utterly unique.