

Deuteronomy - Commentaries by Gordon Henry Hayhoe

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 8:5-9:22: God's Grace and Loving Purposes (8:5-20)

Deuteronomy 8:5-9:22

There were not only things to remember about the wilderness journey, but there were things to consider, too. There was a loving purpose in all God's ways, for just as a parent has to punish his children (or should!), so the Lord had dealt with His people. In God's dealings with us it is well to remember these things, for there are three ways we can look at the chastening God sends. We can despise it, or perhaps we might faint under it, but the right way is to be exercised by the trial, so that we learn the needed lessons through it (Hebrews 12:5-11).

After "remembering" and "considering" these things, it then says, "Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, and to fear Him" (verse 6). This is the proper result, but sometimes when reminded of what God says, and having even spent a little time considering it, we then fail to walk in it. May the Lord make the truth we know more practical in our lives!

These exhortations are all in view of the good things the Lord had in store for them in the land of Canaan. It was a place of plenty, where there was no lack of anything, for the land was good, and it was rich in minerals too. But even in this there was a danger, for they might begin to boast that it was their own wisdom and strength that made them wealthy, forgetting that they were once only slaves in Egypt when the Lord delivered them. Then, too, it was He who gave them the strength to work the land, and harvest the crops. All came from Him, so they had nothing to boast of in themselves. The chapter closes with a solemn warning that if they did not obey His voice, but went after other gods, He would cause them to lose the good land He gave them. Indeed this is what happened to Israel in God's government.

In the ninth chapter the people are told that they should always remember that the Lord had not given them the land of Canaan because they were better and more righteous than those nations who were dwelling there, but because He had promised it to their fathers, and He is ever faithful to His Word. They did not need to be afraid of the power of their enemies, for even though there were giants in the land, God was going to give it to them.

Moses then, by God's Word, reminds them that he had interceded for them when they had fallen into idolatry at the time the law was given. He had received the tables of stone on which the ten commandments were written, but when he found them worshipping a molten image, he had broken the tables at the foot of the mount. If he had brought them into the camp it would have meant certain judgment upon all because of their sin. He therefore interceded for the people for forty days, having neither meat nor drink, and God graciously came in on their behalf. In what could they boast then? Their very existence was a monument to God's grace, for they had deserved only judgment. And as we look back over our own past, must we not say it has been grace all the way too? Must we not exclaim with the apostle Paul, "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Corinthians 15:10), for His grace excludes all boasting on our part. God's grace and love will be our endless theme in heaven, and Israel's theme on earth, to the ages of ages.

Further Meditations

1. Why did the Lord give the land of Canaan to Israel?
2. Intercession for the Lord's people is one of our great privileges as Christians. Where do we read of Christ's intercession for us? Under what circumstances are we to intercede for other believers.
3. As you consider the subject of intercession you would no doubt be encouraged to listen to the Audio CD Christ's Intercession as High Priest and as Advocate by R. Thonney.

Conference: 1972, A Separated People (7:1)

Address—G.H. Hayhoe

Like to read a few scriptures about how God desired to separate his people? First of all, in the 7th chapter of Deuteronomy, in the first verse, when the Lord thy God shall bring me into the land, whither thou goest to possess it, and thou hast cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites and the Amorites. And the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites and the Jebusites, 7 nations greater and mightier than thou, When the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee, thou shalt smite them and utterly destroy them. Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them either shalt thou make marriages with them. Thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son, for they shall turn away. Son from following me, that they may serve other gods, so shall the anger of the Lord be kindled against you and destroyed ye suddenly. But thus shalt thou deal with them. He shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cast down their Groves, and burn their graven images with fire. For thou art and holy people unto the Lord thy God. The Lord thy God hath chosen me to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon thee, nor choose thee, because you were more in number than any people, for you were the fewest of all people. But because the Lord loved thee, and because He would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your Father's hath, the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house. Bondman from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, shall we turn over to?

Judges, pardon me. Joshua Chapter 9. Joshua Chapter 9, verse 3. And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard that Joshua, what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai, they did work wildly. And went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took all sacks upon their ***** and wine bottles old and rent, and bound up, and old shoes, and clouded upon their feet, and old garments about them. And all the bread of their provision was dry and moldy. And I went to Joshua under the camp of Gilgal, and said unto him, And to the men of Israel, We become from a far country. Now therefore make a league with us. And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell among us, and how shall we make a league with you? And they said unto Joshua, We are thy servants. And Joshua said unto them, Who are ye, and from whence come ye? And they said unto him. From a very far country thy servants are come, because of the name of the Lord thy God. For we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt, and all that he did to the 2 Kings of the Amorites that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to OG king of Bashan, which were at Ashtaroth. Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying, Take Biddles with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We are your servants. Therefore now make ye a league with us. It's our bread we took hot for our provision out of the houses, out of our houses, on the day we came forth to go unto you. And now behold, it is dry, and it is moldy. And these bottles of wine. Which we filled were new, and behold they be rent, and these are garments in our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey. And the men took their vettels, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord. And Joshua made peace with them and made a league with them and let them live. And the Princess of the congregation swear unto them. And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbors, and that they dwelt among them. And the children of Israel journeyed and came unto their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon. Chopra and Bira, and Kerja Jiram, and the children of Israel smooth, and not because the Princess of the congregation had sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel. And all the congregation murmured against the Princess, but all the Princess said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel. Now therefore we may not touch them.

Now, another little story I'd like to read to you and. Second Kings chapter 6, verse 8 Then the king of Syria warred against Israel and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp. And the man of God sent unto the King of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place, For thither the Syrians are Come, hit her, come down. And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him of, and warned him of, and saved himself there not once nor twice. Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing. And he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not show me which of us is for the king of Israel? And one of his servants said, None, my Lord, O king. But Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the word. That thou speakest in my bed chamber. And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan, and therefore send he to their horses and Chariots, and a great host. And they came by night, and compassed the city about. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early and gone forth, behold. And who compassed the city, both with horses and Chariots, and his? Sent unto him, Harass my master, how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And only she prayed. And said, Lord, I prayed. He opened his eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, a mountain was full of horses and Chariots of fire. Round about Elisha. The 21st verse. And the king of Israel sent unto Elisha when he saw them, My father, shall I smite them? Shall I smite them? And he answered, Thou shalt not smite them. Thou wouldst not smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow. Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master. And he prepared great provision for them, And when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away. And they went to. Their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel. And then just two verses in Second Corinthians chapter 6. 2nd Corinthians chapter 6 in the last two verses. Wherefore come out from among them, and be separate, saith the Lord, And touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Well, as I remark, the reason that I read these scriptures is to speak about separation. Then we can see that it was God's purpose that his people should be a separated people unto Him. And it's very loudly to see the reason why He wanted them to be a separated people. It was because He loved them and because He wanted to bless them. And dear young people, when I speak of separation this afternoon, it isn't because God wants to rob you of something. It's because He wants to give you something. He wants you to know the true source of happiness and joy. Because the Lord Jesus not only died to deliver our souls from hell. When he died because he wants our company and he's going to find the satisfaction of his own heart in a coming day in the company of his redeemed people, I say it will be the satisfaction of his own heart and it will be the satisfaction of ours too. But he wants our whole hearts. He has a right to them. He's done everything that love could do. Love couldn't have done more and would not do less than he has done to win. Heart and mind. But you know, we have a constant enemy, an enemy who knows all the tricks, knows just how to trap us. He may come out against us with, as it were, sword and spear, or He may come with a plot and a plan that we may not recognize, but it's always with an attempt to steal away our hearts so that the Lord wouldn't have our hearts like he should, but that He might turn our hearts away from the one. Who is the true object of our affections? And let us remember this dear young people, the Lord Jesus has never left his first love. It's lovely to see. In addressing the seven churches in Revelation, he begins by speaking to the first one and telling them how he felt it that they had left their first love. But in the last one, he says, as many as I love.

I review Can Chasten and that is he spoke of how they had left their first love in the 1st. Letter and in the last one, after giving us, we might say the history of the church's departure, he says, I still love you. And if I correct you, it's because I love you. It's because I seek your good. It's because I want to Sup with you and you with me. And so he takes his place in revelation in that last church outside the door knocking saying. Now behold, I stand at the door and knock if any man hear my voice, and open the door. I will come into him, and will Sup with him, and he with me. And so I say. This passage that we read in the 7th chapter of Deuteronomy showed the children of Israel the path that God had marked out for them when they came into this grand inheritance, this land flowing with milk and honey. This morning we were talking of the manner of love that has been. Bestowed upon us the place that we have been brought into. And then it's said. The world knoweth us not because it knew Him not. And isn't it just exactly in another, shall I say in another way, what we have here in the 7th of Deuteronomy? The Lord saying how that He was going to bring them into this land, greater and mightier nations than themselves, and they would possess it, and then that they would have that land, and that His love was upon them. And it said. He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself. Even as He is pure, so in Deuteronomy he brings before us that practical side of things. And were they to share their hearts with those who didn't know his love? Oh, it's true. They had to do business with them, and we have to do business with the world. The young people have to go to school. You have to perhaps go further and get further education. But you know, the great trouble is. The danger, the constant danger of forming links. With the world, oh, what a danger that is. And since we have hearts that are quite capable of entering into these arrangements with the world, we have within us a fond nature that can still enjoy the world. The world can never, never come up to the things that we enjoy. They don't possess that kind of life, but we can go down to the things that they enjoy because we do possess their kind of life. We still have that nature. I'm just as capable of settling down and enjoying the things of the world as any other person because I still have the old nature. But

the Spirit of God is constantly bringing before us that we are His, that we have a new power, that we have a new Center for our affections, that we have a different home. And because of this, now there is a practical separation that takes place. Now. This is not a Pharisaical separation. It's a practical separation, I say, because it is founded on our hearts having been won by him. But when he doesn't possess that place in our hearts that is rightfully his, then our affections grow cold and we find that the world has quite a lure. And it has that particularly in youth, because when we're young the way is rather unfried and we think that we. To try everything, to find out we know the old expression of the world. I'll try anything once. But I've often said that was just exactly what Adam said. He was going to try something once. Yes, he tried it once. But when he took of that thing once, it brought in sorrow that lasted the whole of his 930 years. So you see, by trying that once, he suffered for 930 years for trying something. Nothing once. Oh, this is serious, isn't it? And we away from the Lord and our souls, could possibly make a step that would bring sorrow upon us, and what is worse still, perhaps on those who follow us. Abraham made a false step in taking Hagar, and he brought sorrow upon himself. He brought trouble into his family, He brought sorrow unto his nation, and they still haven't had been delivered from the results. Now what Abram did when he took Hagar? And so in our chapter here in the 9th chapter of Joshua, we find something else that happened in the history of Israel. And to me it has a very instructive lesson.

These people who came, these gibeonites, didn't come as enemies. And don't expect the world to come and say we're your enemy. They won't come that way. Probably there will be a few that do. There are a few that show open opposition. Indeed, the first two chapters, the verses of the 9th chapter, show those who showed open opposition, who fought with Israel. Who didn't want them to possess their inheritance but the story that we. Read is not by those who showed open opposition, but by those who tried to form links with the people of God by deceiving them and all. Dear young people, this is the snare today. This is the great danger for us today. And these people heard how that God's people were going forward victoriously. They saw that they were possessing this good land, this land flowing with milk and honey, and that God was with them and fully came to them. And they came. It says they worked wildly, and it says they brought. All sacks upon their ***** wine bottles old and random, bound up, all sheer. This worn out clothes and they presented the story that they had made a long journey and that they had come to make a league with these people because they saw that God was with them. How do you young people, I want to apply this in a very practical way to your life and mine. I want you to see that this is the approach that the world makes. We're living in a time when the world says. While we recognize that we have a God. Much pleasure and joy that things are sort of letting us down. The world that once was a place of joy is really and not what it used to be. They recognize that their bread is kind of moldy. They recognize their wine bottles, their rent, They recognize that their shoes are worn out. And they say, well, we need what the Christians have, but they don't intend to become Christians. They intend to sort of form links. They sort of intend to deceive us into thinking and that Christ in the world can work together. And it never can be. It didn't work here, and it can't be. Be and all dear young people, that is the approach of the world today. And I'm sure that you young people that I'm speaking to today have had young friends at school and college say, well, you've got something that we don't have. And let's go along together. Let's walk together. Because really, the world needs more people like you, and you can have a good influence on us if we just go along together. And all how this sort of flatters us, doesn't it? It makes us realize that we really do have something by being brought up in a Christian home. We have something by being brought up in a home where the Word of God was read, having had the privilege of sitting in the Assembly of God and hearing the truth ministered, I tell you to your young people, it's a wonderful privilege. We don't half appreciate it until we get older. It does have an impact. It has an effect upon our lives, a very real effect. And the world who looks at us recognizes that we do have something that is better than what they have. But they think the two principles have to be mixed. They think the world and that what the Christian has can be mixed. But I want to tell you it can't be mixed. From beginning to end. The Bible shows that there is no. Of that which this world is as a system, and that which the Christian has. As soon as God made the light, then it says he separated the light from the darkness. And constantly through the word of God, over and over again we see God teaching his people that when they were brought to him they were a separated people. The world is looked upon as a system of things that was built up by Cain and his posterity. A system. Certainly it had a religion. Certainly it had scientific progress. Cain was a religious man. Cain believed in the same God that Abel did. Isn't that what they tell you? Well, we all believe in the same God. Let's compare notes. And if we could just get the two together, we have something and you have something, and we can just sort of pool our resources, as they might say.

And so I say, Cain had the same God that Abel had, but he approached him in a different way. Cain approached God by the works of his own hands. Abel approached God as a Sinner. He approached him with the blood of a sacrifice. He recognized that he was not approaching God as one who had any right in his presence of himself. He had by faith learned the true way. And then what about Cain's posterity? Well, in Cain's posterity we see the beginning of the vast world system. One of his posterity was the father of such as dwelling tents and have cattle, the founder of the commercial world. Another one was an instructor in every artificer of glass and iron. Perhaps we could say that he was the scientific world. Another one was the father of all such as handled the harp and the organ. He was the entertainment world. And so you see, Cain had religion, he had commerce, he had the science, he had entertainment. Well, he thought his world was all right that we find out that his world was under the judgment of God. And I don't know whether you ever noticed in reading. But it is remarkable that when you read about Cain's. Posterity. It never says of one of them and he died. Never says of 1 of Cain's posterity and he died. But it does tell you about their accomplishments, and you don't read anything about the accomplishments of the descendants of Seth. Who was the man of faith and of everyone of his posterity, it says. And he died. Why was this? Well, because the others didn't live for anything that came after this life. They lived for this life. Death was out of their their figuring. They didn't count upon it. They they were trying to fix up the world. They wanted to make it. They were the kind of people that are described in Revelation as the earth dwellers that said, this world is a wonderful place. We're going to make the best of it. So that was their place. But what about the posterity of. Where we find that Noah, he was a man who feared God, Enoch walked with God. This was the posterity of faith. We don't read of them accomplishing anything in the world except that Noah builded an ark. Now that wasn't anything for the world system. It was something that was very important to the man of faith. And then it says, and he died. Why? Well, their hopes weren't in this condemned world at all. They were going to leave it. And dear friends, dear young people. The world is a system of things built up from Cain, his posterity and alienation from God. But here we find these people. They came and they made-up this little story that they were ambassadors. And they said, no, please make a treaty with us and we'll live among you. And we realize that our own resources are all spent. And so let's get along together and share what we have. All dear young people, I say again, you know this story as well as I do. You've heard it from the boys and girls at school. Perhaps you have an unsaved boyfriend or an unsaved girlfriend and they say, oh, you have something that I don't have. Tell me about it. I I want a person like you. The world needs people like you. And so they make a great appeal. And after they had lived. Story And they looked over their possessions and examined them. It looked that the story was very good. Surely the story was true. These people must be sincere. They couldn't find a flaw in what they said. And how many a young person has been deceived this way? They said, oh, I couldn't even find a flaw in what he said. He really seemed sincere. She really seems sincere. She really seemed to want what I have. But she didn't accept it, did she? She didn't accept Christ. She didn't want to be

thoroughly like you. And perhaps that person was something like King Agrippa. Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. That's quite different from being. All together. It's a different thing to be almost a Christian from being altogether a Christian. It's a different thing from admiring what the Christian has and having what the true Christian has.

And so these people were deceived. And what was the wrong? Why were they deceived? Was it because they weren't clever man? Oh, no, it was the leaders of the people and even Joshua, and you notice where they came, they actually came to Gilgal. The people were in the right place. That was where God wanted them to be before they went forth to victory. Dear young people, you might be in the right place too. It has been said that Judas knew the place, and you can be in the right place and not be dependent upon the Lord. Many of our dear young people have been in the right place. Thank God for it. Thank God that they had learned what it was to value the truth of God and to be gathered to the precious name of the Lord Jesus. But what was the flaw? What was wrong with these these Israelites that entered into this agreement that made a league with these people the Spirit of God? Just make one comment about it. A very simple comment, but a very. Forceful comment and what is it it says here? In the 14th verse. And the men took of their vettels, and asked not counsel. At the mouth of the Lord there was the whole thing. The whole thing, the story was good, the people were clever. They seemed sincere, everything looked good on the surface, and you say, well, how could they help it? Because anybody would be deceived by something so cleverly done as that. The Lord wasn't deceived. The Lord knew where these people came from, although the Israelites didn't. And if they had asked the Lord, it says they asked not counsel at the Lord. All dear young people, do you ask counsel at the Lord? We had that verse this morning. Sin is lawlessness. I ask you again, and I say to myself, do we ask counsel at the Lord? It says if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who give it to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. Do you think the Lord wants you to miss? Do you think he wanted Israel to get into this Mass? Of course he didn't. He wanted to bless them. He had brought them on eagle's wings to himself. He had said how he loved them and he had set his love upon them, and he's going to bless them abundantly in a coming day. But he didn't want them to get into this situation. But they didn't do the one important thing. They didn't. Ask him. Oh, do you read the word of God and pray? When those situations come up in life and you really find a difficult thing facing you, you ask counsel at the Lord. Do you turn to His Word? What do you say? Well, it looks so good. They seem so sincere, I couldn't doubt them for the world. Or do you instead turn and say, well, I don't know, but the Lord knows, you know, I remember reading a little instance in the life of Mr. Darby that quite struck me. Somebody asked his advice about a matter and he had been misinformed about the matter and so he gave his advice and afterwards he found that he had been misinformed and so the advice he had given was also incorrect. And I was very much struck by what he did. He went to the person that he had given this information to and he said, he said, I, I told you so and so because I had been misinformed. And he said, I'm sorry, but that doesn't excuse me because he said the Lord wasn't misinformed and if I had asked him, he would have given me the right answer. Oh dear young people, I plead with you. Ask counsel at the Lord, never take a step in disobedience to His word, because if you do, it will not only be a dishonor to Him, but it will be to your own loss. Well, what happened now? We haven't time to go into all the details of the story, but after they had made this, it didn't take them long to find out they had made a mistake. Within three days they found out the mistake that they had made.

And many a young person has found out within three days that they made a mistake when they took a step in disobedience, forming perhaps a marriage, entering into some unscriptural association. And after three days they find out they've made a mistake. And then, of course, what do you want to do? Just what they wanted to do. Well, they wanted to get out of this situation. But the Lord wouldn't let them. He said no, you have to put up with it now you've you've taken that step now whatsoever on and so that shall he also reap. And so from those three days forward they had to suffer because they asked not counsel at the Lord. And how long did this situation last? Well, long afterwards in the reign of King Saul. Still, these Gibeonites were among the people of God. Saul. King Saul thought, well, I'll clean up this situation. And so he slaughtered some of these Gibeonites, and God had to deal with his people. O dear young people, I tell you, we can't get away from the reaping that we bring on ourselves. And I'm going to speak a faithful word because of this. These situations. Sometimes exist in our assemblies and we'd like to get this, this cleared up and not cleared up, but it stems back for a few years, perhaps quite a few years, when someone entered into a wrong association, made an unequal yoke, and it was the beginning of something that spread out and fanned out. These gibeonites multiplied and they were thorns in the sides of the people of God. Oh, how true. That verse, none of us liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself. When we take a step, we have to suffer ourselves. But we often are like Jonah. We bring trouble on everybody in the boat with us. Yes, we bring trouble in the whole crowd because of what we did. Oh, what a lesson. But I also want to say something that's nice, and I love that verse in Psalm of Solomon chapter 1, and I want you to notice what it says it says. Withdraw me, we will run after Thee. Notice the change from the singular. Draw me, we will run after thee. One young person drawn after the Lord. One young person who puts Christ first in his life. One young person who wants to follow the Lord and his leading in his life. What a blessing he can be to others. That's the converse of it. Just as harm can be done by a false step if you. Young person set out to please the Lord. Who can tell a blessing that you're going to be in the little meeting where you live? Who can tell the blessing that will be if you seek the Lord's mind and get the right partner and set up a Christian home, what a blessing you may be in that assembly. What your home might mean. That's why it says in the Song of Solomon about rivers of water being dispersed. Abroad in thy streets, that is, Solomon said to his son. You walk in wisdom's. Ways and the blessing will flood into the streets, and blessing flows out when we're obedience obedient, but sorrow when it's otherwise. Then I'll let us notice this other instance here in. Second Kings chapter 6. Here we find an enemy. Who? Invaded the land of Israel. And he said to his servants, In such and such a place shall be my camp. Now one thing that we can say that is very nice about the King of Israel at this time, he didn't trust his own wisdom. He wasn't like the elders of Israel who trusted their own wisdom and asked not counsel at the Lord. But we find the opposite here, a very beautiful case, and that is. That when the king of Syria came in and planned that his camp would be in such and such a place, the man of God sent a message to the king of Israel and he said, don't go there, you'll find your enemy there. Now he could have said just like the Gibeonites. Are like the children of Israel with the Gibeonites. He could have said, well I'm going to go and see, but he didn't. He didn't. And so it tells us in the.

Ninth verse. And a man of God sent unto the King of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place for us. Thither the Syrians are come down, and the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice. Isn't this nice? When he heard the message, he didn't say. Ah, he's just an old man. How does he know? How can he see what's going on? After all, he belongs to another generation. He doesn't all that much. I'm going to find out for myself. But we don't find him acting that way. He listened and he saved himself, not once nor twice. And some of us who by the grace of God. Have been brought to have been brought to perhaps marry a Christian partner and have at least some desire we trust to please the Lord. We saved ourselves once or twice too. We found that the Lord warned us and kept us from snares. We were just as capable of the snares that other people fall into and want delivered us. Not because we were super wise. Not because we were any more intelligent than anybody else. But here was a. Warning given to this man. Not once nor twice. Apparently several times he saved himself from this situation. And so the king of Syria said, well, what's

going on? You can't seem to catch this person at all. Every time I plan that I'm going to make an attack on him, he seems to get out of the situation. How does he do it? And notice. In the 12TH verse. The end of the 11TH verse the king of Syria said, Will you not show me which of us is for the king of Israel? And one of his servants said, None, my Lord, O king, but Elisha the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber. Now they had made this plan, those gibeonites. But the children of Israel didn't know that little plan that was made back in their in their city three days journey away, but the Lord did. But in this case, the king of Syria said, well, how does this man know? Well, the servant said there's a prophet there that's telling the words that you speak in your bedchamber and all. Isn't this lovely? Just to think that we have a God who looks down upon this world who knows everything that's going on. There's not a person that crosses your pathway or mine. There's not a plan that is made to spoil your life and testimony or mine, but the Lord knows all about it. He knows all about it, and if we look to Him and hearken to His advice, we'll save ourselves. Not once nor twice. We'll find that He is a mighty God who loves us and who is able to deliver us. So then the king of Syria thought, well, we must get this man. And so they came and encompassed the city where Elisha was with his servant, the city of Dothan. And when they came and encompassed the city. Why, the servant of the man of God got up in the morning, and he said, Alas, my master, what shall we do? He looked, it looked very difficult. Here was the whole power of the enemy arrayed against the man of God. And dear friends, the whole power of Satan is arrayed against you when you want to please the Lord. Or are you saying, what will I do? Other young people are doing it. It's a different day, Brother Hayhoe. Today you don't understand because you were brought up in a different generation. And perhaps I don't fully understand. I don't think I do. But the Lord does. The Lord does. And he knew what was being said in the bedchamber. And more than this, with all the power of the enemy outside the city of Dothan, the man of God was at peace. Well, he saw the protection that he had. The mountain was full of horses and Chariots of fire round about. God's servant, the one who wanted to please him. And when the young man's open eyes were opened wide, he saw. And he said, Those that are with us are more than those that are with them. And that's the verse that we read in John's epistle. Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.

Oh, dear young person, don't get discouraged. Don't get discouraged. You have a wonderful savior. If you know him as your savior, He cares for you. He protects his own and he wants to be your deliverer. Or you say, does that mean we have to be rough with the world? Well, I think it's very nice what Elisha did after this. He said food before them. He wasn't unkind, but he was firm. He was faithful. And you don't have to be unkind, but you must be faithful if you would deliver yourself. And he was faithful. He fed these people. But he didn't make any league with them and they went back to their own, kind of. And they left them alone. It says they didn't come into their country again. They left them alone. And when you and I seek to act in faithfulness, we'll find that we don't have to leave the world alone. The world wants to leave us alone. They see the one that's for us. They see the protection that we have. The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. So we see two different instances here. Those who were put in a difficult spot and follow their own counsel and advice and got into a difficulty. But here we find another where they're put in a very difficult spot. But they didn't follow their own counsel. They followed the counsel of the Lord. They hearkened to his voice and they were spared not once nor twice. And they were able, as we see Elisha was able to continue. His testimony, what a blessing he was to the people of God. And dear young people, I know that the greatest decisions of your life are made in use, the greatest decisions that are going to affect the whole of the rest of your life. And as I stand here and look into your young faces. If the Lord leaves us here. Nothing would I desire any better than your happiness, but I warn you that if you truly belong to Christ. You can bring plenty of sorrow into your life. You can bring plenty of sorrow into the life of others too. Who you don't want to cause sorrow and why? Just because you don't listen to the counsel of the Lord, oh how plain, how simple His blessed word. Oh, May God grant that each one of us, young and old, in every situation, may look up and say, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And even when it seems difficult to take the step and say no, remember, the little hymn in all is just a little word. And so is why yes, but all the difference they do. Make no one could ever guess what a difference and all and YESO, will you say yes to the Lord? Will you say no to every temptation that would seek to lead you away from him? All those lovely verses I just close with in Second Corinthians chapter 6 when the Lord calls us to come out to Him in separation. Isn't it beautiful what he says? He says and I. There will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. The only place in addressing Christians where the Lord takes that title of the Lord Almighty. It's a name that isn't customary for Christianity. In Christianity we usually read of God as Father. Why does he take his place there and say, I'll be a father unto you, saith? The Lord Almighty. All because I know that some of you young people are saying all my situation is so difficult. This generation is so different. But all remember the one who calls you out to walk in his company, who wants to act. The Father's part has all power. He's still able to fill the mountain with horses and Chariots of fire round about you, and if you by his grace seek to walk in obedience to Him. You'll look back and you'll say, thank God. He delivered me not once nor twice. He wanted to bless me, and He does want to bless you. Dear young people, may the Lord grant that you will hearken to His voice. May grant that you will be preserved from those snares and pitfalls to which our hearts are so prone. Because He loves you. He wants your company forever, but He also wants you to know what it is.

To walk in His company down here in this world and have His blessing upon your life. Could we just sing that little hymn 174? 3.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 7:17-8:4: God's Desire for Blessing (7:17-26)

Deuteronomy 7:17-8:4

The children of Israel were told not to fear the mighty nations that were in Canaan, for the Lord said He would deliver them into their hands, and He assured them that He was, and is, mightier than all the power of the enemy. He told them, however, that He would not drive out their enemies all at once, for they would not be able to possess it all, but "little by little" as they needed it. So it is with us as Christians. We do not learn everything all at once, but as we learn a truth and walk in it, God gives us more. May our prayer be like that of Jabez who said, "Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that Thine hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested" (1 Chronicles 4:10).

As we read these chapters we cannot help but see that the longing desire of the heart of God was for the blessing of His people. He sought to do them good at their latter end, but they refused and rebelled. We see the same longing desire in that blessed One who came to tell out what was in the heart of God, as He wept over Jerusalem when they rejected Him. He would have brought them the promised blessings, had they received Him, but now, though rejected and cast out, He has accomplished that mighty work on Calvary whereby all God's promises will

yet be made good in a future day. He took Israel's place (Isaiah 49:3) beginning their history, as it were, over again, coming out of Egypt (Matthew 2:15), triumphing over all the wiles of the enemy in the wilderness as the perfect obedient and dependent Man, and then bearing the curse of a broken law for them at the cross. He has now opened the way whereby God can righteously bless them, though they have forfeited every claim to it in themselves. Such is man, whether Jew or Gentile!

Now to notice our chapter more particularly. We find the Lord reminding the people of the wilderness journey and its lessons of how they were humbled and proved by it. They found out what was really in their stubborn hearts, though they had not realized it before. And don't we learn, too, how stubborn and rebellious our poor hearts are, by what we pass through day by day in this world? Peter is an example of this. He never thought he would deny his Lord, but when put to the test he did. Boys and girls, and even we who are older too, sometimes do not realize how bad our hearts really are, and then when exposed to temptation we see what they will do, for God would teach us all the need of dependence on Him for strength, each step of the way. Undoubtedly each one of us has to admit we have done things in life we never thought we would do; but if we really believed what God says about our hearts (Jeremiah 17:9), we would not be surprised at anything we might do. Instead of trusting self, we would feel how very weak we are, and ask the Lord to keep us (Psalm 16:1).

But there is a bright side to this wilderness journey. The children of Israel not only learned in it what they were, but they also learned what God is, as the One who can meet every need of His people. He fed them and even kept their clothing from wearing out. For forty years their clothes never got old, nor did their feet swell in the long tramps over wilderness sands.

Further Meditations

1. What lessons were the people reminded of from the wilderness journey?
2. A little baby depends on its mother for food, shelter, warmth, love, in fact, everything. As teens or adults do we depend less on the Lord? How does Luke 4 hint at an answer?
3. Answers to Prayer by G. Muller is filled with faith-stirring descriptions of complete dependence on God. It would no doubt help to build your faith in the dependable One.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 6:9-7:16: Blessings Earthly and Spiritual (6:9-25)

Deuteronomy 6:9-7:16

The children of Israel were also to write the Word of God upon their gates. The gates are figurative in Scripture of the place where we meet the world, such as in business and other contacts. This instruction to the Israelites would have a message for us to be careful in these things. How often a Christian's testimony has been marred by some questionable business deal or some long-unpaid debt. In all our business dealings we should be thoroughly upright, saying what we mean and meaning what we say. Our word should be as good as our bond. Even children can learn this uprightness when very young, and strict truthfulness is the first lesson needed.

At this point the children of Israel were told of the good things that awaited them in Canaan, and that when they came in and possessed them they should not forget that it was the Lord who gave these blessings to them. How easily any of us forget the Lord when we have plenty of good things, though in reality it is then that we should be most thankful to Him. Israel's enjoyment, and continuance in the good land the Lord gave them, was made dependent upon their obedience. For us salvation is secure through Christ's finished work, but even now our enjoyment of our blessings is dependent upon obedience.

The parents in Israel were to be prepared to explain to their children all about what God had done for them, and the meaning of His commandments. Oh that each Christian parent were prepared to do this today, and, as it says here, to tell our children these things, realizing that it is for our own good, as well as theirs.

The Lord told the children of Israel that when they came into the land they were not to make any covenants or agreements with the people dwelling there, but to utterly destroy them. Nor were they to make any marriages with them, for they would then be led astray by the idolatrous wife or husband, who had no heart for the true God of Israel. Surely all this is a warning for us, who are so prone to make compromises with the world, and for Christian young people who contemplate marriage.

The Lord reminded His people that He did not set His love upon them because they were a great or mighty people, for they were exceedingly few in number, but it was just His sovereign choice in love. Just as a husband is jealous of his wife's affections, so the Lord is of His people. A husband may fail to prove himself worthy of his wife's confident love, but the Lord, who told Israel He was their Husband (Isaiah 54:5), is always worthy. He has never failed in faithfulness to them.

We notice here that Israel's promised blessings for obedience were all earthly blessings in their homes, fields, and flocks, as well as freedom from sickness. It is important to see that this is altogether different from the Christian's blessings, for we are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ," (Ephesians 1:3). It is, of course, true that God cares for our needs as we pass through this world, but prosperity and the increase of earthly possessions are not always signs of the Lord's blessing with a Christian, as it was with an Israelite. Nor are we promised healing for our bodies today, for though God is able, and His power has not changed, He does not manifest it in the same way now. Nevertheless let us turn to the Lord first in every time of need.

Further Meditations

1. How were the children of Israel to deal with the people already dwelling in the land?

2. What is the difference between the Lord's blessings and His mercies? What are some of the things we are guaranteed are ours forever in Christ?

3. If you've been meditating on God's blessings for the Christian you will likely enjoy *Seven Present Blessings Through the Death of Christ* by H. H. Snell.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 6:1-8: Walking in the Word (6:1-8)

Deuteronomy 6:1-8

God foreknew that the children of Israel could not get blessing through keeping the law, but now, since the Lord Jesus has borne its curse, He would have us enter into the full liberty of Christian position. We who are saved are not under law, but under grace—blessed deliverance! We now have a new life from God, through new birth, and this life, which is the very life of Christ, delights in obedience (Romans 7:22). The Lord Jesus said to His own, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). But here God demanded that the people love Him with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their might — a thing they could not do unless they were born again. How impossible for the natural man to get blessing under law, but how lovely to be delivered from the principle of law altogether, and to know God revealed in Christ as "the God of all grace," (1 Peter 5:10). We do, however, learn in these chapters that the path of obedience is always the path of blessing; only, as we have remarked, we need new birth to have the power to obey — or the heart to delight in it.

The Israelites were specially charged to have these words in their own hearts, and to teach them diligently to their children. Our children know where our hearts are, for they see where we really find our enjoyment, and so the example comes first, before our teaching. This is most important. We notice, too, that this teaching was not to be only one day a week, or in a place of meeting, but when sitting at home, when walking on the road or street, at bedtime, and in the morning. Don't we often neglect this as parents, and fail to show our children that the Word of God not only tells us the way of salvation, but that it should govern our whole pathway, at home, at school, at work, and in everything we do?

Again the practical side of things is brought before us here, for the children of Israel were reminded, not only to teach the Word of God, but to walk in it. It was to be bound to their hands, so that they would not do anything contrary to it. It was to be as frontlets between their eyes, so that they would not look at things which God had forbidden. How careful we have to be about the pictures we have in our homes, as well as the magazines and other publications that come in, for too often these things put bad ideas into our minds, and our children's, too — to say nothing of television and the movies with all of their demoralizing effects.

The Word of God was also to be written on the posts of the Israelite's home. Using this passage, some have put texts outside their homes for others to see, and one can rejoice at their faithfulness in this. At least it is nice to have Scripture texts hanging on our walls for our own encouragement, and also so that others coming in can see them. However I think the important lesson for us is that we are to be known in the community as those who walk according to the Word. Even children can learn to play as Christians, always being fair in what they do, and considerate of others. The Bible says "be courteous," (1 Peter 3:8), and yet sometimes this Christian grace is forgotten. Let us learn to speak to our friends about the Lord and not mix freely with those who do not want to hear of Him. Boys and girls who want to please the Lord have to be very careful who they have for companions—certainly it should not be those who use bad language or say wicked things.

Further Meditations

1. What are some of the practical instructions given to Israel to help them walk in the Word of God?
2. What are some practical ways that people in the community can know that we love the Lord Jesus? How can it be done with both words and actions?
3. One way of presenting truth to the world around is to spread the gospel. The Great Commission by C. H. Mackintosh is a real encouragement to any evangelist.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 4:10-5:33: A New and Undivided Heart (4:10-49)

Deuteronomy 4:10-5:33

The children of Israel are here reminded of how, when God spoke to them at Mount Sinai, they did not see Him at all — only the fire, clouds and darkness, and therefore they must not make any similitude of Him to worship. The one true God who had spoken to them was not to be represented by works of men's hands, nor were they to worship the sun, moon or stars — not anyone, or anything, but Him. God is a jealous God, and they were to have no other gods beside Him. He warned the children of Israel that if they went after other gods to worship them, He would soon have to drive them out of the wonderful land He was giving them. Then they would have their idols elsewhere, and suffer the sad results of their choice.

Nevertheless the Lord told them that even in the land of their captivity and scattering, if they turned to Him with all their heart, He would hear them. How gracious the Lord is! Even if it takes trouble to make us turn to Him, He will hear and bless when we do. As to Israel, He will never forget the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all will be fulfilled on the ground of sovereign grace in a future day. Israel, as well as the Gentiles, can only come into blessing on this one ground — sovereign grace! The Lord reminded His people here that they were the objects of His special favor, and that He had not done for any other nation on the face of the earth what He had done for them. Yes, Israel

are God's earthly people, and He tells them here that He chose them because He loved them — what a touching appeal! Many years later, in a time of their rebellion too, He reminded them that He loved them "with an everlasting love" (Jeremiah 31:3). What a day it will be for that nation when they have a new heart, capable of entering into and responding to that love!

When speaking of Israel's place as God's earthly people, it is interesting to contrast the "better thing" of Hebrews 11:40, which is ours. We, the Church, have been brought into a nearer place than Israel, for we are members of the body of Christ and will have the nearest place possible to Him as His bride for all eternity. What an appeal this should have to our hearts!

God told Moses that he was to appoint three cities of refuge on the wilderness side of Jordan for the man-slayer. We have already spoken of the meaning of this in previous papers, but will remark here that for us, Christ is the true "City of Refuge" from coming judgment. Reader, are you safe in Him?

In the fifth chapter we find the law — the ten commandments — repeated, for it was upon the ground of obedience to this that the people had entered into a covenant with God. Even when it was given, they were afraid, as Moses reminds them here, and did not want to hear the voice of God again. They failed utterly in keeping it too, and yet how strange to find many in Christendom today who still put themselves under law, and enter into a similar covenant to get blessing on that ground, although God has solemnly declared that "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (Romans 3:20). Israel's trial under law only proved that there was no good in man, and when they finally rejected and crucified Christ, the trial was over. Christ then bore the curse of the broken law in order forever to deliver from it those who trust in Him.

Further Meditations

1. What reason did God give for choosing Israel as His earthly people?
2. God's faithfulness to His promises is essential to the blessing of His people. In addition to this portion in Deuteronomy where else in God's Word is that principle shown?
3. A very refreshing little booklet on the subject of God's faithfulness and delight to bless can be found in J. G. Bellett's booklet *God Exceeds His Promises*.

Los Angeles Conference: 1980, Hands of Love (3:3)

Address—G.H. Hayhoe

Deuteronomy chapter 3 and verse 3. Deuteronomy 33 and verse 3. Yeah, he loved the people. All his Saints are in thy hand, and they sat down at thy feet. Everyone shall receive of thy words. I'd like to look at some passages this afternoon that speak about those hands. You know, as we start another year, I'm sure that every one of us feel that we don't know what is ahead, but we do know that there are those hands of love. We do know that He cares for us. And that is so encouraging to our hearts to know that the One who loved us and gave himself for us not only cares for us, but would have us to know that those hands of love. Are upon us and that we are in his hands. There's another verse that's very comforting in this same book of Deuteronomy. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. There are times when all of us feel down, but we can never feel so low that those arms of love are not underneath us, bearing us up, that we cannot rejoice in these very words that we read here. Could we ask? This because those people had been so faithful all through those 40 years of wilderness journey. Oh, certainly not. We only have to read that 40 years of history of murmuring and complaining and failure and realize that it's just like ourselves. So much of that murmuring, so much of that complaining, so much of that failure. But does it not encourage your heart and mind to know that these words are spoken at? The end of their journey, just before they entered the Promised Land. Not at the beginning. As we were commenting the other night. If John 3:16 was the first verse in the Bible, it would be easy to understand. But when it's after 4000 years of man's history, it's certainly the more wonderful because it hadn't in any way changed the heart of God. Indeed, we find through the Scripture that the assurances of God's love. Are given at a time when we could have expected at the very least here it was at the end of the wilderness journey that it says yeah, he loved the people. And then again when we read in Jeremiah at the time when they had failed so grievously that they must be in the governmental ways of God carried off into captivity. And yet that beautiful 30. 3rd chapter of Jeremiah says yeah, I have loved. Thee with an everlasting love. Therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee. I say, that was just on the verge of the time that they were about to be carried away. Had it changed His love toward them? No, His is an everlasting love. Then again we come to the New Testament, and we find the disciples. After we think of their pathway with the Lord Jesus failing to enter into what was in his heart just about to forsake him and flee. And yet we read in that 13th of John having loved his own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end. And then too, if we might step back into the Old Testament again in Malachi, at that time when there was so much failure among his people that you only have to. Read that book of Malachi to be saddened by the things that were going on, and yet it opens with these words. The burden of the word of the Lord by Malachi. I have loved you, saith the Lord. And then at the very last of the churches, Laodicea, where there was coldness and indifference, again, it says, as many as I loved, I rebuke and chasten. And so God would have us to enter into and lay hold of that love, not to encourage us to go on careless of his claims and of himself, but rather. To draw our hearts back for His word says He restoreth my soul. And how lovely it would be if there was in our hearts this afternoon a fresh sense of His love that would draw us back to have a greater desire to live, to please Him. Aren't these words precious? All His Saints are in thy hand. Not some of them, not the faithful ones only, but all His Saints are in thy hand, and so those hands. Love are holding everyone here who knows him as Lord and Savior. And then it says they sat down at thy feet. Oh, how lovely to sit down at his feet to begin this year, just to have time to sit down for an hour and think about himself. Think about those hands that are about us, that are caring for us, sometimes perhaps correcting us, but always in love. And so it says they.

Down at thy feet everyone shall receive of thy words, and I trust that'll be true this afternoon, that each one of us will receive of His words. If the speaker is forgotten, that won't matter. But if by His grace you will receive of His words, then those words will truly sustain you, because

it's His word. The word of man will never really sustain us in difficulty. About his words. Oh how lovely. When they lay hold of our hearts and our consciences, as the 16 Psalm says, the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places. Yeah, I have a goodly heritage. Have often said wherever and whenever the word of God comes home to our souls in power, it turns the place into a pleasant place. Whether it's the burning fiery furnace like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, or whether it's inside. Prison with Paul and Silas, or whether it's in the ordinary trials of life. How wonderful when that word comes home to us and the Lord makes Himself precious to our hearts. Well, I just like, as I said, to look at a few scriptures that bring before us something about those hands. I certainly realize that I can't turn to all the scriptures that speak of it because they're so abundant all through the Word of God. That's. That we sang My times are in thy hand. It was just a circumstance in David's life. Well, let us turn then, first of all to John chapter 10. John chapter 10 and verse 27. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My father which gave them me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my father are one. Well, surely we could say that this is the starting point. If we're going to know anything about those hands, we must first of all know that we have salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, that we have security through Him. The heart will never be at rest until we have the sense in our souls and that we have security in Him. Of course, it's all based upon His finished work. It's nothing that we have done or could do. Because it's all that he took our place, that he bore the judgment, and that he satisfied God's holy claims, that the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. That is the ground of it all. But it's our theme this afternoon to speak about those hands and know how lovely this is. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them. You know those who don't know the Lord Jesus, they don't hear that voice. To them it's only the voice of a stranger. But just like the sheep, when there are many sheep at the side of the well, the sheep doesn't know all the different voices of the different shepherds, I don't suppose. But there's one voice that the sheep knows, and that is the voice of their of its own shepherd. And so God makes himself known to the soul through his word. And isn't that a blessed thing? That many of us. This afternoon I hope all of us can say, oh, I've heard that loving voice. I have heard that voice speaking to me. I've rested upon Christ for my salvation. Others might say, well, how do you know? Oh, but I say, how do I know The sun is shining? I can't see it, but I can see the results of it here. And if you're close to what you can feel, it's warm. And so you and I know it. God has made himself known to us through. Word, He has revealed himself to our souls. He has made himself known as the one who is our Savior. And here He wants us to know how secure we are. I give unto them eternal life. Oh how marvelous a life that can enter into and enjoy all that's in the heart of God for every saved person in this room this afternoon.

Already possesses a life that is able to enter into. And enjoy fellowship with God. You and I will not have a different new life when we get to heaven. We already possess the life that is suited to heaven. That's why heaven will be home to us. Brethren. When we get there, we'll immediately feel well. I'm just in the atmosphere of the life that I possess now. I can relax now. I don't have to be on guard anymore because I'm right in the atmosphere where my life will find its fullest expression and enjoyment. That's heaven to the believer. Oh how wonderful. Then I give unto them eternal life as the Lord Jesus said, and this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. I say again, that we might know him. A little hymn says our God, whom we have known, well known in Jesus love. It's a, it's a God who has been made known, so we have eternal life. And it says, And they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. So here we have the hand that gives security. Oh, how precious this is to the simplest believer. Someone has said, Oh, but you could pluck yourself out of his hand. Well, but the rest of the verse still holds, It says, And they shall never perish. Now, of course, I don't believe for one moment that any of us could pluck ourselves. Out of his hand because He's the one who holds on to us. We're not told to hold on to Christ. He holds on to us. But even if it were possible, as some people suggest, why? How wonderful. God hasn't just left one part to secure us, but he has given two parts. In this verse He says they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. So I say to anyone who has listened to this argument. And even if you could pluck yourself out, you still could never perish. The other part of the verse still holds good. God wants us to have this knowledge. I say this is the grand starting point of our Christian life. He wants us to know that we have been brought into favor in the beloved, as the apostle could say, and I always enjoy the end of the 8th of Romans. It says it begins in the singular. I am persuaded that neither death nor life. Nor angels and our principalities and our powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate me. Does he say no, shall be able to separate us? Now usually in English we don't change from the singular to the plural in a sentence. But here the Spirit of God changes from the singular to the plural in the sentence. Why does he do this? Oh, Paul said. I am persuaded. But if others are not persuaded? It's still true. If they belong to Christ, it's still true, So he says. I'm persuaded. But nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Oh, how delight, how it delights the heart of God to have us enjoy this security. And then he adds to it. My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. And I and my father are one. So here we have the two hands, the hand of the father and the hand of the son, and both securing us like the little boy, his father put some money in his hand. And he said, now if you can get that out of my hand, you can have it. And so the boy tried, you know, and he pulled up this finger and that finger. And as soon as he got the second one up, the other one snapped down. And he tried for quite a while he couldn't get. Out of his father's hand. And so then his father put the other one on top of it. And he says, now try. Oh, he said, if I couldn't get it out of one, I'll never get it out of two. Dad and dear friends, isn't this wonderful? God wants us to have this blessed security, this assurance. And if there's anyone here that Satan has been able to get you doubting, May God grant that this very afternoon the place that grace has brought you into. May fill your heart and fill your soul. God wants us to enjoy these things as the grand starting point of our Christian life. He wants us to know that we belong to Him. We often sing I am His and He is mine, forever and forever. So He would have us to know this. And I trust that each one here can say thank God. I know that He has made me secure.

In Christ. Because of what Christ has done, because of that finished work on Calvary's cross, now I'd like to turn to another passage in Isaiah chapter 41. Isaiah chapter 41. Verse 10 Fear thou not, for I am with thee. Be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee. Yeah, I will help thee. Yeah, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Isn't this lovely? In this verse, it's not so much the thought of salvation, although certainly this is true. But I believe the thought in this. Is particularly what we have brought before us help and strength for our pathway, and surely we need that, because just as we could not save ourselves, we're not able to take one step alone. Our little opening hymn said. Our times are in thy hand, Father, we wish them there. And don't we feel the need of this as we go on in our Christian life? Those hands that are holding us, they are there to help. US, and as we need help and we find the need of it so much, and indeed God encourages us to walk in that way. Dependence is what properly characterizes the Christian. In fact, it has been said that prayer is the expression of dependence and confidence in God. Dependence because we are dependent creatures. Our very life and breath is in our His hand. And so we need to realize that we are constantly dependent upon him. We don't want to be like Peter, who thought that he had enough. Strength himself to be faithful to his Lord. He boasted that he would not deny his Lord. And perhaps some of us can think of how there were things that we thought we would not do, but how we found how very weak we were. We can't keep ourselves. But oh, how often when there's been a

time when we have felt just at wits end corner as it were, and some earthly friend puts his hand on his shoulder, on our shoulder and says, I'm praying for you. I just like to encourage you. Doesn't that human hand do a great deal to help us, but always infinitely more when the hand that our many sins had pierced puts his hand, so to speak, upon us. And says, fear thou not, I am with thee, be not dismayed, for I am thy God. Oh, what a hand, brethren, to be placed upon us. And as we begin another year, just to feel that in these situations that we are going to have to face if the Lord leaves us here through this year, that there is that hand of love that is placed upon us, that hand that never, never is. Turn against us. Sometimes earthly friends get discouraged because we don't always appreciate their the things that they they don't always appreciate, rather the things that we do and say. And in the end we might lose their friendship. But not so with this one. As I brought before you at the beginning, the times that he assured of his people of their love was at times when perhaps it could have least been expected. And yet he assured them that his heart had not changed. So if there's anyone here and you feel utterly dismayed, listen to these words. I am thy God. I will strengthen thee. I will. Yeah, I will help thee. Yeah. I will uphold thee. How will he do it? With the right hand. The right hand in Scripture always suggests the hand of power. And so that hand placed upon us is to give us the help. And. Strengths that we need. We were just reading this morning about the children of Israel when they left the land of Egypt. It tells us that everyone was to have a staff in his hand and we were speaking about. The the staff and what it really means, how that its support. Sometimes you expect an older person who feels a little uncertain on his feet to have a cane, to have a staff in his hand. But God didn't make any particular stipulation when they were leaving Egypt. He didn't say if there's anybody that's feeble and old, he better get a staff because it's quite a journey.

No, this command was given to all the people and so we're talking to those this afternoon. Who are young and those who are old? Have you got a staff? Have I got a staff? Are we facing this year in confidence in ourselves that we can handle the situations that are going to arise? I hope not, but I hope we will be. Like the children of Israel when they left the land of Egypt, Each one, young and old, was to have a staff in his hand. And the scripture says, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. But oh, isn't this lovely, The right hand of. Righteousness, God is so perfectly settled the whole question of our sins at Calvary that it can be the right hand of his righteousness, not of ours because we often fail, but his and in that confidence we can look up. And so I say before I go on, if if there are any of us that feel that there is some particular situation pressing upon you, some decision you have to make and you're just as it were. Throwing up your hands and saying, I don't know what to do. May this word speak to your heart, These wonderful words. Yeah, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness To know that he is there to uphold us. The dearest friend that we possibly can have. The friend who's ever true, the one who died for us at Calvary. The right hand of his righteousness to uphold us, to help us. And strengthen us. Now let's turn to another one in the Psalms in Psalm 139. Psalm 139. Perhaps we should begin at the seventh verse. Further shall I go from thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in hell or Hades, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. I'm sure many of us are well acquainted with this 139 sum. Perhaps we could put a heading over it. The Lord knows all about us. He knows our thoughts. He saw us before we were ever born. He watched us the very formation of our bodies. Why, He knows every physical weakness that we have. Because it says here in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. Isn't it wonderful there's not a doctor on Earth that fully understands everything about our physical makeup individually, because every one of us are so different? But isn't this wonderful? There's one who does, who knows all about us. And you say, but nobody knows what I'm thinking about. He does. It says He understands our thoughts afar off. He understands us perfectly. Then, brethren, he knows all about us. Inside and out if I can. The expression, there's not a thing about us that he doesn't know. Our physical makeup, our emotional makeup, just everything about us. He knows fully, and it's so nice here. We can't get away from His presence. It doesn't matter where we go. There's no place whether it's up in the heavens, whether it's here upon the earth and the uttermost part of the sea, even in death, for that's what is referred to in regard to Hades. No place could we go. That we get away. Away from his presence. His presence is always there watching us. And then it says in this tenth verse, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. And it seems to me the particular thought in this verse is the Lord leading us. Sometimes a person will perhaps come to you and they'll have a little problem and they'll ask you for some advice. Well, sometimes. Sometimes we give poor advice because we don't fully understand their situation. We don't fully enter into their makeup and all about them. We haven't sat where they sat. We don't know all about everything. But isn't it lovely that in this Psalm where the Lord says I know all about you, there isn't a thing about you that I don't fully know and fully enter into?

And now the psalmist says that's the kind of a leader I have. That's the one who leads me, as we have in that passage, and I believe it's the 11TH of Isaiah. His name shall be called wonderful counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. What A1 to give us counsel, what A1 to lead us. And so there may be some decision that is pressing upon someone here and you say I don't know just what to say. Wasn't it good to come to someone that knows all about you perfectly, one who knows the very inmost thoughts of your heart that you perhaps are almost afraid to tell to anybody else? And yet the Lord knows all these. And after telling us all these wonderful things, then it says even there, wherever we could go, it didn't matter where it would be. Sometimes people like to get away from a situation. They say, well, if I could just get away from here, I would get. Get away from the situation, he says. But you don't get away from the Lord. He follows you wherever you go. And actually, we don't get away from the situation if the Lord has put us in it. It's usually best just to face up and seek His help and His guidance in it. Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. Oh, I think this is so lovely. Here's those hands that are upon us, assuring us of salvation. Holding us securely so that we cannot be lost. Here are those hands that when we feel weak and helpless in situations that are there to help us and strengthen us, and then that hand that's placed upon us and says, just take my hand and I'll lead you along. Sometimes when people give us directions, why we don't just thoroughly understand the directions and we can make a mistake. We don't. To the place exactly because we didn't thoroughly understand. But if that person was taking us by the hand and leading us, how could we make a mistake then? Oh, isn't this beautiful, brethren? This hand, this hand that was pierced for us at Calvary is the one who wants to say to us that he leads us and he holds us. And another verse says. That when we turn to the right hand or to the left. Thou shalt hear a voice behind thee saying, this is the way. Walk ye in it. When ye turn to the right hand or to the left. When you've turned to the right hand or to the left. That is, the Lord is so close, He ought to go before. But you know, sometimes we run ahead of Him, don't we? We get out ahead of Him, so He should be leading us, but He comes behind us. I remember Brother Hart told a story about. Many years ago up in Canada, he wanted to go a certain way through the Bush country and there was a guide that offered to take him. And after he had been over the path a few times, he, he thought he knew it. And so he said to the guide, it's all right, I can find my own way. But you know, this guy had usually gone with him and brought him through these paths in the forest. But this time, he tried it out on his own. And he came to a certain place. The first one or two turns he seemed to know, but he said, then I began to feel I was going down a road that nothing looked familiar, a path I should say. He felt quite insecure. And he thought, well, the best thing I can do is to shout out, I'm lost. So he put up his hands to his mouth and shouted out, I'm lost. And just almost right away he got the return from. Indian, I'm coming, he said. How did you come to be so

close? Oh, he said, I was just afraid you might miss your way, so I stayed close by. You didn't see me, but I was close by. Isn't that lovely? That's the kind of a savior we have too. He says, Thou shalt hear a voice behind thee saying this is the way. Have you ever heard it? I guess we all have. We got ahead of the Lord. And then there seemed to be that voice saying, you've gone ahead. Of me, but here I am, and so here this one wants to be our leader. Even there thy hand shall lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. And they must turn now to Psalm 32. Well, perhaps you could begin at the first verse. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord, unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me. My moisture is turned into the draught of summer. Sealoth I acknowledge my sin.

Unto thee and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgave us the iniquity of my sin. Selah. For this shall everyone that is godly pray unto thee, in a time when thou mayest be found surely in the floods of great waters, they shall not come nigh unto him thou art my hiding place, thou wilt preserve me from trouble, Thou wilt. Encompass me about with songs of Deliverance. Well, perhaps I could suggest. Looking at this verse as the Lord having to deal with us when we have got away from Him, you know we can become very willful. And even in a home where often the father and mother delights to put their hand of love upon the child and show their affection and love to their child in a very warm and feeling way, there are times when that hand is placed upon the child in a little different way. The hand has to be. Placed upon the child in the way of correction, in the way of punishment. And you know the Lord sometimes has to do this with us too. It says, if ye be without chastisement, for of all our partakers, then are ye ***** and not sons. God will not allow us to go on without correction if we are truly His and those same hands of love that want to lead us, and that want to show us the way and help. Help us and sustain us. Sometimes that hand has to be placed upon us in the way of correction. And here the psalmist seemed to feel that. He said day and night thy hand was heavy upon me, and perhaps there's someone here and you've got away from the Lord and certain things have come into your life. And in the secret of your own heart you're saying, I'm afraid the Lord is showing me that I'm going in a path of self will. And his hand is upon me to correct me, to show me that he's displeased with the way that I'm walking. Well, it's in love. Mr. Darby once said. The worst of all chastisement is that God should leave us to our own ways. That's a chastisement in itself. Any parent who loves their child will chasten them betimes. And you know, for the Lord to leave us and go our own way would be the worst kind of. But He does love us, and He loves us too much, brethren, to let us go our own way without correction. He has to put His hand upon us, and sometimes it has to be heavy, as it says here. Day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me. My moisture is turned into the drought of summer. In other words, I don't feel young and full of energy again. There's there's something. The Lord's hand is upon me. Well, what was the result? As that hand was placed upon him, The same hand, I say, that was pierced at Calvary, The same hand that always holds us secure. Now it is placed upon us because God would teach us. He would correct us as a father. And a father's hand will never 'cause His. Child, a needless tear. There's something, there's a needs be. And So what is the result with the Psalmist? Isn't this lovely? He said, I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid? I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgave us the iniquity of my sin. I might say that there are different ways in which forgiveness is looked at in the Scripture. Every believer is judicially forgiven, and that is before God. He is looked upon as a forgiven Sinner, fit for the glory made white in the precious blood of Christ. But in God's dealings with us in the family, there is such a thing as governmental forgiveness. And so it's very important that we realize that if we are going on. With something in our lives that we know is dishonouring and displeasing to the Lord, that that hand is placed upon us in love May, and we do what it tells us here. Come and just tell the Lord about it. Oh, don't go on that way. And especially perhaps our thoughts run along these lines as a new year begins. And you know, I don't think there's anything more tormenting than for a Christian to go on with.

Bad conscience with something on his conscience that he refuses to judge, and that he goes on willfully. May put on a pretense in front of other people, but you know there's no use putting on a pretense to the Lord, because He sees us through and through. He knows all about us. Thou hast set my secret sins in the light of Thy countenance. And if there's anything that is not right in your life or mine, let us remember that this hand is placed upon. Us for a purpose. And so he says, I acknowledged my sin unto thee. And the Scripture says if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Not only to just look upon it lightly, but I believe the verse goes deeper than that, to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. I believe it means that we get down to the very root of the failure. What is it that caused us to do these things where we walk away from the Lord? Where are we walking carelessly in our lives? Because one thing leads to another. Big weeds don't suddenly appear in our gardens. They start as little weeds that we didn't pull out, and then they become bigger and bigger until they choke out the garden. And so it is. We need to get to the root of the thing. Why did we allow this thing? Perhaps it was something that we started off. And thought, oh, that's just a little thing, but they grow into great things. And so here he says, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord. And thou forgave us the iniquity of my sin. I believe this brings before us the the nature that's behind it that we have allowed for in the cleansing in the 19th chapter of Numbers. There was not only the ashes of the heifer, but there was the cedar wood. And the scarlet and the hyssop. And we usually find that when there's failure in our lives, it's something of that character. Maybe thought we thought we were somebody important, like the great Cedars. Maybe we were trying to show off like the scarlet. Or maybe we were discouraged like the hyssop. And this is at the root of our troubles. Very often we need to get to the root. Peter's denial of the Lord was because he was like the cedar. He thought he was better than the rest of the disciples. And there's usually something. And so we need to get, I say to the root of it, Thou forgave us the iniquity of my sin. And then it says here in the seventh verse, Thou art my hiding place, thou shalt preserve me from trouble, thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Oh, how happy this is, the restored soul. Just like Naomi when she returned from the land of Moab, ** *** said, I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty. But when did she come back? The beginning of barley harvest, and then she was there for the wheat harvest. Then she was brought into the enjoyment of a wonderful relationship with Boaz. But this was after she returned. And so if the Lord is speaking to any one of us here this afternoon, if that hand is upon us in the way of correction, may we profit for His glory because it's in love. And now let's turn to the next one I'd like to look at is in the Song of Solomon. Solomon, Song of Solomon. In chapter 2. Verse 6. His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me. Isn't this lovely? Now we can see a position of relaxation, and that's what the Lord wants us to do. He wants us to enter into all the thoughts of His love and of His grace toward us. And this brings us into being able to relax in His presence. You know when we get home to glory, that is going to be what? We're going to enjoy to the very full. We're going to be able to relax and enjoy all that's in his heart. But isn't it lovely when there isn't something special to be said? We all know what it is when there is real and deep love. A person may put his arms around you and not say a single word, but it's just an expression of love. And isn't this beautiful here?

There are times as I say. When we need to be strengthened, there are times we need to be LED, there are times when we need to be corrected, but there are times, brethren, when He just wants us to rest in His love. He just wants us. Someone has said a friend is someone that you can walk with or talk with for 1/2 an hour walk with or I should say sit down with for 1/2 an hour and nothing is said and yet you both

feel benefited. Each other's presence. And you know, I think this is so lovely now that we can just relax in his presence. I think that's what he wants us to do when we come on Lord's Day morning to remember him and his death. Just to sit there, not to be thinking about the problems of life, not to be thinking about other things, he says if a man examine himself. Let a man examine himself and so let him eat. It doesn't mean that we're doing that while we're sitting at his table, but it's that we come there, everything being settled between our souls and the Lord, how we come there to be relaxed, just to sit there and enjoy His presence and to enjoy His love, you know, and a happy relationship in marriage. How often it's true 2 can just sit down together and you know, they just enjoy one another's company. Enjoy one another's love. The Lord wants us to enter into something of this. He wants us just to walk with Him and talk with Him along the pathway of life as our dearest friend with a sense of the little hymn puts at arms of mercy. Now surround me favors these, nor few, nor small, all that we might enjoy more of this. As I say, not always looking up and making requests. Not always. Coming to the Lord with problems. But sometimes just talking to the Lord as to our dearest friend, having fellowship with Him, because the word fellowship means common thoughts. It just means that we can enter into His thoughts and share what is in His heart, and read a precious verse and just think of His love toward us and of the place that grace has brought us into. Then there's another one in that 31st Psalm. It's the one that we sang in our opening hymn. Psalm 31. I just like to go back because there's a context to this, I think. Go back to the 30th Psalm. It says in the sixth verse. And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy favor thou hast made my mountain to stand strong. Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled. I cried unto thee. To thee, O Lord, and unto the Lord, I made my supplication. Now the 14th verse of the 31st Psalm. But I trust. In thee, O Lord, I said, thou art my God. My times are in thy hand. Deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me. Make thy face to shine upon thy servant. Save me for thy mercy's sake. In this 30th Psalm, we see that there was a danger of just sort of relaxing in a enjoyment of present prosperity. You know, that's the way it was with Job. Job was very wealthy, he had a nice family, things seemed to come his way and he even went as far as to say I thought I would die in my nest. You know, we can get like that. Brethren, There is such a thing as we were just saying about relaxing and enjoying his love, but there is such a thing as another kind of relaxation and that is we sort of think that everything is now pretty favorable. Our job is secure, a lot of things to. Be thankful for about our family. The assembly is going on happily and we kind of just relax and in our prosperity, so to speak, we say everything's settled now. I think everything's sort of secure for me. I think I'm over the hump now and it says thou didst hide thy face and I was troubled and these times the Lord allows when things just seem to be going on well. And I know that many have experienced this. He just everything. Seemed to be so nice and then all of a sudden things went wrong and it just seemed like a storm of trouble and he says.

Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled. It just seemed that something came in as though the Lord were hiding His face and we were troubled. But what was He trying to teach us, Brethren? I believe He was trying to teach us just what we have in this 31st Psalm and the 14th and 15th verses. But I trusted in Thee. It's easy to trust in Him when everything goes well. Even Satan said about Job. Well, no. Wonder he feels happy and secure because everything comes his way, but just take away those things. Ah, now Job had to learn to trust the Lord even when things were very adverse, when he lost his family, when he lost his possessions, when he lost everything that seemed to make life worthwhile to him, when he lost all those of them to be able to trust in the Lord. That was the test. But this is what brings out these. Words from the Psalmist. My times are in thy hand, and I don't believe that we'll ever really have peace in our souls. Until we come to that point in our souls when we are content to say, My times are in Thy hand, as we sang in our hymn. Our times are in Thy hand, Father, We wish them there. And again, our times are in Thy hand, pleasing or painful, dark or bright, as best may seem to Thee. O brethren, this speaks to my own heart. Because when we have good health and when. We have so many things to be thankful for and we do in this land have many things to be thankful for. And yet we can just sort of rest on our oars and sort of enjoy the blessings and forget the blessing. But here what he's bringing before us is that even when the Lord seems, as it were, to hide his face when trouble comes, when difficulties arise, what is He teaching us to trust Him just as much on the stormy waters? As on the smooth to trust him just as much because he is allowing both. He sets one over against the other. He allows the trials, he sends the blessings, but it's all in love. And so what a note of triumph, it seems to me, when the psalmist could say, after an experience like this, he said, I, I thank the Lord in my prosperity. He said, Lord, by thy favor thou hast made my mountain to stand strong. He didn't forget the Lord, but he rested on the blessings. Now in all these are taken. Away, and he is troubled, and now he has come to the point where he can say, But I trusted in thee. I said, Thou art my God. My times are in thy hand. O brethren, I say this for myself as well as for you. Are we content to say that when the things come in life that are hard to understand and life is so full of hard questions, do we just look up and repeat those words with the psalmist? My times. In thy hand do we add those words as a little song, Father, we wish them there. Oh friends, that's peace, that's blessing. That's truly what God is teaching us, because He not only. He not only sends those times when things go well, but He also sends those adversities. And it may not be in the way of correcting us like we were noticing a few moments ago. It may be just that He wants us to enjoy the blessing and not just to rest in the blessings. O May God grant that we will realize the force of these words. Then my times are in thy hand. And now, just before I close, I'd like to turn. One more passage in John chapter 20. Verse 19. Then the same day, at evening being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord, Then said Jesus to them. Peace be unto you as my Father hath sent me. Even so, send I you. Isn't this a lovely climax to it all? Here we have the Lord standing in the midst of His own faith is here changed to sight, as it were. They actually see Him. And we're going to see Him another day, brethren. We're going to see those marks in His hands and feet and side. We're going to rejoice when we see Him as the One who has accomplished that mighty work for us and now has us at home in fullest blessing in His presence.

Oh, what a future is ahead of us. But here he stands in their midst. And it says, then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord? Can we apply this practically, that as we gather around Him on Lord's Day morning, Oh, how precious to see Him in our midst. Truly, it does make our hearts glad, doesn't it? The disciples hearts were glad when they saw the Lord, and our hearts are glad in the meeting and the measure in which we see Him. But I just wanted to close with this little Commission that the Lord gave to the disciples. Then said Jesus to them, peace be unto you. As my Father has sent me, Even so, send I you. We've been talking a lot about the things that we can enjoy, those arms of love that hold us, that surround us, that guide us, that care for us. But all brethren, we're left here in this world to be, for him to be. Not only for His glory, but also to be a blessing to others. Of course, it is for His glory that we should be a blessing for others, but I believe it's important that we should realize this. And now from this happy meeting place where the Lord showed them his hands and his side, those wonderful hands that we've been talking about, and their hearts are full of gladness. Now He says, I am sending you out into what kind of a world was he sending them a. Style world, a world that didn't want him, but he sent them out. And what a what a wonderful expression this is. As my father has sent me, so have I sent you. So the Lord Jesus had been sent into this world by his Father in love to tell what was in his Father's heart. He knew what was in that the bosom of the Father. He came down as the little hymn says, he came to earth to make it known, brethren. We

have such a privilege. Are we seeking to be a blessing to others in the measure in which we enjoy His love and have proved those hands of love and have been made glad by them? Have we realized that now we're sent into this world, sent to speak to those who don't know Him, sent to encourage one another in the Lord? And I'm sure that if each one of us had been present at that occasion when the Lord stood there in the mids. And said, And peace be unto you. And showed them his hands and his side. If we had been there, wouldn't our hearts have been thrilled? And then when we heard him say, As my father has sent me, Even so send thy you. Wouldn't our hearts have thrilled that we had such a privilege that he was going away, and that now we could seek to represent him? Sent by him back into this world, taken out of it, and sent back into it as his messengers, oh May God. That we may realize this privilege, we may feel those hands upon us all the time, we may realize that our times are in His hand and go forth to this world to be able to tell them something of what we have known and what we have enjoyed. Paul said I believed, and therefore have I spoken. May these things be made real to our hearts, and then as we speak of them to others, they will be for. To them too.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 3:21-4:9: Keeping God's Word (3:21-29)

Deuteronomy 3:21-4:9

When the children of Israel had conquered these nations, with their walled cities and gates and bars (and many of the men were giants too), then the nations across the Jordan in Canaan were afraid, for no matter what great boasts men may make of their power, there is always a fear and trembling underneath it all. God told the children of Israel not to fear their enemies, for it was He who was giving them the victory. When we are walking to please God, the world is far more afraid of us than we ever need to be of them. Let us always fear God, but not men! "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe."

At this time Moses requested that he might go over and see the goodly land of Canaan which God had promised to His people, but God would not allow him to do so because of his failure in losing his patience with the people at Meribah. It is a serious thing to lose one's patience with the people of God, no matter how much they try us. They are God's people and He loves them. Moses was told, however, to encourage and strengthen the hands of Joshua who was to be used of the Lord to lead the people into the land, and this he did. It is sweet to find one who has come under the government of God for failure, not smarting under it, but submitting, and still seeking to encourage others in the path. This was truly an evidence of the grace of God in Moses' heart.

Once again the Lord reminded the people of the need of full obedience to Him and His Word. Moses told them that they were not to add to the Word God had commanded, nor to take away from it, for God had already shown His solemn judgment upon those who did so. Of course we know that this is law and not grace, but a similar message is given in Revelation 22:18-19, warning of the solemnity of adding to or taking away from God's Word. I do not believe any real Christian would do this, but if we fail to obey it, or add our own thoughts to it, are we not doing much the same thing? This is very searching, is it not? And so here, the children of Israel were told to keep and do the commandments of God. He also told them that this would be their wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations around, and it is indeed our wisdom to walk in obedience to the Word of God too. Even a child who walks in simple, unquestioning obedience to the Word of God is kept. He need not learn about all the evil things in the world in order to escape them, but by reading his Bible and just doing what God has said, he will be preserved.

How foolish the "prudence" of unbelief, for what is sweeter and more simple than to know that an all-wise Father, who loves us perfectly, has not left us to take one step according to our own wisdom. He who loved us enough to give His blessed Son to die in our guilty stead has not only provided for our eternal salvation through His shed blood, but has graciously marked out the pathway too.

God warned them of the different ways by which they might lose the Word which He had given them. They might add to it, or take from it, or they might willfully fail to walk in it. Then, too, they might forget it, or perhaps lose heart-interest in it. Moreover if they did not fail in these things themselves, they might neglect to teach them to their children and grandchildren. Alas how often this has been done!

Further Meditations

1. Why was Moses not allowed to enter the land of Canaan?
2. How do we escape the evil that is around us in the world?
3. Simple daily obedience is part of the secret to a happy Christian life. You can find more on the subject in The Secret to a Happy Fruitful Christian Life: Part 1 by B. Anstey.

Los Angeles Conference: 1980, The Lord's Hands for His Own (33:3)

Address—G.H. Hayhoe

I'd like to turn first of all to Deuteronomy chapter 33, Deuteronomy chapter 3, and verse 3. Deuteronomy 33 and verse 3. Yeah, he loved the people. All his Saints are in thy hand, and they sat down at thy feet. Everyone shall receive of thy words. I'd like to look at some passages this afternoon that speak about those hands. You know, as we start another year, I'm sure that every one of us feel that we don't know what is ahead, but we do know that there are those hands of love. We do know that He cares for us. And that is so encouraging to our hearts to know that the One who loved us and gave himself for us not only cares for us, but would have us to know that those hands of love. Are upon us and that we are in his hands. There's another verse that's very comforting in this same book of Deuteronomy. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. There are times when all of us feel down, but we can never feel so low that those arms of love are not

underneath us, bearing us up, that we cannot rejoice in these very words that we read here. Could we ask? Is this because those people have been so faithful all through those 40 years of wilderness journey? Oh, certainly not. We only have to read that 40 years of history of murmuring and complaining and failure and realize that it's just like ourselves. So much of that murmuring, so much of that complaining, so much of that failure. But does it not encourage your heart and mind to know that these words are spoken? At the end of their journey, just before they entered the promised land. Not at the beginning. As we were commenting the other night, if John 3:16 was the first verse in the Bible, it would be easy to understand. But when it's after 4000 years of man's history, it's certainly the more wonderful because it hadn't in any way changed the heart of God. Indeed, we find through the Scripture that the assurances of God's love are given at a time when we could have expected at the very least here it was at the end of the wilderness journey that it says, yeah, he loved the people. And then again when we read in Jeremiah at the time when they had failed so grievously that they must be in the governmental ways of God, carried off into captivity. And yet that beautiful. The 33rd chapter of Jeremiah says, yeah, I have loved thee with an everlasting love. Therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee. I say that was just on the verge of the time that they were about to be carried away. Had it changed his love toward them? No, His is an everlasting love. Then again we come to the New Testament and we find that the disciples. After we think of their pathway with the Lord Jesus failing to enter into what was in his heart just about to forsake him and flee. And yet we read in that 13th of John having loved his own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end. And then too, if we might step back into the Old Testament again in Malachi, at that time when there was so much failure among his people that you only have to. Read that book of Malachi to be saddened by the things that were going on, and yet it opens with these words. The burden of the word of the Lord by Malachi. I have loved you, saith the Lord. And then at the very last of the churches, Laodicea, where there was coldness and indifference, again, it says, as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. And so God would have us to enter into and lay hold of that love, not to encourage us to go on careless of his claims and of himself, but rather. To draw our hearts back for His word says He restoreth my soul. And how lovely it would be if there was in our hearts this afternoon a fresh sense of His love that would draw us back to have a greater desire to live, to please Him. Aren't these words precious? All His Saints are in thy hand. Not some of them, not the faithful ones only, but all His Saints are in thy hand, and so those hands. Love are holding everyone here who knows Him as Lord and Savior. And then it says they sat down at thy feet. Oh, how lovely to sit down at his feet to begin this year, just to have time to sit down for an hour and think about himself. Think about those hands that are about us, that are caring for us, sometimes perhaps correcting us, but always in love. And so it says they sat.

Down at thy feet everyone shall receive of thy words, and I trust that will be true this afternoon, that each one of us will receive of His words. If the speaker is forgotten, that won't matter. But if by His grace you will receive of His words, then those words will truly sustain you, because it's His word. The word of man will never really sustain us in difficulty. About his words. Oh how lovely when they. Lay hold of our hearts and our consciences. As the 16 Psalm says. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places. Yay. I have a goodly heritage, have often said. Wherever and whenever the Word of God comes home to our souls in power, it turns the place into a pleasant place. Whether it's the burning fiery furnace like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, or whether it's inside the prison. Paul and Silas, or whether it's in the ordinary trials of life, how wonderful when that word comes home to us and the Lord makes himself precious to our hearts. What I just like, as I said, to look at a few scriptures that bring before us something about those hands. I certainly realize that I can't turn to all the scriptures that speak of it because they're so abundant all through the Word of God. That's him that we send. Times are in thy hand. It was just a circumstance in David's life. Well, let us turn then, first of all to John chapter 10, John chapter 10, and verse 27. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand, my father. Which gave them me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my father's hand. I and my father are one. Well, surely we could say that this is the starting point. If we're going to know anything about those hands, we must first of all. Know that we have salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, that we have security through Him. The heart will never be at rest until we have the sense in our souls and that we have security in Him. Of course, it's all based upon His finished work. It's nothing that we have done or could do, because it's all that He took our place, that He bore the judgment, and that He satisfied God's holy. That the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. That is the ground of it all. But it's our theme this afternoon to speak about those hands. And oh, how lovely this is. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them. Now those who don't know the Lord Jesus, they don't hear that voice. To them it's only the voice of a stranger. But just like the sheep, when there are many sheep at the side of the well. The sheep doesn't know all the different voices of the different shepherds, I don't suppose. But there's one voice that the sheep knows, and that is the voice of their, of its own shepherd. And so God makes himself known to the soul through his word. And isn't that a blessed thing? And that many of us this afternoon, I hope all of us can say, oh, I've heard that loving voice. I have heard that voice speaking to me. I've rested upon Christ for my salvation. Others might say, well, how do you? You know, oh, but I say, how do I know the sun is shining? I can't see it, but I can see the results of it here. And if you're close to it, you can feel it's warm. And so you and I know it. God has made himself known to us through his word. He has revealed himself to our souls. He has made himself known as the one who is our Savior. And here he wants us to know. How secure we are, I give unto them eternal life. Oh how marvelous a life that can enter into and enjoy all that's in the heart of God. For every saved person in this room this afternoon already possesses a life that is able to enter into and enjoy fellowship with God. You and I will not have a different new life when we get to heaven. We already possess the life that is suited to heaven. That's why heaven will be home to us, brethren, when we get there, we'll immediately.

That they feel why I'm just in the atmosphere of the life that I possess. Now. I can relax now. I don't have to be on guard anymore because I'm right in the atmosphere where my life will find its fullest expression and enjoyment. That's heaven to the believer. Oh how wonderful. And I give unto them eternal life as the Lord Jesus said, and this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ. Whom thou hast sent. I say again, that we might know him. A little hymn says our God, whom we have known, well known in Jesus love. It's a it's a God who has been made known, so we have eternal life. And it says, And they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. So here we have the hand that gives security. Oh, how precious this is to the simplest believer. Someone has said, Oh, but you could pluck yourself out of his hand. Well, but the rest of the verse still holds, It says, and they shall never perish. Now, of course, I don't believe for one moment that any of us could pluck ourselves out of. Hand, because he's the one who holds on to us. We're not told to hold on to Christ, He holds on to us. But even if it were possible, as some people suggest, why? How wonderful. God hasn't just left one part to secure us, but He has given two parts. In this verse He says they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. So I say to anyone who has listened to this argument. Even if you could pluck yourself out, you still could never perish. The other part of the verse still holds good. God wants us to have this knowledge. I say this is the grand starting point of our Christian life. He wants us to know that we have been brought into favor in the beloved. As the apostle could say, and I always enjoy the end of the 8th of Romans. It says it begins in the singular. I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor. Our principalities and our powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate me. Does He say no? Shall be able to separate us? Now usually in English we don't

change from the singular to the plural in a sentence. But here the Spirit of God changes from the singular to the plural in the sentence. Why does he do this? Oh, Paul said. I am persuaded by the father's are not persuaded. It's still true. If they belong to Christ, it's still true, So he says. I'm persuaded. But nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Oh, how delight, how it delights the heart of God to have us enjoy this security. And then he adds to it. My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. And I and my father are one. So here we have the two hands, the hand of the father and the hand of the son, and both securing us like the little boy, his father put some money in his hand. And he said, now if you can get that out of my hand, you can have it. And so the boy tried, you know, and he pulled up this finger and that finger. And as soon as he got the second one up, the other one snapped down. And he tried for quite a while he couldn't get. Out of his father's hand. And so then his father put the other one on top of it. And he says, now try. Oh, he said, if I couldn't get it out of one, I'll never get it out of two. Dad and dear friends, isn't this wonderful? God wants us to have this blessed security, this assurance. And if there's anyone here that Satan has been able to get you doubting, May God grant that this very afternoon the place that grace has brought you into. May fill your heart and fill your soul. God wants us to enjoy these things as the grand starting point of our Christian life. He wants us to know that we belong to Him. As we often sing. I am His and He is mine, forever and forever. So He would have us to know this. And I trust that each one here can say thank God. I know that He has made me secure.

In Christ, because of what Christ has done, because of that finished work on Calvary's cross, Now I'd like to turn to another passage in Isaiah chapter 41. Isaiah chapter 41, verse 10. Fear thou not, for I am with thee. Be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee. Yay, I will help thee. Yay, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Isn't this lovely? In this verse? It's not so much the thought of salvation, although certainly this is true. But I believe the thought in this verse is particularly what we have brought before us, health and strength for our pathway. And surely we need that, because just as we could not save ourselves, we're not able to take one step alone, our little opening hymn said. Our times are in my hand, Father, We wish them there. And what we feel the need of this as we go on in our Christian life. Those hands that are holding us, they are there to help us and as we need help and we find the need of it so much, and indeed God encourages us to walk in that way. Dependence is what properly characterizes the Christian. In fact, it has been said that prayer is the expression of dependence and confidence in God. Dependence, because we are dependent creatures are very life. Breath is in our his hand, and so we need to realize that we are constantly dependent upon Him. We don't want to be like Peter who thought that he had enough strength himself to be faithful to his Lord. He boasted that he would not deny his Lord. And perhaps some of us can think of how there were things that we thought we would not do, but how we found how very weak we. We can't keep ourselves but oh, how often when there's been a time when we have felt just at which end corner, as it were, and some earthly friend puts his hand on his shoulder, on our shoulder and says, I'm praying for you. I just like to encourage you. Doesn't that human hand do a great deal to help us? But always in the infinitely more. When the hand that our many sins had pierced puts his hand. So to speak upon us and says, fear thou not, I am with thee. Be not dismayed, for I am thy God. Oh, what a hand, brethren, to be placed upon us. And as we begin another year, just to feel that in these situations that we are going to have to face if the Lord leaves us here through this year, that there is that hand of love that is placed upon us, that hand that. Never, never is going to turn against us. Sometimes earthly friends get discouraged because we don't always appreciate their the things that they they don't always appreciate, rather the things that we do and say, and in the end we might lose their friendship. But not so with this one. As I brought before you at the beginning, the times that he assured of his people of their love was at times when perhaps it could have. Been expected, and yet he assured them that his heart had not changed. So if there's anyone here and you feel utterly dismayed, listen to these words. I am thy God. I will strengthen thee. I will. Yeah. I will help thee. Yeah. I will uphold thee. How will he do it? With the right hand. The right hand in Scripture always suggests the hand of power. And so that hand placed upon us is to give us the health and the strength that we need. We were just reading this morning about the children. Israel, when they left the land of Egypt, it tells us that everyone was to have a staff in his hand and we were speaking about. The, the staff and what it really means, how that its support. Sometimes you expect an older person who feels a little uncertain on his feet to have a cane, to have a staff in his hand. But God didn't make any particular stipulation when they were leaving Egypt. He didn't say if there's anybody that's feeble and old, he better get a staff because it's quite a journey. No, this command was given to all the people. And so we're talking to those.

Afternoon Who are young and those who are old? Have you got a staff? Have I got a staff? Are we facing this year in confidence in ourselves that we can handle the situations that are going to arise? I hope not, but I hope we will be. Like the children of Israel when they left the land of Egypt, Each one, young and old, was to have a staff in his hand. And the Scripture says, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. But oh, isn't this lovely, the right hand of my righteousness. God is so perfectly settled the whole question of our sins at Calvary that it can be the right hand of his righteousness, not of ours because we often fail, but his and in that confidence we can look up and so I say before I go on, if there are any of us that feel that there is some particular situation pressing upon you, some decision you have to make and you're just as it were throwing up your. Hands and saying, I don't know what to do. May this word speak to your heart, these wonderful words. Yeah, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. To know that he is there to uphold us. The dearest friend that we possibly can have. The friend who's ever true, the one who died for us at Calvary, the right hand of his righteousness. To uphold us, to help us and strengthen. Now let's turn to another one in the Psalms, in Psalm 139, Psalm 139. Perhaps we should begin at the seventh verse. Further shall I go from thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in hell or Hades, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. I'm sure many of us are well acquainted with this 139 sum. Perhaps we could put a heading over it. The Lord knows all about us. He knows our thoughts. He saw us before we were ever born. He watched us the very formation of our bodies. Why, He knows every physical weakness that we have. Because it says here in my book, all my members were written which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. Isn't it? Wonderful. There's not a doctor on earth that fully understands everything about our physical makeup individually, because every one of us are so different. But isn't this wonderful? There is one who does, who knows all about us. And you say, but nobody knows what I'm thinking about. He does. It says. He understands our thoughts afar off. He understands us perfectly. Then, brethren, he knows all about us. Inside and out if I can use the expression. And there's not a thing about us that he doesn't know. Our physical makeup, our emotional makeup, just everything about us He knows fully. And it's so nice here. We can't get away from his presence. It doesn't matter where we go. There's no place whether it's up in the heavens, whether it's here upon the earth and the uttermost part of the sea, even in death. For that's what is referred to in regard to Hades. No place could we go that we get away from. His presence, His presence is always there watching us. And then it says in this tenth verse, even there shall I hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. And it seems to me the particular thought in this verse is the Lord leading us. Sometimes a person will perhaps come to you and they'll have a little problem and they'll ask you for some advice. Well, sometimes we give poor advice. Because we don't fully understand their

situation, we don't fully enter into their makeup and all about them. We haven't sat where they sat. We don't know all about everything. But isn't it lovely that in this Psalm where the Lord says I know all about you, there isn't a thing about you that I don't fully know and fully enter into? And now the psalmist says that's the kind of a leader I have. That's the.

One who leads me as we have in that passage, and I believe it's the 11TH of Isaiah, His name shall be called wonderful counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. What A1 to give us counsel, what A1 to lead us. And so there may be some decision that is pressing upon someone here and you say I don't know just what to say. Wasn't it good to come to someone? One that knows all about you perfectly, one who knows the very inmost thoughts of your heart that you perhaps are almost afraid to tell to anybody else. And yet the Lord knows all these. And after telling us all these wonderful things, then it says even there, wherever we could go, it didn't matter where it would be. Sometimes people like to get away from a situation. They say, well, if I could just get away from here, I would get away from the situation. Says But you don't get away from the Lord. He follows you wherever you go. And actually we don't get away from the situation if the Lord has put us in it. It's usually best just to face up and seek His help and His guidance in it. Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. Oh, I think this is so lovely. Here's those hands that are upon us, assuring us of salvation, holding us securely. So that we cannot be lost here are those hands that when we feel weak and helpless in situations that are there to help us and strengthen us, and then that hand that's placed upon us and says, just take my hand and I'll lead you along. Sometimes when people give us directions, why we don't just thoroughly understand the directions and we can make a mistake. We don't get to the place exactly because. We didn't thoroughly understand, but if that person was taking us by the hand and leading us, how could we make a mistake then? Oh, isn't this beautiful, brethren? This hand, this hand that was pierced for us at Calvary is the one who wants to say to us that He leads us and He holds us in. Another verse says that when we turn to the right hand or to the left, thou shalt hear a voice behind. Find thee saying, this is the way, walk ye in it. When ye turn to the right hand or to the left, when you've turned to the right, the right hand or to the left. That is, the Lord is so close, He ought to go before. But you know, sometimes we run ahead of Him, don't we? We get out ahead of Him, so He should be leading us, but He comes behind us. I remember Brother Hart told a story about many years ago up in Canada. He wanted to go a certain way through the Bush country and there was a guide that offered to take him. And after he had been over the path a few times, he, he thought he knew it. And so he said to the guide, it's all right, I can find my own way. And after he had been over the path a few times, he he thought he knew it. And so he said to the guy, it's all right, I can find my own way. But you know this guy. Had usually gone with him and brought him through these paths in the forest, but this time he tried it out on his own and he came to a certain place. The first one or two turns he seemed to know, but he said, then I began to feel I was going down a road that nothing looked familiar, a path I should say. He felt quite insecure and he thought, well, the best thing I can do is to shout out I'm lost. So he put up his hands to his mouth and shouted out. I'm lost. And just almost right away, he got the return from this Indian. I'm coming, he said. How did you come to be so close? Oh, he said, I was just afraid you might miss your way, so I stayed close by. You didn't see me, but I was close by. Isn't that lovely? That's the kind of a savior we have too. He says. Thou shalt hear a voice behind thee saying, this is the way. Have you ever heard it? I guess we all have. We got. Head of the Lord. And then there seemed to be that voice saying, You've gone ahead of me, but here I am. And so here this one wants to be our leader. Even there thy hand shall lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. And then let's turn now to Psalm 32. Well, perhaps he could begin at the first verse. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord, unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me. My moisture is turned into the drought of summer.

Selah. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgave us the iniquity of my sin. Selah. For this shall everyone that is godly pray unto thee, in a time when thou mayest be found surely in the floods of great waters, they shall not come nigh unto him. Thou art my hiding place, Thou. Preserve me from trouble, thou wilt compass me about with psalms of deliverance. Well, perhaps I could suggest. Looking at this verse as the Lord having to deal with us when we have got away from Him, you know we can become very willful. And even in a home where often the father and mother delights to put their hand of love upon the child and show their affection and love to their child in a very warm and feeling way, there are times when that hand is placed upon the child in a little different way. The hand has to be placed upon the child in the way of correction, in the way of punishment. And you know the Lord sometimes has to do this with us too. It says if he be without chastisement were of all our partakers, then are you ***** and not sons. God will not allow us to go on without correction if we are truly His and those same hands of love that want to lead us and that want to show us the way. And help us and sustain us. Sometimes those that hand has to be placed upon us in the way of correction. And here the psalmist seemed to feel that he said day and night thy hand was heavy upon me and perhaps there's someone here you've got away from the Lord and certain things have come into your life and in the secret of your own heart you're saying, I'm afraid the Lord is showing me that I'm going in a path of. Self will, and his hand is upon me to correct me, to show me that he's displeased with the way that I'm walking. Well, it's in love. Mr. Darby once said the worst of all chastisement is that God should leave us to our own ways. That's a chastisement in itself. Any parent who loves their child will chase them betimes. And you know, for the Lord to leave us and go our own way would be the worst. Kind of chastisement, but he does love us, and he loves us too much, brethren, to let us go our own way without correction. He has to put His hand upon us, and sometimes it has to be heavy, as it says here. Day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me. My moisture is turned into the drought of summer. In other words, I don't feel young and full of energy again. There's there's something, the Lord's hand is upon me. Well, what was the result as that hand was placed upon him, The same hand, I say, that was pierced at Calvary, The same hand that always holds us secure. Now it is placed upon us because God would teach us. He would correct us as a Father. And a father's hand will never 'cause his child a needless tears. There's something, there's a needs be, and So what is the result with the Psalmist? Isn't this lovely? He said, I acknowledged my sin unto thee and mine iniquity have I not hid? I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgave us the iniquity of my sin. I might say that there are different ways in which forgiveness is looked at in the Scripture. Every believer is judicially forgiven, and that is before God. He is looked upon as a forgiven Sinner, fit for the glory made white in the precious blood of Christ. But in God's dealings with us in the family, there is such a thing as governmental forgiveness. And so it's very important that we realize that if we are going on with some. In our lives that we know is dishonouring and displeasing to the Lord. Now that that hand is placed upon us in love, may we do what it tells us here. Come and just tell the Lord about it. Oh, don't go on that way. And especially perhaps our thoughts run along these lines as a new year begins. And you know, I don't think there's anything more tormenting than for a Christian to go on with a bad.

Conscience with something on his conscience that he refuses to judge and that he goes on willfully, may put on a pretense in front of other people, but you know there's no use putting on a pretense to the Lord because He sees us through and through. He knows all about us. Thou set my secret sins in the light of thy countenance. And if there's anything that is not right in your life or mine, let us remember that this hand

is placed upon us for. Purpose And so he says, I acknowledged my sin unto thee. And the Scripture says if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Not only to just to look upon it lightly, but I believe the verse goes deeper than that, to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. I believe it means that we get down to the very root of the failure. What is it that? Us to do these things were we walking away from the Lord? Where are we walking carelessly in our lives because one thing leads to another. Big weeds don't suddenly appear in our gardens. They start as little weeds that we didn't pull out and then they become bigger and bigger until they choke out the garden. And so it is we need to get to the root of the thing. Why did we allow this thing? Perhaps it was something that we started off and thought oh. That's just a little thing, but they grow into great things. And so here he says, I will confess my transgressions under the Lord, and thou forgave us the iniquity of my sin. I believe this brings before us the the nature that's behind it that we have allowed for in the cleansing in the 19th chapter of Numbers. There was not only the ashes of the heifer, but there was the cedar wood and the scarlet and the history. And we usually find that when there's failure in our lives, it's something of that character. Maybe thought we thought we were somebody important, like the great Cedars. Maybe we were trying to show off like the scarlet. Or maybe we were discouraged like the hyssop. And this is at the root of our troubles. Very often we need to get to the root. Peter's denial of the Lord was because he was like the cedar. He thought he was better than the rest of the disciples. And there's usually something. And so we need to. Yet I say to the root of it, Thou forgave us the iniquity of my sin. And then it says here in the seventh verse, Thou art my hiding place, thou shalt preserve me from trouble, thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Oh, how happy this is, the restored soul. Just like Naomi when she returned from the land of Moab, ** *** said, I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty. But when did she come back in? Beginning of barley harvest, and then she was there for the wheat harvest. Then she was brought into the enjoyment of a wonderful relationship with Boaz. But this was after she returned. And so if the Lord is speaking to any one of us here this afternoon, if that hand is upon us in the way of correction, may we profit for His glory because it's in love. And now let's turn to the next one I'd like to look at is in the Song of Solomon, the Song of Solomon chapter 2, verse 6. His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me. Isn't this lovely? Now we can see a position of relaxation. And that's what the Lord wants us to do. He wants us to enter into all the thoughts of His love and of His grace toward us. And this brings us. Us into being able to relax in His presence. You know when we get home to glory, that is going to be what we're going to enjoy to the very full. We're going to be able to relax and enjoy all that's in His heart. But isn't it lovely when there isn't something special to be said? We all know what it is. When there is real and deep love, a person may put his arms around you. And not say a single word, but it's just an expression of love. And isn't this beautiful here?

There are times, as I say, when we need to be strengthened. There are times when we need to be LED, there are times when we need to be corrected. But there are times, brethren, when He just wants us to rest in His love. He just wants us. Someone has said a friend is someone that you can walk with or talk with for 1/2 an hour. Walk with or I should say sit down with for 1/2 an hour and nothing is said and yet you both feel benefited by each other's presence. And you know, I think this is so lovely that we can just relax in His presence. I think that's what He wants us to do when we come on Lord's Day morning, to remember him in his death, just to sit there not to be. Thinking about the problems of life, not to be thinking about other things. Things he says if a man examine himself, that a man examine himself and so let him eat. It doesn't mean that we're doing that while we're sitting at his table, but it's that we come there, everything being settled between our souls and the Lord, how we come there to be relaxed just to sit there and enjoy his presence and to enjoy his love, you know, and a happy relationship in marriage. How often it's true 2 can just sit down together. And you know, they just enjoy one another's company, enjoy one another's love. The Lord wants us to enter into something of this. He wants us just to walk with him and talk with him along the pathway of life as our dearest friend with a sense of the little hymn puts at harms of mercy. Now surround me favors these nor few nor small all that we might enjoy more of this. As I say, not always looking up and making requests. Not always coming to the Lord with problems, but sometimes just talking to the Lord as to our dearest friend, having fellowship with Him. Because the word fellowship means common thoughts. It just means that we can enter into His thoughts and share what is in His heart and read a precious verse and just think of His love toward us and of the place that grace has brought us into. Then there's another one in that 31st Psalm. It's the one that we sang in our opening hymn, Psalm 31. I just like to go back because there's a context to this, I think. Go back to the 30th Psalm. It says in the sixth verse. And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy favor thou hast made my mountain to stand strong. Thou didst tide thy face, and I was troubled. I cried unto thee. To thee, O Lord, and unto the Lord, I made my supplication. Now the 14th verse of the 31st Psalm. But I. Trusted in thee, O Lord, I said that thou art my God. My times are in my hand. Deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me. May thy face to shine upon my servant. Save me for Thy mercy's sake. In this 30th Psalm, we see that there was a danger of just sort of relaxing in a enjoyment of present prosperity. You know, that's the way it was with Job. Job was very wealthy, He had a nice family. Things seemed to come his way and he even went as far as to say I thought I would die in my nest. You know, we can get like that. Brethren, There is such a thing as we were just saying about relaxing and enjoying His love, but there is such a thing as another kind of relaxation and that is you sort of think that everything is now pretty favorable. Our job is secure, a lot of things to be. Thankful for about our family, the assembly is going on happily and we kind of just relax and in our prosperity, so to speak, we say everything's settled now. I think everything's sort of secure for me. I think I'm over the hump now and it says thou didst tied thy face and I was troubled and these times the Lord allows when things just seem to be going on well and I know that many have experienced this. He just everything seems. To be so nice and then all of a sudden things went wrong and just seemed like a storm of trouble and he says. Thou didst tide thy face, and I was troubled. It just seemed that something came in as though the Lord were hiding His face and we were troubled. But what was He trying to teach us? Brethren? I believe He was trying to teach us just what we have in this 31st Psalm and the 14th and 15th verses. But I trusted in Thee. It's easy to trust in Him when everything goes well. Even Satan said about Job.

Wonder he feels happy and secure because everything comes his way, but just take away those things. Oh, now Joel had to learn to trust the Lord even when things were very adverse. When he lost his family, when he lost his possessions, when he lost everything that seemed to make life worthwhile to him, when he lost all those of them to be able to trust in the Lord. That was the test. But this is what brings out these. Words from the Psalmist. My times are in my hand, and I don't believe that we'll ever really have peace in our souls until we come to that point in our souls when we are content to say my times are in my hand as we sang in our hymn. Our times are in my hand, Father, We wish them there. And again, our times are in my hand, pleasing or painful, dark or bright as best may seem. Today. Oh, and brethren, this speaks to my own heart, because when we have good health and when we have so many things to be thankful for, and we do in this land have many things to be thankful for. And yet we can just sort of rest on our oars and sort of enjoy the blessings and forget the blessing. But here what he's bringing before us is that even when the Lord seems, as it were, to hide his face when trouble comes. When difficulties arise, what is he teaching us? To trust him just as much on the stormy waters as on the smooth? To trust Him just as much because he is allowing both. He sets one over against the other. He allows the trials, He sends the blessings. But it's all in love. And So what a note of triumph, it seems to

me, when the psalmist could say after an experience like this. He said, I, I thank the Lord, the Lord. In my prosperity, he said, Lord, by thy favor thou hast made my mountain to stand strong. He didn't forget the Lord, but he rested on the blessings now, and all these are taken away, and he is troubled. And now he has come to the point where he can say, But I trusted in thee. I said, Thou art my God. My times are in my hand. O brethren, I say this for myself as well as for you. Are we content to say that? When the things come in love. That are hard to understand and life is so full of hard questions. Do we just look up and repeat those words with the psalmist. My times are in my hand. Do we add those words a little song Father, we wish them there Oh friends, that's peace, that's blessing. That's truly what God is teaching us because he not only. He not only sends those times when things go well, but he also sends those adversities. And it may not be in the way of correcting us like we were noticing a few moments ago. It may be just that He wants us to enjoy the blessing and not just to rest in the blessings. Oh, May God grant that we will realize the force of these words then. My times are in thy hand. And now, just before I close, I'd like to turn to one more passage in John. Chapter 20. Verse 19. Then the same day, at evening being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them, Peace be unto you, as my Father has sent me. Even so. Sam IU. Isn't this a lovely? Climax to it all. Here we have the Lord standing in the midst of His own faces here changed to sight, as it were. They actually see Him. And we're going to see Him another day, brethren. We're going to see those marks in His hands and feet and side. We're going to rejoice when we see Him as the One who has accomplished that mighty work for us and now has us at home in fullest blessing in His presence. Oh, what a future is ahead of us but here.

He stands in their midst and it says then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord? Can we apply this practically that as we gather around him on Lord's Day morning. Oh, how precious to see him in our midst. Truly, it does make our hearts glad, doesn't it? The disciples hearts were glad when they saw the Lord and our hearts are glad in the meeting and the measure in which we see him. But I just wanted to close with this little Commission that. Gave to the disciples, then said Jesus to them, Peace be unto you. As my Father has sent me, Even so send I you. We've been talking a lot about the things that we can enjoy. Those arms of love that hold us, that surround us, that guide us, that care for us. That, O brethren, we're left here in this world to be for Him to be, not only for his glory, but also. To be a blessing to others. Of course, it is for His glory that we should be a blessing for others, but I believe it's important that we should realize this. And now from this happy meeting place where the Lord showed them his hands and his side, those wonderful hands that we've been talking about, and their hearts are full of gladness now He says, I'm sending you out into what kind of a world was He sending them? A hostile world, a world that didn't want him. But he sent them out. And what a, what a wonderful expression this is. As my Father has sent me, so have I sent you. So the Lord Jesus had been sent into this world by His Father in love, to tell her what was in his Father's heart. He knew what was in that, the bosom of the Father. He came down, as the little hymn says, He came to earth to make it known. Brethren, we have such a privilege. Are we seeking to be a blessing to others? In the measure in which we enjoy His love and approve those hands of love, and have been made glad by them, have we realized that now we're sent into this world, sent to speak to those who don't know Him, sent to encourage one another in the Lord. And I'm sure that if each one of us had been present at that occasion, when the Lord stood there in the midst and said, Peace be unto you, and showed them His hands. If we had been there, wouldn't our hearts have been thrilled? And then when we heard him say, as my father has sent me, Even so send by you, Wouldn't our hearts have thrilled that we had such a privilege that he was going away, and that now we could seek to represent Him? Sent by him back into this world, taken out of it, and sent back into it as his messengers? Oh, May God grant that we may realize this privilege. We may feel those hands upon us. All the time we may realize that our times are in His hand and go forth to this world to be able to tell them something of what we have known and what we have enjoyed. Paul said I believed, and therefore have I spoken. May these things be made real to our hearts, and then as we speak of them to others, they will be for blessing to them too. Could we sing that little hymn 256? Praise the Savior, ye who know Him, who can tell how much we owe Him gladly Let us render to Him all we have and are 256. Is a savior. All we have.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 33:27-34:12: The Lord Exalted (33:27-29)

Deuteronomy 33:27-34:12

What marvelous words, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." We may feel very low at times, as indeed we often have, but we can never get lower than those everlasting arms which are always underneath. When as a nation Israel comes to realize this and turns to the Lord, then the promised blessings will come upon them in all their fullness in that millennial day. Their land will then yield its increase, and the heavens will drop down dew. Then it will truly be said, as it is prophesied here, "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord." All will be fulfilled according to God's faithful promise, founded upon the work of Christ on Calvary.

After telling of these blessings, Moses then went up to the top of Mt. Nebo at the command of God and viewed the land. As we have noticed before, he could not enter the land, for he had failed to maintain the glory of the Lord before the people, thinking instead of his own position. When we become weary and angry because of the failure of the people of God, we place ourselves above them, when we are not really above them at all. In fact, we only find fault in order to shelter ourselves from the evil we cannot rise above, for if we were really above it, according to God, we would never weary, but seek the blessing of His people according to His mind. This honors and exalts the Lord, who will ever maintain His own glory — by us if we are faithful, or in spite of us if we are not.

Moses did not have any ordinary funeral, for he was the only man of whom we read in Scripture that was buried by the Lord. Perhaps the people would have made a great deal of his sepulcher had they known where it was, but the Lord did not allow them to find out, preventing this snare.

It is surely strange how men — even true Christians — will often resist the truth of God ministered by His servants, but when they are gone they will make a great deal of them. How our hearts are always prone to exalt man, but God would teach us to exalt Christ alone! If the truth of God is ministered, let us rejoice, esteeming the servant highly in love for his work's sake (1 Thessalonians 5:13), but let us not give to any man, either living or having gone before, the place which belongs alone to Christ. Moses was the greatest prophet whom God ever raised up

in Israel, but the time came when his service was ended, and then the Lord raised up Joshua in his place. There is only One who never failed, and who lives for evermore above. May we ever look to Him, and to Him alone!

“Jesus, Thou alone art worthy, Ceaseless praises to receive.”

It is precious at the close of this interesting book to look back and trace the pleadings of the Lord with His people, and how often He exhorted them to walk in His ways. Even though He knew of their weakness and of the sad failure that would mark their history as a nation, He spoke often of their future blessing, which He in His faithfulness would bring in. May we who read these things be stirred up to walk more devotedly for the Lord, always counting upon His unchanging grace and love!

Further Meditations

1. Why might the Lord have buried Moses Himself?
2. Moses did enter the land of Israel but only after his death. When did he do it and what does the incident tell us about God and His faithfulness.
3. There's an encouraging booklet on the burial of Moses by J. G. Bellett entitled *God Exceeds His Promises*.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 33:12-26: God's Purposes for His People (33:12-26)

Deuteronomy 33:12-26

Sweet and comforting words were spoken about Benjamin, and they have been a cheer to many, even to this day. How marvelous to know that we, like Benjamin, are “beloved of the Lord.” We know our love is weak and feeble, but we are beloved of Him, and always safe when by His side. Then too, we are covered over by His love and kept by His strength “all the day long.” What confidence this gives!

“Why should I ever careful be, Since such a God is mine? He watches o’er me night and day, And tells me, “Thou art Mine.”

The enemy would seek to occupy us with ourselves, reminding us how weak our love is, but happy confidence in our souls is the result of a sense of His love, which never changes.

Joseph comes next. He is a beautiful figure of Christ, for He was rejected by his brethren, as Joseph was. “He came unto his own, and His own received Him not” (John 1:11), but just as rich and abundant blessings, and the enjoyment of them, are promised to the tribe of Joseph, so those who share Christ’s rejection now shall enjoy in communion the precious fruits of His redemptive work even now, as well as reigning with Him in a future day. Let us bear in mind that when we shun the cross we are shunning the enjoyment of our blessings.

The blessings of the other tribes speak to us of God’s purposes for Israel; blessings they would have realized then in their land had they walked in obedience, but they forfeited them through disobedience. They will, however, dwell safely in the full extent of their land, and be blessed in their going out. They will also rule the nations in their coming day of blessing and enjoy the abundance of the treasures of the earth and sea in a manner that has never been known before (Psalm 45:8-9). They will have many happy children in that day (Psalm 127:3-5).

It is particularly instructive to note the blessing of the tribe of Asher, and if we, like them, would dip our foot in oil — walking in the power of the Spirit — we would enjoy our spiritual blessings in a fuller measure here and now. The iron speaks of strength, and the brass (from which their shoes were made) tells us of self-judgment. These two things go along with walk in communion with God. Sometimes we would like to appropriate these blessings to ourselves, that is, we would like to prove the daily strength the Lord gives, but without self-judgment and communion. Surely God is faithful, but if we are to walk in the good of His promise, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be,” let us be sure that we do not become careless in our walk. Let us allow the Spirit of God to speak to us through His Word. “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (Revelation 3:22).

How the Lord delighted to bless people. He was above all for Israel, as well as for us, riding upon the heaven for their help; and now we know Christ is risen and is “head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all” (Ephesians 1:22-23). This is what gives confidence — not our great numbers for we are few indeed, but “Christ is all, and in all” (Colossians 3:11).

Further Meditations

1. In what way is Joseph a figure of Christ?
2. The value of communion or common thoughts with God is hard to overestimate. It’s very fragile and extremely important. How does the Lord Jesus’ life show His daily communion with His Father?
3. You would no doubt enjoy the meditations found in the short booklet *Communion With God: What Is It?* by C. H. Mackintosh.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 33:6-11: Reward for Faithfulness (33:6-11)

Deuteronomy 33:6-11

Special blessings came upon Levi and Joseph because of their faithfulness, for God never forgets anything done for Him. We may do something for the Lord as Joseph did, and even get into a great deal of trouble for it at the time, yet the Lord who searches the heart values it, and His reward will surprise us. He will never be our debtor. Let us be willing to suffer and endure hardness for Christ! If we think of what He endured for us, our fainting hearts will be encouraged and we will find that “the end of the Lord” is blessing unbounded.

The blessing of Reuben, “Let Reuben live, and not die; and let not his men be few,” makes us think of the grace that saved us when we were “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1). We deserved to die, but instead of this we “live through Him” (the Son of God, 1 John 4:9). This is the grand starting point of all blessing with us, as it was with Israel, and there will not be “few” but “many sons” brought home to glory (Hebrews 2:10).

We might notice as to Judah, who comes next in our chapter, that the expression, “bring him unto his people” and “be Thou a help to him from his enemies,” looks on to a future day when God will bring back the Jews (those of Judah) to their land, and bless them there. They are a despised people today, having many enemies, but the Lord will deliver them and rule the world in and through them. It is also precious to apply this passage to ourselves. After we have been given life instead of the death we deserved, the Lord brings us to His people. We become “fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.”

Next comes the tribe of Levi who had proved themselves faithful at a time when Israel worshipped the golden calf. They had thought more of the Lord’s glory than even father or mother. They were obedient to the Word of God, and stood on the Lord’s side regardless of what others were doing, and this is most important. We must be faithful if we are to be used of the Lord on His behalf, for “it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Corinthians 4:2). Because of this faithfulness, the tribe of Levi was chosen to be the priestly tribe, and Moses requests that the Thummim and Urim, which mean lights and perfections, might always be with them. This is so needed for all who serve the Lord. Moses (who was of the tribe of Levi) had failed when tested at the waters of Meribah, for there is nothing that tries the patience of the servant like the strivings of the people of God, especially when it is our heart’s desire to help and build them up. But God allows these testings so that we might turn to Him and count upon Him, even in the darkest days. When there is an interceding for the people of God, and a counting upon God, there is sure to be blessing as a result, but let us remember that the trials in the path of serving the Lord make manifest if we are really walking with Him or not. No strength of natural character will keep us when difficulties arise, but let us never forget these three words, “God is faithful,” and count upon Him. His love to His people never falters, and if we are to act on His behalf let us “walk in love” always.

Further Meditations

1. Why were the tribes of Levi and Joseph blessed in a special way?
2. Why does God allow us to be tested? Why doesn’t he just make it “easy” to obey? Besides Levi who else faced some difficult tests in the book of Deuteronomy?
3. You might find real encouragement from the clearly written pamphlet, Discipleship — Its Terms, Tests and Rewards: Seven Things That Characterize a Disciple Indeed by B. Anstey.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 32:32-47: God’s Government (32:32-47)

Deuteronomy 32:32-47

What a mighty “Rock” the children of Israel had, but, sadly, they forsook Him. They chose to live in ways of sin and willfulness, and to trust in their own wisdom and strength. They wanted their own pleasures and fun apart from God, even though Moses told them that their “grapes were grapes of gall, their clusters were bitter.” And indeed how many today make a similar choice. They want to have their fling in the world, well knowing that the path they are treading can only end in sorrow and bitterness, for the Scripture says that the pleasures of sin are only for a season (Hebrews 11:25). What sorrow and remorse these sins bring, even in this world, as well as eternal loss.

The Lord warned His people that He Himself would deal with them if they went on in sinful ways. Sometimes when trouble comes we would like to blame others, but let us always seek grace to see the Lord’s hand in all that takes place in our lives. No one can say an unkind word about us unless the Lord allows it (2 Samuel 16:10) nor can war break out unless God allows it (Psalm 106:41-42), and even sickness comes from His hand (Deuteronomy 28:59) — always to do us good at our “latter end.” This we can learn from Job in all he passed through. And so here the Lord told them that after they had come to the end of themselves, owned the folly of their own ways, and turned to Him, then He would come in and deliver them. He said He would deal with their enemies and deliver His people, causing their hearts to rejoice again in His goodness.

How often the Lord deals with us in His government, for we are so foolish and willful at times. One feels this especially for those who are young (though we all need it!) for the enemy makes a special attack upon the young, knowing that if he can get them in sinful paths, he can ruin their lives. Sometimes in an unwatchful moment he may lead them to take a false step which will ruin their lives for years to come. That verse is so very important, “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jeremiah 10:23). We do not have the wisdom in ourselves to choose a right and safe path for our own feet, but if we turn humbly and dependently to the Lord, He will guide us, for He has promised, “In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:6). How good to have such an unfailing guide! May we never try to take a step without Him!

Moses then, with Joshua, exhorted the people again to walk in the ways of the Lord for, he said, “It is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life.” Alas, how often the Word of God is repeated and hymns are sung in a vain and thoughtless way. Those who read or sing in this way do it only to salve their consciences, or because they enjoy singing, without meaning it at all. Think of singing,

“Saviour, we long to follow Thee, Daily Thy cross to bear,”

and then walking out of the meeting to go on in a worldly way with worldly friends, worldly dress, a worldly home, and everything else that savors of seeking after the things of earth. Surely it ought to be, as it says here, our very life, for what else do we have that is worth living for but Christ (Philippians 1:21)?

Further Meditations

1. Why did Moses and Joshua exhort the people to walk in the ways of the Lord?
2. What are some of the dangers of continuing doing a right thing with a wrong motive? How is this problem illustrated in Malachi 1?
3. This chapter refers to worldliness. You can get quite a bit more help from the pamphlet *Worldliness: What Does it Mean?* taken from the magazine *Help and Food*.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 32:15-31: Considering the Latter End (32:15-31)

Deuteronomy 32:15-31

The Lord, having reminded the people of His goodness to them and the marvelous provision which awaited them in the land of Canaan, knew only too well the effect it would have upon them. He knew that in spite of it all, they would soon forget Him and even rebel against Him. Their forty years of wilderness life had clearly shown this, for they had sacrificed to devils and not to God, and had forgotten “the Rock that begat them.” They had followed their evil ways until the Lord had had to deal with them in His governmental judgment, and this, He warned, would come upon them again until they were scattered and given to the sword. Even then, however, the Lord said He would not allow the enemy to consume them, lest their enemies would say that it was their own strength that had done it. Oh how faithfully He warned them, for it grieved His heart to see them follow their own sinful ways. And so it is with us who so often choose paths of self-will, to our own sorrow and loss. May all these things be a warning to us, for God has caused them to be written down for our learning (Romans 15:4).

Again the Lord pleaded, “O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!” (verse 29). The children of Israel were living for the present only as so many are today, and here they are called upon to consider where the path ended. How important this is! Have you considered your latter end? Do you know where you are going to spend eternity? Remember that unless you have personally accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, you are lost and on the road to eternal hell. Why go on carelessly one moment longer? Come to the Saviour today and be saved before it is forever too late.

The people were then told that in warfare it was not a question of the strength of their enemies, but of the Lord being with them. If He went with them, then one would chase a thousand, and two would put ten thousand to flight, but if not, they would be defeated no matter how great their armies. How little is thought of this today. The nations build their mighty armies and weapons but leave God out, and because of this, we know that a time of war and bloodshed, far worse than the world has ever seen before, is coming upon the favored lands of Christendom (Romans 11:22; Hebrews 10:28-29). Judgment fell upon Israel for their disobedience, and since Christendom has not continued in the goodness of God, judgment will fall upon them too.

The next verse (verse 31) is very striking. “Their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.” Even the enemies of Israel knew that when the Lord fought for His people, they could never prevail against them. And so the world sees and knows that the Christian has something they do not have. Especially in the presence of death, the one who is truly saved has a “Rock” which will never give way, while the poor unbeliever learns that his crumbling “rock” is not like ours. His reason, his religion, or his good works will never give him peace when he finds himself face to face with death and eternity. Be sure, dear reader, that you can say,

“On Christ the solid Rock I stand.”

Further Meditations

1. On whom did Israel’s victories in warfare depend?
2. The Psalms have a lot in them about Christ as our Rock. What are some of the references and how do they show Christ in contrast to the confidences of the world.
3. If you are thinking on the lovely subject of Christ as our rock you would probably enjoy the story behind the beautiful hymn *Rock of Ages* by Augustus Toplady.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 32:10-14: The Everlasting Arms (32:10-14)

Deuteronomy 32:10-14

We then read that He instructed His people. How much we need this for the difficulties of the way. There are so many problems in life, and we feel unable to make the right decision — in fact it is impossible of ourselves. But the Word of God gives us instruction for every step of our pathway, and if we read it diligently, giving the Holy Spirit of God His place as the teacher, He will teach us what to do. This is so needful,

especially in youth, and that is why we are told, “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth” (Ecclesiastes 12:1). We would like to encourage our readers, young and old, to form the habit of seeking to follow the wisdom of God’s Word at all times.

Not only did the Lord tell His people that He had found them, led them, and instructed them, but He had also kept them as the apple of His eye. How tenderly this speaks to our souls! We are so easily led astray that it is precious to think of the One who keeps us with all the carefulness with which we would guard our very eyes. When we find ourselves in places of temptation and danger, we can just look up and say, “Lord, keep me.” If we are self-confident, He may have to allow us to have a fall, and then we learn the hard way, but when we cry to Him to keep us, we will soon find those mighty arms outstretched to keep us from falling. On one occasion Peter did not feel he needed the Lord’s keeping power, for he said, “Although all shall be offended, yet will not I” (Mark 14:29), but when he had learned his lesson, how fully he proved the Lord’s restoring and keeping power in the days and years that followed. How important it is that we walk dependently, seeking grace to follow the perfect example of the One who said “Preserve Me, O God: for in Thee do I put My trust” (Psalm 16:1).

The Lord brought before His people here the illustration of the mother eagle who stirs up her nest when the time comes for the young eagles to leave it. It is soft and comfortable for them when they are small, but she does not want them to stay in the nest forever. When she knows they are old enough to fly, she stirs it up and forces them out. It ceases to be a comfortable resting place for them, and so they try to fly. She then gets under them when they begin to go down, and bears them up on her strong wings until they learn to fly alone. And so the children of Israel would have remained in Egypt, but the Lord did not want them to settle down there, and He allowed trouble to come so that they would want to leave. Then He bore them up when their hearts would have fainted, and was carrying them to the land where He would have them. And is it not often so with us? We would like to settle down in this world and make ourselves comfortable here, but this is not God’s purpose for us. He therefore brings trouble into our lives, stirring up our nest until we get out to fly toward heaven. Then, as we meet the difficulties of the way, He puts His everlasting arms under us and bears us up until we again look up and fly heavenward, where our eternal rest is.

The next verse brings in the rich and abundant blessings that awaited the people in the land of Canaan, far better than they had ever had in Egypt — and how much better still are the joys that await us in the Father’s home above!

Further Meditations

1. What does a mother eagle do to help her young learn to fly?
2. Genesis 22 provides a wonderful example of how the Lord stirred up Abraham’s nest and allowed God to be glorified by faith. Describe what the Lord did throughout the story to both test Abraham and strengthen him.
3. You can find real refreshment from the messages of comfort and encouragement found in *Angels in White* by R. Elliott.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 32:5-10: The Faithfulness of the Lord (32:5-10)

Deuteronomy 32:5-10

The children of Israel are reminded again of how good the Lord had been to them. He had brought them and established them, and yet they were perverse and crooked in their ways, and seemed to forget how He had been a Father to them. If they had not heard of His goodness, they could ask their fathers who would tell them of God’s wonderful works on their behalf. He then told them that when God divided to the nations their inheritance, when He gave to each their place to live, He set the boundaries of each according to the number of His people Israel. Israel is God’s earthly people, and His purpose is to make their land the center of earthly blessing in a coming day. Jerusalem is yet to be “the joy of the whole earth” (Psalm 48:2). Any person or nation who persecutes them comes under the judgment of God, for even though they themselves are now a scattered people because of their rejection of Christ, they are still “beloved for the fathers’ sakes” (Romans 11:28). Their land, the land of Palestine, is called “the glorious land,” and the Lord has already begun to work in bringing them back, though as yet they are going back in unbelief. It is, however, a remarkable sign that “the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (James 5:8). When as a nation they turn to the Lord in repentance, God will bless them in their land, but before that time comes we, the church, will have been called to “meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18). The way unsaved men act, one would think the world belonged to them, but let us not forget what the Lord said to Nebuchadnezzar when he became occupied with his own importance and greatness. He told him “that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will” (Daniel 4:25). How foolish of the nations to leave God out of their plans!

How precious the words that follow. “The Lord’s portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.” They might forget what He had done for them, but He still loved His people, and the Lord will never rest until His own are fully blest. Yes, God Himself will find His eternal joy in the blessing of those who are the subjects of His grace, whether it be Israel on earth or ourselves in heaven. We often think of our joy, but His joy in blessing us is far deeper. And not only in the future, for just as He wanted His people Israel to walk in obedience then so that He might lead and bless them in all things, so He would have us walk in the enjoyment of His love now. The enemy will do all he can to rob us of this precious portion, as we all know. May we be kept looking to the Lord for strength to walk in His ways.

The Lord had proved His goodness to Israel. “He found him in a desert land ... He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye” (verse 10). And has He not done this for us, too? We think of how He found us wandering far from Him in all our guilt and sin. Like sheep we had gone astray, but the Lord Jesus as the Good Shepherd sought after us until He found us. Then He led us about. How many mistakes we would have made, how often we would have missed the path, if He had not graciously taken us by the hand and led us about. And yet, sadly, sometimes we have resisted His leading to our own loss. But He has always been faithful, always near at hand to hear our call.

Further Meditations

1. What must happen before God will bless Israel in their land?

2. The Lord's joy and satisfaction can be our motive for doing something. In Revelation chapter 2 the Ephesian saints were reproved for just one thing, What was it?

3. A good atlas really helps in seeing the land that the children of Israel will possess one day. In fact it would be a big help in understanding many references throughout the Bible. One that is pretty thorough is The New Moody Atlas of Bible Lands by B. Beitzel.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 31:14-32:4: Confidence in God (31:14-30)

Deuteronomy 31:14-32:4

Moses and Joshua were both called to stand before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the Lord appeared in a pillar of cloud which stood over the door. There He spoke to them, telling Moses of how the people would turn aside after his death and worship the idols of the heathen and break the covenant of the Lord. He told Moses, too, of how He would have to deal with them because of their sins, and then gave Moses a song to teach them which would be a reminder of why all the promised trouble came upon them. It is precious, however, to find at the end of the song the promise that, in spite of all, God would bring them into blessing when they turned to Him in repentance.

Because of this Joshua is again exhorted to "be strong and of a good courage." Man's course has always been one of departure from God, of willfulness and sin. Whether it be Israel or the church, what a record it has been of failure and departure from the Lord. The servant of the Lord is to be prepared for this. He is not to have any confidence in the flesh, for as surely as he does, he is bound to be disappointed. He is not, however, to be discouraged, but to labor on in the confidence that God is working in grace and will never fail. Whenever the eye is turned away from self and "man, whose breath is in his nostrils" (Isaiah 2:22), and fastened upon the Lord instead, we have courage and strength. How needful this is! We will never be able to go on steadily in our service to the Lord unless we realize this, for just as surely as we build our hopes upon some man, we will live to see the day when those hopes fail. If, however, we build only upon the Lord, there will be no disappointment and no deluded hopes. All is sure in Him. May the Lord encourage our hearts to go on faithfully in these days when all that is of man is beginning to break down completely.

The book of the law was then taken and put in the side of the ark. The ark, as we know, is a type of the Lord Jesus, and He alone lived in this dark scene for God's glory every step of His blessed pathway. What a testimony against them it was, but good it is to know that we have been "reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Romans 5:10). His life here before men only condemned us and showed how guilty we were.

The song which follows ascribes greatness to the Lord and tells of His justice and truth. This is most important. We find the power of God called in question today, and the holiness of His throne denied. On every hand we hear the denial of eternal punishment, and while much is said about "God is Love," the solemn fact that "God is Light" is forgotten. Let us remember that God cannot pass over sin. He must judge it. If it were not for the marvelous fact that the Lord Jesus bore the judgment of God for sin at the cross, then we must bear our own sins in hell forever. And so we read in our chapter, "All His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He" (verse 4). God will never sacrifice the holiness of His own throne, but, blessed be His name, the One who bore sin's judgment is now seated "on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:3). Divine justice has been fully satisfied.

Further Meditations

1. What did the Lord tell Moses and Joshua at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation?

2. How does the cross of Christ show that God can't pass over sin to show love?

3. The booklet The Four Judgments by A. H. Burton gives a brief and helpful summary of four separate occasions when God has shown and will show His judgment of sin. Reading it will likely deepen your sense of both His holiness and grace.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 31:1-14: Strength and Courage (31:1-14)

Deuteronomy 31:1-14

Moses continued his exhortation to the people, for he fully realized the difficulties of the path. And yet he knew the strength of the One who had brought them out of Egypt to bring them in to Canaan. He spoke of his own great age and of how he could not lead them any longer, but he said, "the Lord thy God, He will go over before thee." There may be those whom we have looked up to and are now gone, but their parting word is like that of Moses, as it were, "Look to the Lord." He will never fail, for His "years are throughout all generations" (Psalm 102: 24). God did, however, in His goodness raise up another to lead His people. It was Joshua. They were, nevertheless, not to look at him as the one who would give them the land, but only as the instrument through whom the Lord would give it to them. It is lovely to see Moses at a time like this speaking so nicely of the one who was to take up this wonderful work of leading the people of God. There is so much envy and jealousy in our natural hearts that we are sometimes slow to acknowledge the service of others, but it is surely a precious fruit of grace to see those who rejoice to find others raised up of the Lord to carry on the work they are no longer able to do. May the Lord deliver those of us who serve Him, from any thought of our own importance and give us to realize it is the Lord's work, and He can use whom He pleases. He can do without any of us, no matter how important our labor may seem to be!

The people are reminded of how the Lord had already given them the victory over Sihon and Og, and He was able to give them the victory in the land which He had promised to them. They are therefore exhorted, "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, He it is that doth go before thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." How much we need exhortations like this today! The power of the enemy seems to be increasing almost daily, and fresh difficulties are arising on every hand, but the Lord is faithful, and when our eyes are upon Him we can press on with courage and confidence, knowing He will never fail. Let us not lose heart, but always count upon God to undertake every step of the way.

After giving this word to the people Moses then called Joshua and exhorted him personally. If we are to go on in that quiet confidence which is so needful, we need to walk with God in secret. We need the daily reading of His Word and prayer in the privacy of our own rooms if we are to have power and courage before others. It is one thing to know the truth, and even to be able to expound it publicly, but it is quite another thing to be walking in it in the secret of our own souls. It is in the way that we keep ourselves in the love of God (Jude 21), and only in this way, that we can be able to be a help to others and point them to the Lord, as to One whom we have found to be our all in all.

The priests, the sons of Levi were then commanded to read the Word to the people at the feast of tabernacles. Men, women, and children were all to be present to hear the Word read. Let us not neglect the assembling of ourselves together, for if it was important for Israel, it is surely needful for us too.

Further Meditations

1. Who was to take up the work of leading the people of God after Moses?
2. The quiet, practical, private walk with God in our hearts is a real secret of spiritual power. What does God have to say in His Word about our thoughts, hearts and feelings? You can start your search into what He really values in Malachi 3.
3. Hudson Taylor was a man who in many ways lived a life of deep faith and piety. You can learn a lot from that inner walk with God in the book Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret by Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor.

Toledo Conference: 1983, Suffering in our Lives (29:29)

Address—G.H. Hayhoe

Oh brethren, what I had on my heart this afternoon was to speak a little bit of the different ways of God. In suffering in connection with the lives of believers, I believe we can learn much by what the Word of God reveals to us as to these different ways that suffering come. We know that it's part of this world in which we live, and we'll see how that God has a purpose in all the things that come. Although we may not always understand, this is a very lovely verse that is brought before us here in Deuteronomy 20. And the secret things belong unto the Lord our God. There are things that God has not been pleased to make known to us. There are things He has been pleased to make known for which we thank Him. And as someone has said that we should never allow the things that we don't know and don't understand to spoil the things that we do know and do understand. How often it's so that because there's something we don't understand, we dwell upon it. We get upset about it instead of enjoying the 101 Things and far more that God has made known to us that it is our privilege to know and enjoy. And as children of God, how very richly we have been blessed. Oh, how marvelous. As Mr. Darby once said, the path of the Christian is worthwhile if it were 1000 times harder than it is. Because we know where the path is going to end. We know it's going to be fullness of joy in that glory above. And so as we think of this, we have the courage to go on in the pathway. It tells us in Proverbs. Where no vision is the people perish. And if we don't have a vision of coming glory, why we do perish? Or is, another translation reads. We cast off restraint. That is, we say it's not worthwhile, this conflict is too difficult. There are too many problems and yet when we think of the end of the journey. When we think of the future that awaits us, why our hearts ought to be filled with praise and Thanksgiving. Because of all that we know, of all that has been secured to us, and at so great a cost, the Lord Jesus loved us and gave Himself for us. He wanted us not only to save us from the penalty of our sins, but the wonder to my soul, brethren, is that He wanted to have my company. I just can't understand that, but I believe it's true. It says in Proverbs chapter 8 that when he created this world. His delights were with the sons of men, and that he was rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth. Yes, and when man sinned as they did in the Garden of Eden. And then it's to me as though God said, well, you've spoiled this world that I made so beautiful for you, but I'm going to give you something better than what you have spoiled. And it's going to cost me a great deal. But I want your company so much. That I'm willing to pay the price. So that I can have your company in a place you can't spoil. Oh brethren, our hearts ought to be filled with thankfulness. We ought to be lifting a note of praise to the Lord. As a little hymn says, this is my story, this is my song praising my Savior all the day long. So here, in this verse, here, God gave many instructions to his people. Some of them they could understand. Some of them they couldn't. Some of them when they understood them, they could do them intelligently and in faith. Others they did without understanding. For instance, if you had asked an Israelite, why do the insides of an animal have to be washed a certain way before you sacrifice them? Why, he'd have to say, well, I don't know. I just know that God has said that, and so I do it in loving obedience to Him. There were things that they were called upon to do that they didn't understand. But there was much that they did, much that they could rejoice in. God made it very clear to them that He had a glorious lamb for them, a lamb full flowing with milk and honey, where He would come and bless them, and that He would find His own delight, as He will in the coming day. When He does fully bless them, it says He will joy over the US singing. He will rest in his love. So let us then, if there are things that we don't understand. Let us be content to leave those things with God, because as we will see, I trust with the Lord's help, there is a day coming when we will understand.

Now we find here in this twenty 29th 18 mom, it says As for God, his way is perfect. He is the word of the Lord is tried. He is a buckler to all those that trust in him. No one that has really trusted him hasn't found that he's faithful to his word that he is a buckler to those that trust him. The ones I feel most sorry for. Are the ones who don't trust Him? Because I know if you don't trust Him, there's nothing worse for a Christian than the wheat of unbelief growing in our hearts. And I have to say, I've experienced it myself. And it can make you terribly miserable. Doubting the wisdom and love of God's ways will only make you miserable. But believing what God says, you'll find that His word is tried. Like the lady who wrote beside a lot of verses in her Bible T&P. And someone said to her, well, what does that mean besides so many

verses? Well, she said, tried and proven she had proved these things to be true. And so we have this privilege too of knowing that God's Word is true and He is a buckler to those that trust in Him. And then in this 33rd Psalm, it's very interesting how it comes in here in the 33rd, in the 32nd, No, pardon me, it's in the 30th Psalm. In the sixth verse it says, And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy favor thou hast made my mountain to stand strong. Thy doubt, it's tied thy face, and I was troubled. Sometimes God is very good to us. Sometimes he does make, so to speak, our mountain, to stand strong. He seems to undertake for us and protect us and care for us in remarkable ways. But then there are times when he allows trouble to come, as He did with Job and others. And he said, thou decide thy face. And I was troubled. And then, as you see, he goes through quite a little exercise and then. 31st Psalm that we've read. He could say, But I trusted in thee, O Lord, I said, Thou art my God. My times are in my hand. Oh, how lovely to come to that point where we can say my times are in my hand. To know that those hands as we sang, that our many sins have pierced, is now our guard and our guide. Well, having this thought before us, our brothers spoke about these ways of God a little bit on the young people's meeting on Friday. And I'd just like to look on some of the different aspects of God's ways. He showed how that God did have a protection. Sometimes he withdrew that protection, but we know that He has a particular purpose in all the things that come, and there are some of them that we just will never. Understand down here in this life there are those things that come that we just have to leave with God. But there are others. Let us turn first of all now to Romans chapter 8. Romans, chapter 8. Says here in the 22nd verse, for we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together. Until now, and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the spirit. Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our body. Now that shows us that there are some things that come just because we are part of this groaning creation. And we might think of that man in the 8th chapter of John. The Lord Jesus came along where that young man was. And it tells us that he was there, and his disciples asked the question, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind. And the Lord's answer was, neither did this man sin nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. Now as I say, there's always some purpose that God has in everything, but there are some things that are not necessarily because of anything that we have done in our lives. Now this young man, that was by where in the 8th chapter, 9th chapter of John, Rather, he was born blind. He was part of the groaning creation. There wasn't any particular discipline that had come upon him.

But it's just that he was part of that groaning creation. But it tells us that the works of God were made manifest in him. The very fact that he was born blind made him feel his need of the Lord. And there were many other people when the Lord Jesus passed by that could see him with good eyes, and they didn't particularly feel their need. But the Lord Jesus saw this man and this. Felt his need and oh how grateful he was when the Lord opened his eyes. And you know, I believe that there will be many people in heaven and they'll say, well, I was born with some physical disability, but I don't regret that. I know that God has used that very thing to make me feel my need of him. It has caused me to turn to the Lord and so how often those who have. Health and strength and all those kind of things that really have a easy life, as we might say. They just go on enjoying the pleasures of this world and leave God out. So God does have a purpose even in things that come upon us quite apart from anything that we have done, things that perhaps we were born with. Perhaps you have some physical thing that you were born with and you say why? Well, God. Can use that very thing to make you feel constantly dependent. How often those of us who are true Christians and who are older have because we're part of this groaning creation. We have partaken of some physical limitation and that has taught us dependence. It has taught us constantly to be asking the Lord to help us. And if we didn't have that, who can tell how independent, how self willed we might be. What things we might plunge into. And so we can see that there are things that take place in our lives, they're not particularly the governmental ways of God because of failure or other things that with the Lord's help we'll speak about, but just those things that are because we are part of this groaning creation. And if I'm speaking to someone and you say I've never had good health, I've had handicaps that other people. Have and it really gets me down at times and I don't know what I have done. Well, that man hadn't done anything particular that he was born blind, but it made him feel his need of Jesus. And as our brother brought before us last night, how beautiful it was to see that man with all those leaders, perhaps with the best of health, rejecting the Lord. But his eyes were opened and his heart was opened to acknowledge the Lord Jesus. As the Son of God. And so instead of feeling grieved and upset because we have these things, let us realize that God has some purpose to teach us dependence upon him, to keep us looking to him constantly through our lives so that we might find the help that we need from Him. And it doesn't need to make us search our hearts and say, what? What have I done as I say? Man hadn't done something, but it was a blessing. It was for his good. And God used it for his good too. Well, these are things that do come upon us. And as we grow older too, the body has wears out. The scripture says the days of our years are three score years and 10. We can't expect to always have good health as we grow older. I remember visiting an old Christian, he was about 80 years old, and he was constantly complaining that he didn't feel as well when he was 60 as when he was sixty. Well, I would hardly expect that I would feel quite as good at 80 if I lived to be that as I do and as I would at 60. Well, so you know, we can't expect the body is going to wear out, but you know, it's very blessed as we get older to learn more and more dependence on the Lord. The scripture speaks of those who bring forth fruit in old age, and there's nothing sweeter than to visit someone in an old folks home and see them praising the Lord, learning to trust Him in a new way as they get older.

And find the limitations of old age. Well, that's not particularly the governmental ways of God, that's just that the body wears out. Brethren, our bodies are part of a groaning creation. And it says not only the creation, the animal creation, not only unbelievers, but not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves grown within ourselves, waiting for the adoption. To wit, the redemption of our body and the Lord is sufficient for every stage of life, no matter what it may be, whether it's youth, whether it's middle life or old age, the Lord is sufficient. He is enough to fill and satisfy the heart, and He delights to do that so that we would be happy and rejoicing in Him. But the only way we can do this is when this verse really grips our souls. Our times are in my hand. We're content with what he orders in our lives. I've told a story before as an illustration and perhaps some have heard it, but the little boy who was flying a kite and it was a beautiful day and the wind was taking the kite up higher and higher and he was having to let out more string as it went higher. And someone walked by and said, why are you holding your kite down? It wants to get up and you're just holding it down with that string. Why don't you let go and see how high it will go? Well, he let go of the string and we all know what happened. Yes, the kite came down. The very thing that was holding it down was also keeping it up. And brethren, this is so true that those things that are keeping us down are often keeping us up. They're keeping us in communion. They're keeping us independence upon the Lord, and that is always for our good and for our blessing. And now I'd like to turn to another one in Second Samuel. Second Samuel in the 11th chapter. Well, perhaps I'll turn over is a little more about it in the 12th chapter. Romans, I mean. Second Samuel, chapter 12. And the seventh verse. And Nathan said unto David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel. I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul. And I gave thy master, gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the House of Israel and of Judah. And if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord to do

evil in our His sight? Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and has taken his wife to be thy wife, and has slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from mine house, because thou hast despised me and has taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Well, this is one of the ones, Bradham, that I have to say that God has left it as one of His secret things. I don't know that I can in any way say why God allowed this to happen to Uriah. I'm not speaking now about his government upon David, but why the Lord allowed this to happen to Uriah. If you go back to the 11Th chapter, perhaps I should read a few verses. The 11Th verse. And Uriah said unto David, The ark and Israel and Judah abide in tents, and my Lord Joab and the servants of my Lord are encamped in the open fields. Shall I then go into mine house to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth? I will not do this thing. Here was a man, perhaps one of the most devoted of. David's servants, Uriah the Hittite. And it wasn't for anything that he had done, because his answer shows that he really had a desire to please God. He really valued the ark as our brother brought before us this morning, and God's people and their interests. And here by the treacherousness of David, another person who was a real believer, he was actually put out in the forefront of the battle and killed.

He, he, he, could you say, what blessing did he get from that? Well, that's one of the secret things that we have to expect sometimes, that there are questions in life to which we will never find the answers. Down here. I was quite struck because I can look at other passages and with the Lorde help I will and show how we can get a blessing out of the sufferings and the trials that we go through. But you would say, what blessing did Jiraiya get from this? Well, all I can say is that I'll have to wait until that coming day to find out. I can say this, however, that God knew what was ahead for Uriah. And if Uriah had ever found out what was happened, he would have been a terribly sad and crushed man. And God didn't let him see that. And sometimes God sees things ahead in our lives that we don't see, things that we don't know what's ahead. He does, and He knew what was ahead. Uriah if he ever found out what had happened. And so the Lord took him away. And we find him numbered among David's mighty men. He was counted as one who was one of the mighty men for David. And I'm sure that when we meet a Uriah in glory that we will see that God honored his faithfulness. And sometimes our faith is put to the test in things. And brethren, I say again, there are things that we just have to say. I'll never find out in this life but on another day. We shall know, even as also we are known. Are we content to take things, those hard questions of life, those situations to which there seems absolutely no answer? A God delights in that faith that counts upon Him, as we had in that verse. The trial of your faith is much more precious than a gold perisheth, though it be tried with fire, And I think Uriah's faith was tried with fire. And it says it'll be found under praise and honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ. I expect to see Uriah get a great reward, perhaps I can say a greater reward than this, than if this had never happened, because it brought out his devotedness to the Lord and to the Lords people. And the hardest part of it all was he didn't bear it from an unbeliever, but he had to suffer it from a believer. Have you suffered something from a believer? And there seemed absolutely no explanation why the thing should have happened as it was. Well, just think about this and just think about the faith of Uriah and by the Lords grace look up and ask him to help you to leave all with God to commit it to him. And no, I'm glad that God has put this story in the word because I can think of a lot of other stories that I can see some good came from the thing. I can tell you of other things in the. Where people learn lessons, but here there was just a matter of simply committing the whole matter to the Lord. And there are times like this in life, and I wish to encourage you. Perhaps someone has done something and you get bitter, you get away, you leave the meeting, you turn against them. What have you gained? I say you've lost everything by doing it. The Lord has forgiven us for many things, and He can give us the grace. Situations, no matter how difficult, to just leave all with God. So in this second case, there is something that can't be explained, but it will be in another day. Well, and there's another kind of suffering. Perhaps we could find that in Philippians. Philippians chapter one. And verse 29 For unto you it is given on the behalf of Christ. Not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for his sake, having the same conflict which he saw in me. And now here to be in me. Well, here's another kind of suffering. And that tells us here not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for His sake. We could think of cases of this. I'll take one instance. We think of Paul and Silas. They came to preach the gospel in Philippi. They were sent there by the Lord. They were doing His will. It was not for any disobedience or. Will in their lives that they had to suffer on that occasion, but it was because the world is opposed to the gospel. And while I stand here talking to you, I'm sure that I could safely say that there are thousands upon thousands of real Christians who are suffering for Christ's sake. It's not for some wrong that they have done. It's because they're in a hostile world. They're in an enemy's land.

Suffering As we look back in the history of the Church, why the history of the Church has been just filled with suffering Saints, people who have given their lives for Christ, people who would rather die than be unfaithful to their Lord or deny him, it says in Revelation. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. And they loved not their lives unto the death. And there will come in your life and in mine, if we seek to be faithful to the Lord, times when we'll suffer for Christ, when the confession of His name will bring reproach and suffering. It might mean just being laughed at. It might mean that you lose a promotion or lose your job. It might mean that you. Have to suffer like some have in Russia and other places where they're sent to Siberia. And our brethren out in India, if they make a confession of Christ, they have to be content with more menial jobs because they are not following the ordinary religion of the country. And so there are many ways, brethren and dear young people, that we are called upon to suffer for Christ. Is it worth it? Is it worth it? Is this world so important to us that we would rather put our light under a bushel or under a bed that rather than be faithful to Christ? I believe the bushel means business and the bad means laziness. And you know, there are two things that do hinder us from being loyal to the Lord and that is we don't like to lose out. In material things, we don't like to lose out. In things that we think are really important and then make up life, but. All when we think of what the Lord gave up for us, the only person who could choose where he would be born was born in a Manger. The person who could say the silver and the gold is mine, but while walking through this world would say show me a penny. And we think of him not having a place to lay his head. And yet he made all the things that are used to build a finest, finest houses in this world. All think of our precious Savior. He's left for us. Oh, I say, and I say it to myself. Are we holding back from some situation that involves suffering for Christ? Oh, it's worth it. It's given to us. It's not as though it were something that we just had to do. As though a soldier is ordered into a an action that he is not very anxious to go in because he has to face the gunfire. But you and I. It says it's something that is given to us, the privilege of suffering in this world for Christ. And Paul speaks of it. He experienced it himself and now he said it's given to us in the behalf of Christ. That is, we're suffering on his behalf because he's not wanted here and we love him and we want to acknowledge Him and we seek the blessing of others that they might know the. And the pardon that he gives. And so this is something else, this kind of suffering for Christ in obedience and in telling out the glad tidings of the gospel. Well, I believe if the Lord leaves us here, we can't expect things to get easier. I believe that things are going to get more difficult. I love you, dear young people. And I often think, as I look into your faces, of what may be ahead if the Lord doesn't. But I do know this, that the Lord will fill your heart, He will give you grace to suffer, and He will make you happy in it. The apostle Paul and Silas in the prison at Philippi, they prayed and sang praises to God, and they had the great joy that night of hearing that jail keeper confess the Lord and receive him. That was a far greater joy than the finest.

Pay that they could have got for doing anything well, it's worth it suffering for Christ and now we have another one in first Peter chapter three, first Peter 3 and verse 14. But on if you suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled, but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts. And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you. With meekness and fear, having a good conscience that whereas they speak evil of you as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accused your good conversation in Christ. Well, we spoke about suffering for Christ. Now it's here it says suffering for righteousness sake. If I could think of an example of that in the Bible, I would think of Joseph when Joseph. Was sold down into Egypt and then was given a job there, working in the House of Potiphar. He sought to maintain a good conscience. He sought to do his work well, as he certainly should and we all should when we're working for an employer. But there was a situation there that brought temptation with it. And when he was put in this spot, why, it wasn't a matter of preaching. It wasn't a matter of trying to bear a testimony that she might be saved, but it was to maintain a good conscience. And when he was put to the test, why it tells us this was his reply. God forbid that I should do this great wickedness and sin against God. He sought to maintain a good conscience and I know the way the world is today. It's very easy for them to say, oh don't worry, everybody does this. It's maybe not altogether straightforward, but everybody's doing it. And it's very easy, dear young people, and we who are older too, in the business world, very easy for us to not to maintain a good conscience, just to let little things slip in where we haven't done what the Lord would have us do. What was thoroughly honest and upright, where we could say at the end of the day. As Paul said here in Do I exercise myself to have always? A conscience void of offense toward God and toward men. Of that suffering for righteousness sake. And you know, that was very hard for that was very hard for Joseph on that occasion. Sometimes the Lord helps us when we try to be upright and honest, but sometimes the same thing happens to us. That happened to Joseph. Joseph not only lost his job, and I think it might have been a pretty fair job that he had because he was in charge of the household, but he was actually put in prison. For trying to maintain a good conscience, yes, he was put in prison. And why did God allow that, you say? If he was trying to maintain a good conscience, why didn't God uphold him? Sometimes, brethren, we have to suffer for righteousness sake. Sometimes we have to suffer. Young people have lost their jobs, young people have failed to get promotions just because they desire to be thoroughly honest and upright. And so this is suffering for righteousness sake. And Joseph there was cast into prison, but you know, God had his hand in it. And there in that prison he was able to speak to that Butler. And that Butler was, I believe, led to put his faith in the Lord. And he afterwards turned around and spoke up for Joseph and was the means of him getting out of prison. Well, we see how God has ways in situations like this. He accomplishes his own purposes, but here we sometimes have to suffer for this. I'm Speaking of the various ways that we have to suffer in this world. It's a world where everything is out of order, so to speak, and it tells us not to be afraid of their terror and either to be troubled. We find the same thing with those three Hebrew children. Have sometimes said they probably could have found a way to get out of that situation. When they were told they had to bow down, they could have easily said, well putting your head down isn't necessarily bowing, that's just a muscular thing and they could have found a way of getting away from the responsibility of being loyal to the Lord. But no, they wouldn't. They rather would maintain a good conscience.

The same with David, with the Daniel rather. He was in the school at Babylon, and he refused to eat of the King's meat or drink of the wine that he drank. He sought to maintain a good conscience before God. And you know, there's a warning in Timothy. That sometimes in giving up a good conscience, it says we make shipwreck. That doesn't mean we can be lost, but we can definitely spoil our usefulness in our Christian testimony. And the world is very alert about that. I don't think there's anything the world is more ready to point a finger at a Christian as in anything where he thinks that he has. Been a little bit dishonest how quick they are to make a great deal out of it. Reflects on the testimony. Well, there is such a thing as suffering for righteousness sake. And then it says to be ready to give an answer when we're asked, ready to tell why. And so that's what that's what Joseph did. He was ready to tell. He said God forbid that I should do this great wickedness and sin against God. Well, then there's also suffering. Turn over to John, chapter 15. John chapter 15 and verse one. I am the true vine and my father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away, but every branch that beareth fruit, he purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now we have the dealings of God with us as his children. This is not so much what we suffered in an outward way, like the case of Uriah, or suffering for righteousness sake, or suffering for our testimony to Christ. Here it's the Lord himself. Here is God our Father as the husbandman, and he sees that we are bearing fruit. When I read this, I think about Job. The Lord bore a very wonderful testimony to Job. He said that he was a perfect and an upright man and one that feared God and astute evil. But God had a desire that there should be more fruit. And there was something that was hidden in Job's heart that Job wasn't. A little hindrance to bearing fruit, and it was very hidden because outwardly his life seemed to be. And was very upright and good. But you know, they're inside there. There was a pride. There was a self righteousness have sometimes said you might be the most godly living person in the whole assembly and God would put his hand upon you and it might be brethren because we're proud and we think we're better than our brethren. Yes, that's something that God hates is pride. It's good that we should be upright and God come into Job for all these good things in his life that he was indeed a perfect and an upright man and I. Tells us what he said about himself, that he was kind and made the widow's hearts sing for joy and did so many things for people. I believe all that was true, but there was that inward pride. And you know, there's often that within us and the Lord has to prune us. And Job couldn't see it himself. There's an interesting verse if you turn to Job. Where Elihu is talking to him. I think it's the 34th chapter. Verse 29 When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? And when he hideth his face, who then can behold him, whether it be done against the nation or against a man only? The 31st verse. Surely it is meat to be said unto God. I have borne chastisement. I will not offend any more. That which I see not teach thou me. If I have done iniquity, I will do no more. Well, we see here that Elihu is the only one who really had a wise answer for Job. He's telling Job that this didn't happen by chance. When God gives quietness, there's not a power in the world that can disturb it. As our brother brought before us the other day, there's not a power in the world can disturb it unless God allows it. And when he allows that he has a purpose, a job searched his own heart, and he said I have been an upright man, I have been kind, everything has been right in my life. And if I could put it very plainly, he said it doesn't seem fair that all this is coming upon me. But a lawyer who gave him a very, very needful and wise answer, He said, Joel, why don't you ask the Lord to show you what he sees? You don't see it.

But he sees something, Mr. Darby once said, the flesh in another. Is easily detected, but we don't see it in ourselves. Isn't that true of a lot of us? We don't see it in ourselves, but we see it in others. And there was that in Job that he didn't realize. And Eli, who says, why don't you ask the Lord to show it to you? And we finally see that God did show to Job what was the root of his trouble. He was pruning him. There was that which was useless, so to speak. It was Job in his importance as being a better man than his neighbor, and God had to take care of that. He had to prune the branches that weren't going to bear any fruit for him. And he passed Job through a great deal to do that. And sometimes I don't know much about pruning, but as I've been told of those who have pruned by it almost seems ruthless the way they go out the trees. But what was the result in Job's life? It almost seems to the natural man when you read Job as though God was placing on him more than he

could bear. But what was the result in the end? Job was drawn nearer to the Lord. It tells us that he had twice as much as he had before. And he had three children, three daughters, who are spoken of as the fairest in the land. And the three names bring before us fragrance, purity and beauty. And that's what God wants in us, brethren. He wants that fragrance of Christ, that purity of Christ, and he wants us to be for his glory here, fragrance, purity, and beauty, that beauty of Christ to be seen in us. And I believe that that pruning produced that result with Job. And so sometimes when we go through trials instead of giving ourselves a clean sheet, I think we can take good heed to what. Eli, you said to Job and we can say, Lord, what is there in me? That needs to be corrected. And then Eli who advised him, he said if the Lord shows it to you, be willing to give it up. If I have done evil, I will do it no more. In other words, when the Lord shows it to us, do we say I can't give that up, it's part of me. Or do we say, Lord give me grace? He giveth more grace. Well, let's pruning brethren. And very often this takes place in our lives. Terrible things could happen, like did to Job, but that was pruning and the result was. Much blessing in Job's life as a result of it. Now let's turn over to 2nd Corinthians that we'll see another case. Second Corinthians. Chapter 12 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buff at me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that I it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee. For my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore. Will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me? Well, here we could perhaps call what God was doing as preventing something. There was a tendency on account of all that had been given to Paul, that he might be exalted, that he might be lifted up with pride. There's a tendency in every one of our hearts along that line. And if the Lord gives us more than others, it's so easy for us to become proud. Well, in the case of in the case of Paul, it was in spiritual things. He had those wonderful revelations from. In glory, and so along with it, God gave this thorn in the flesh. He gave him that which, if I could choose the expression, made him somewhat despicable in the eyes. And into the ears of those who listen, there's a suggestion of it when it says his bodily presence was weak and his speech contemptible so that people would say, well, I like to listen to Paul. But on the other hand, he has such a poor delivery that he's awfully hard to listen to. He tells us some wonderful things. But and that that was hurtful to Paul. It really was knocking on his pride. And I'm sure that he hesitated to get up on his feet sometimes because he said.

I know that people are going to find it hard to listen to me. And the Lord says that's just what you need, Paul. It's going to help to keep you humble. And you know, God sometimes has to put blocks in our way to prevent things. We think we just like to rush ahead and the Lord puts blocks in our way. Has he put a block in your way? Well, His grace is sufficient. If he has put that block in the way, he knows what he is doing and did he take it away? Now in Job's case, he got back twice as much as before, but I think sometimes as though the Lord said to Paul, Paul, I'm not going to take it away. You're going to have it the rest of your life. You're going to have it the rest of your life, but My grace will be sufficient for you. And there are things even when we have learned what God has for us, he still lets them remain. They still stay with us. And God allows it in his perfect wisdom and in his love, because his ways are perfect and He knows what's best. He knows our frame, He numbers the hairs of our head. He knows all about us. He knows our tendencies, all about us. And so. Paul learned that this was a necessary thing. And isn't it beautiful to see a submission? He says most gladly. I rather glory in my infirmities, he said. I'd rather. Have this thing that I have to bear with all my life and have a sense of the Lord's presence with me that's better than just having all that delivery and all that nice thing that I could glory in as a man, that I was the best, I was tops and everything like that. Now He has this that keeps him down. Well, brethren, God sometimes prevents things in our lives. He sees where the road goes and he allows things and he doesn't always take them away. He sometimes let's them remain and keep. Teaches us to be constantly dependent on him. And let's turn over to Hebrews chapter 12. Hebrews chapter 12, verse seven. If he endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons. For what Son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, as became of all our partakers, then are ye ***** and not sons? Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence. Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but He for our Profit. We might be partakers of His Holiness now. No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous nevertheless. Afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised. Here we find another, and that is the Lord dealing with us in chastisement. We could speak of different cases like this through the Scripture and all of us have experienced it in some measure in our lives. Because it says what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not. We read about what David did to Uriah. Did David come under the chastisement of God for it all the rest of his life? The sword didn't depart from his house for what he did. He took the life of Uriah and he lost four sons because of it. God has to deal. God has to deal very, very solemnly sometimes in our lives. But you know he does it for our profit. And David was drawn nearer to the Lord. Through the chastisement that God saw fit to bring upon him. And we all need it, brethren. There's no one of us that can say, well, I'm such a good child in his family. He never has to correct me. He never has to put his hand upon me. None of us can say that we all have to go through this, more or less. But it's beautiful what it says he for our profit. It says here we had fathers that corrected us after their own pleasure. And sometimes as parents we correct children for our own pleasure. If the children are noisy and they're bothering me, I might tell them to be quiet. That's for my pleasure, not for theirs. They were enjoying having a good time, but for my pleasure. I told them to be quiet. But my Father in heaven.

God, my Father is not like that. Every correction is for our good. All how faithful he is, how wise he is. Sometimes I was a little too strict with my children, sometimes a little too easy with them. I wasn't always wise in the things that I did. But I have a Father who will never make a mistake in his chastening. He knows exactly what we need. He knows the very intense of our hearts. The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by His actions are weighed. That's a beautiful verse. Because it shows us that God not only sees the act, but He measures the amount of self will in the act. I might do something and the Lord would have to deal much more severely with me than someone who was only saved a short time. Because He does make a difference. And those who know their Lord's will. And so we have a Father. It's the correction is not from God as a judge, but it's from a Father and these are part of the troubles that he brings into our lives. It's good for us to be exercised thereby. We may not always discover the exact thing, but if it has drawn us nearer to the Lord, it is a results in blessing. I'm sort of glad the verse doesn't say it heals the peaceable fruits of righteousness to those who find the reason. Because sometimes I think as Christians we don't always see the reason for a trial that God sends. But if it has taught us to be more dependent upon the Lord than it has accomplished a needed purpose, even although we didn't exactly see it ourselves. And so it says that it's we might be partakers of His Holiness and it yields a blessing when we're just exercised when we look up and say Lord, I want to learn what our teaching me in this trial. Well, as I say, there are many kinds of suffering that we go through. That are part of this groaning creation. Some through unkind acts that are done by others, Some because the world is hostile to Christ, some just because we want to do what's right. And then there are other things that have more directly to do with our own personal lives. Preventing us from things, pruning us because when we want to please the Lord, He wants to have more fruit, and then correcting us when we have done what's wrong. There is one other that I'd like to turn to. It's in Hebrews Chapter 11 and verse 25, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. And then the 10th chapter and the 32nd verse but call to remembrance the former days in which. After ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions. Partly whilst

you were made a gazing stock, both by reproaches and afflictions, and partly while he became companions of them which were so used. There is another suffering that we have, and that is when we cast in our lot with the people of God. When we cast in our lot with the people of God, then we suffer along with them. That is, if they go through trials, Paul said. Who is a who is offended and I burned not. He said. The things that came upon him daily were the care of all the churches He entered into, the trials and sorrows of God's people. He shared them well. Let us be willing in this, brethren. There are a lot of trials among God's people. Do we try to run away from these situations, or do we identify ourselves with the people of God? They are suffering people. Sometimes God has to correct them. And we can shed our tears along with them. Even though the correction may come because of self, will were part of it because remembers one of another. Isn't it beautiful to see this with a man like Moses? He could have enjoyed all the excellence of the court of Pharaoh. He could have perhaps been the next Pharaoh in Egypt because he was in line for it and he gave it up. What for? To have a good time with the people of God.

Now to suffer affliction with the people of God. May I put it very practically too, If you take your place among those gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus, you're going to have to suffer affliction along with the people of God. You may say, oh, there's too many problems, I'm just going to stay clear of them. Then you're not really identifying yourself with them. When these Christians got saved, why they It says here they became companions of those who were suffering and. We cast in our lot with those who are walking to please God. Maybe they're going through trials for their own fault. We can still cast in our lot and feel for them. Isn't it beautiful what it says about the Lord in connection with Israel and their passage through the wilderness? Many of the things came on them because of their own self will. But this is a precious verse in Isaiah. I think it's the 53rd chapter. I'm not just sure it says. In all all the reflection he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them. And he bare them and carried the mall. The days of old, all that they passed through, the Lord felt he. He said, you're living in tents, make me a tent and I'll live with you. Isn't that beautiful? Oh, how precious. Brethren, may we go along with the people of God when they're in trial, share it with them, because we're going to share eternal joy with them. We're going to be with them in the Father's house. Well, are we ever going to understand? We don't always understand. Now maybe we just turn to 1st Corinthians chapter 13, First Corinthians chapter 13, verse nine. For we know in part and we prophecy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. And then in the 12th verse. But now we see through a glass darkly, But then face to face. Now I know in part. But then. Shall I know even as also I am known? And one more verse in Revelation 21, just verses three and four. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the Tabernacle of God is with man, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God. God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crime. Neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away. I believe, brethren, we will know in a coming day. I believe it will all be explained. When the Queen of Sheba came to King Solomon with all her hard questions, she couldn't find answers to them in the country where she lived. But when she asked Solomon these questions, it says he told her all her questions. There was nothing hid from her. That he told her not. And I believe when we get the glory and all tears are wiped away and it's all past, then we'll know. Even as also we are known. We'll understand. We'll enter into it. And what's more, I believe we'll say Amen, it was the right way. We'll not question them as we often do now. We'll know that all was done by one who was perfect in wisdom. In the meanwhile, we walk by faith, not by sight. We're companions in tribulation, as John said, and as we go through these different kinds of things that we have to in a world like this, may we realize that we're in good company, he said. I will never leave the nor forsake thee.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 29:1-29: God's Grace and Blessing (29:1-29)

Deuteronomy 29:1-29

We find in this chapter that there is a difference between the covenant made at Sinai, or Horeb, and that made here in the land of Moab. At Sinai it was pure law, which if they had remained under, God would have had to cut them off from being a nation. But since the sacrifices had been instituted, God could go on with His people, not according to the full purposes of His grace which will be made good in a coming day through the work of Christ, but, as it were, in government mingled with mercy. They are therefore reminded here of how the Lord had cared for them every step of their wilderness journey. Their clothes had not worn out, nor their shoes. They had not needed any stimulants, nor bread for food since God had fed them with manna from heaven. He had given them the victory over their enemies, too, when they came out against them. How wondrous His grace, but they did not have eyes to see, ears to hear, nor a heart to appreciate what the Lord had done for them. Surely it all shows that no external manifestation of God's power or goodness will change the heart of man, for unless God by His Spirit works, there is nothing abiding.

This touching appeal for them to walk in obedience was made before all the people, even with their little ones and their servants present. It was an individual thing that applied to all, even to those who were not there to hear it. How precious to think that we are never lost in the crowd to God. He knows us individually, and seeks our blessing according to His own purposes of love and grace. There is a solemn warning here to anyone who hardened his heart in the face of this lovely appeal, and thought he could do as he liked without hearkening to the voice of the Lord, Surely there are many such today who presume to go on in their sins and despise the grace of God. They will not, however, escape the judgment of God, as we find from our chapter. God's judgment will be openly manifested before all some day, especially upon the fair lands of Christendom, just as it has already been upon Israel.

How lovely to find, at the end of the chapter, that the Lord had better things in view for His people, but for the time they must remain a secret. The telling of the secret things which belonged to the Lord awaited the accomplishment of the work of Christ, and the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Now, as we read the chapters that follow here, with their precious prophecies of Israel's future blessings, we can rejoice in them, for the Spirit is here to guide us into all truth. If Israel had sought to "keep all the words of this law" they would have proved the blessings that are revealed here, but the richer and fuller blessings are still in store for them, though they will not know or enjoy them nationally until the Spirit is poured upon them from on high (Isaiah 32:15).

It is precious, at this point, to think of how we, the church, have been brought into a still more wonderful secret than that of Israel's blessing. We have learned by the same Spirit the marvelous truth of the church as the bride of Christ. We are members of His body, to share with Him as His bride (in the nearest possible place), His headship over all things in that future day. What unbounded grace to us, who were Gentiles

outside of all these covenants and promises.

Further Meditations

1. What are some of the practical ways in which God cared for Israel during their wilderness journey?
2. What are some of the scriptures that show what God has in store for His earthly people Israel? You can start your search in Isaiah 11 and begin writing a very long list.
3. Surprisingly enough Hopes of the Church by J. N. Darby provides a wonderful view of the future blessing of Israel that is both refreshing and encouraging to the soul.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 27:1-28:68: God's Desire for Blessing (27:1-26)

Deuteronomy 27:1-28:68

The children of Israel were told that when they went over the Jordan into the land, they were to put up large stones and plaster them. Then they were to write on them all the commandments which the Lord had given them, so that everyone could see and read them. They were also to make an altar on which to offer sacrifices. It was through the sacrifices alone that the Lord could go on with them, for they quickly earned the curses which are mentioned here instead of the blessings which the Lord would have delighted to bestow. Nevertheless, since they had entered into a covenant to keep God's holy law, they had to suffer under His government for their disobedience. In spite of all this God has not forgotten to be gracious, and in a coming day they will have all the promised blessings because of the redemptive work of Christ on Calvary. This alone is the ground of all blessing.

When in the land, six of the tribes were to stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people for obedience, and the other six were to stand upon mount Ebal to curse the people for disobedience. The Levites then pronounced the curses for worshipping false gods, for despising parents, for infringing upon the rights of others, and for deeds of corruption and violence. As the people heard the curses they had to say "Amen."

God desired to bless them, and He told them of how abundantly He would do so if they would keep His commandments. Anyone who reads these verses can see that the blessings were earthly — in their homes, their land, their cattle, and their business. They were promised that their enemies would flee before them, and that they would be the head and not the tail among the nations. God said if they were obedient they would be able to lend, and not borrow from them, too, because they would have more than they needed.

All this stands out in marked contrast with our blessings now as believers, for our blessings are heavenly (Ephesians 1:3). We have no promise of earthly blessing, though the Lord has promised to supply all our needs as we pass through the world on the way to our home above. How often, too, He exceeds His promises, giving us more than we need, for He is ever a free-giving God.

The fearful curses that follow here for disobedience are a solemn reminder of what sin is in the presence of the One who is "a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29). Anyone who traces Israel's history will know how these very things fell upon them for their disobedience to God, and what was worse still, for their rejection of Christ. God said He would make them a proverb and a by-word among all nations where they would be wanderers, and surely it is true even to this day. How refreshing to trace, also, the silver line of God's grace through all their history, showing that all those who turned to Him in repentance received blessing from His hand. It was not, however, because they deserved it, but because of the work of the cross where God declared "His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Romans 3:25), as well as providing a mercy seat for all who come to Him now, for He is "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3:26).

Further Meditations

1. What curses did the Levites pronounce on the people?
2. What are some of the heavenly blessings that God promises to a believer in our day?
3. You would no doubt find refreshment for your soul in the poem Blessed With All Spiritual Blessings in the Heavenlies in Christ.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 25:11-26:19: Acceptable Offerings and Worship (25:11-19)

Deuteronomy 25:11-26:19

Any careless familiarity of a woman with a man is displeasing to the Lord, and was to be dealt with in Israel. Let us remember that the Lord has set "our secret sins in the light of His countenance" (Psalm 90:8). He knows all we do.

The people were instructed to give full weight and full measure in all their dealings. It is a very sad thing when those who bear the name of Christ are dishonest in their dealings. Sometimes we even hear people boast of how they "got by" in some questionable deal. But they only thought they did! God sees all we do. Let us remember that these things are "an abomination unto the Lord."

The children of Israel were not to forget that Amalek was the continual enemy of Israel, nor were they to make peace with him. We too are to remember that "the flesh profiteth nothing" (John 6:63). It never changes, always lusting against the Spirit, so that there will always be

conflict as long as we are in this scene. When we reach the glory, however, the old nature (of which Amalek is a type) will be gone forever.

After this they were instructed what to say when they brought their basket of firstfruits to the Lord. They were never to forget what they were by nature themselves. It is instructive at this point to notice that although God did not accept Cain's offering of the fruit of the ground, He did accept these things from the children of Israel. The reason for this is that they were a redeemed people. They had not, like Cain, refused to take shelter under the blood, when they were redeemed out of Egypt, and over and over again they showed in their sacrifices that approach to God was through the shed blood alone. And so with us, God accepts the "good works" we do for Him in obedience to His Word, but all our work, before we were saved were but "dead works" and "filthy rags."

When the Israelite brought his basket of firstfruits he was to recall what the Lord had done for him. He was to say, "A Syrian ready to perish was my father," and then to tell what the Lord had done for his nation — for it was the Lord's goodness and grace that had blessed them so abundantly. May we, never forget what the Lord has done for us, but tell Him often, from thankful hearts, how we appreciate His wondrous grace to us.

After this they were to tell how they had kept His commandments and done them, how they had not taken for themselves what belonged to the Lord and also how they had cared for the needy among them. While undoubtedly there was failure in carrying this out, it shows us that there is a suited state in which we should approach God as worshippers. He must have first place in our hearts and lives, and to try to look after all our own interests first and then the Lord, is most dishonoring to Him. Then, too, if we have wronged a brother, or neglected the need of some brother, there will be no liberty in worship, nor will our worship be acceptable to the Lord (Matthew 5:23-24). As we think of the many strained feelings and unkind things that have never been righted among the people of God, we know that many dear saints are losing the joy that might be theirs in the Lord's presence. And the Lord is losing His portion too! May the Lord give us grace to settle these things to His glory before another Lord's day.

Further Meditations

1. What was an Israelite supposed to do when he brought his basket of firstfruits to the Lord?
2. It is wonderful to have a clear conscience and be able to worship without hindrance. How did Nathan help David get to the point where he could worship again?
3. You might find the pamphlet Christian Worship by W. Kelly a help in distinguishing the Biblical definition of worship from the way the word often gets used.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 24:6-25:10: Faithfulness (24:6-22)

Deuteronomy 24:6-25:10

Under the law no man was to be left without that which was necessary for his livelihood in order to settle a debt.

Anyone who practiced kidnapping was to be put to death. What wonders the grace of God can now do for the vilest! The people were also to be very careful to observe all the Lord had commanded as to leprosy, so that this dread sickness would not spread or cause defilement in the camp where the Lord dwelt.

There was also to be consideration for the needs of the poor, so that in their dealings one with another no one was to be put under hardship. A man's wages were never to be withheld from him, especially if he were in need.

Moreover, a child was not to die for his father's sins, nor a father for his sons. They were always to be just in their dealings.

There was to be special consideration given to the fatherless and the widow, and they were to leave gleanings in their fields and on their olive trees. God, in all His greatness, thinks of the needs of every one of His creatures, especially man, in spite of all his rebellion and sin. "How good is the God we adore!" Do you know Him as the One who has met the great need of your guilty soul, through the work of His Son on the cross? Are you redeemed by the precious blood of Christ? The needs of your body are not nearly as important as the need of your soul, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).

Whenever it was necessary to beat a man for his wrong doing, they were not to give him more than forty stripes, for if they kept on beating him it would be anger, and not justice he was receiving.

If an ox was put to work in a corn field, they were to allow the animal to eat all the corn it needed — they were not to muzzle it. The Apostle Paul mentions this in Corinthians, to show that this is applicable to those who labor for the Lord. Those of the Lord's people, among whom they labor, are to care for their temporal needs (1 Corinthians 9:7-14).

If a man died in Israel without having any children, then his brother was to marry his deceased brother's wife and raise up seed to his brother. If he did not wish to do so, then in the presence of the elders of the city she was to loose off his shoe and spit in his face. Now, in a typical way, Israel was married to the law, but sadly there was no fruit for God from this "marriage," for "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), and a broken law brought death. The Lord Jesus, the true Husband of Israel (Isaiah 54:5), came to restore that which He took not away (Psalm 69:4), but Israel would not have Him. He was faithful, as a brother was to be in Israel, but in spite of His faithfulness they rejected Him. They ought to have honored Him, for they were unfaithful and not He, but they robbed Him of the honor due to Him and spit in His blessed face. And yet, all this has not changed His love and faithfulness. He will not put them away (Isaiah 50:1), but will yet betroth them to Him in faithfulness, (Hosea 2:19-20). He will bless them and make them fruitful in the coming day when their seed shall be as the sand of the sea

(Romans 9:27). What grace!

Further Meditations

1. What special consideration was given to the fatherless and the widow?
2. How has the Lord shown His faithfulness to His people Israel? to you?
3. If you've been thinking about the faithfulness of God you might be refreshed by the poem God's Faithful Promises.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 23:9-24:5: Care One for Another (23:9-25)

Deuteronomy 23:9-24:5

The people were to be watchful, even in the small things, and in their contact with the enemy on God's behalf they were to be careful that they were not tempted and led away.

Their camp, too, was to be kept clean, for the Lord dwelt among them. A dirty home or meeting room is always a poor testimony before the world. When the heart has been made clean in the precious blood of Christ, we may well expect the person, the home, the clothes, and the meeting room to be clean too. There are times when we cannot help things getting dirty, but for it to become a habitual thing is not according to God, and even the world will frown upon carelessness in these things. God's Word is to be our guide in all these matters, and how thankful we can be for its precious instruction.

While abhorring evil and corruption among their brethren, as God abhors it, they were to consider the needs of one another. They were to be specially kind to their brethren, not charging them interest on money or other things it was necessary for them to borrow. If they made promises they were to keep them. They did not have to make vows or promises if they did not wish to, but if they made them they were to keep them. It is a fine thing to cultivate the habit of being men and women who say what we mean and mean what we say.

When they went into their neighbor's vineyard or fields, the neighbor was not to mind them eating what was growing there, but they were not to carry any away. How lovely these instructions! How they tend to create that happy feeling of a welcome and kindness, so often lacking in the world, and, alas, even among Christians today. May we profit by all this, for God's glory!

God allowed an Israelite to divorce his wife, not because He approved of it, but because of the hardness of their hearts (Matthew 19:8). He showed His mind about these things in the beginning, when He made Adam, and gave him one wife with whom he was to stay. His Word says, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh" (Matthew 19:5). This is His mind, and time does not change it, as this Scripture clearly shows. We know that God bore with many things in Israel, such as a man having more than one wife, and here, divorce, but such were not His mind (Acts 17:30). Let us remember that now, in Christianity, we are much more responsible than the Israelites were. The Spirit of God now dwells in Christendom as a Divine Person, as well as in the body of every true believer, and so Christendom has been enlightened (Hebrews 6:4). The believer, too, has the power to live to please the Lord, and even if he should have an unhappy marriage partnership, the Lord may use it to draw him or her closer to Himself, causing such to walk more dependently upon Him. The believer is not to break that which God has joined together.

Even such matters as the loneliness of a young wife, when first married, are brought before the people of God here, for the One who made the heart knows all about its inmost feelings and the loneliness that it feels at times. May He teach us the same care one for another!

Further Meditations

1. What were the instructions when going into a neighbor's vineyard or fields?
2. What are some of the reasons that God created marriage?
3. If you are considering marriage or are already married you would find it helpful to read or reread Understanding, Love and Respect in Marriage by G. H. Hayhoe.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 22:11-23:8: Close Associations (22:11-30)

Deuteronomy 22:11-23:8

We have been speaking of our homes, our service to the Lord, our business, and the partnerships of life, and we now come a little closer to the very nearest associations, typified in the garments. The children of Israel must not wear a garment of woolen and linen. This came close enough to touch the very skin! There was to be no mixture of things here, and so we need to be pure in that which is nearest and dearest to us. In the very secret of our lives we are to watch against the little things that would rob of us of communion with God. The Scripture says, "Thou hast set ... our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance" (Psalm 90:8). Let us learn to walk before God in the secret of our lives, for as another has said, "If we judge the little things others do not see, we will not have to judge the greater things they can see."

The children of Israel were also to have a fringe, or ribbon of blue, upon their garments. Blue is the heavenly color, and this would remind us that wherever we go, between us and the earth there is to be the constant reminder that we are a heavenly people. In everything we do

there is to be the character of God our Father manifested. It is just like the boys and girls wearing their school colors; they show they belong to the school, and so we who belong to the Lord are to wear our heavenly colors, and act like heavenly people.

We see how God guarded His people against slander and the spreading of false reports. It is a serious thing to raise a slanderous untrue report, or to pass it on when we hear it. The man who raised the evil report was to be publicly punished and fined for what he had done. Truly, “whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles” (Proverbs 21:23). If, however, the thing he said was true, the punishment was to fall upon the evil doer. There is never to be indifference to evil among the people of God, but how wonderful the provisions of grace in Christianity, for all our failures and sins.

We find in the verses that follow the most solemn warnings against moral corruption; and the sanctity of the marriage tie is carefully guarded. There is so much lightness about marriage in these days, that we, as Christians, need to be warned against the spirit of the age in which we live. God’s Word says, “Fools make a mock at sin” (Proverbs 14:9). Let us be on guard against bad books, and not listen to evil jokes that are being told on every hand, for “when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin” (James 1:15). If we listen, we are sure to be defiled, and perhaps laugh, bringing dishonor upon our blessed Lord.

The people were to exercise care as to who was received into the congregation of the Lord, because the Lord dwelt among them. There were those whose background made their sincerity questionable, and there was to be no hurry in receiving such, until full proof was given of their uprightness. They were to make a difference between those who had continually opposed the people of God, and those from whom they had once received kindness. Moreover, they were not to abhor the children of Edom, for they were their brethren.

Further Meditations

1. How did God guard His people against slander and the spreading of false reports?
2. What are some of the dangers that come from listening to filthy jokes? How do Ephesians 5:4 and Romans 1:32 tell us more about this subject?
3. Search bibletruthlibrary.org for “foolish talking” and you’ll find many articles that give more insight into this all too common practice.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 22:6-9: Faithfulness in the Home (22:6-9)

{vi 5477-5480}Deuteronomy 22:6-9

As we go through the chapter we shall see that some of the instructions have a figurative meaning, but we believe it is clear to all that those which are moral have a present application, for God’s moral character never changes.

We learn here that there was to be the tenderest consideration even for a bird. The Lord has given us meat for our food, but we are not to be heartless, and inflict unnecessary suffering upon any of His creatures.

There are some very important instructions which follow here, and they have needful lessons for us. First, if a man build a house he was to put a battlement, or protection, on the side of the roof, so that no one would be in danger of falling from it. In addition to the care for human life which was necessary, it would show us that we who are parents need to be careful what goes on in our homes. These are instructions about “new homes,” and would show us that it is important to start right. If the young people gather in our homes, let us remember that God holds us, as parents, responsible for what we allow them to do. Things in our homes should not be brought down to the level of the world in its foolishness and entertainment. How many a Christian gathering has become a hindrance rather than a help to our young people, and some have “fallen from thence.” Things were allowed that stumbled and turned them aside, and they have “fallen” into the world. They could not see by our conduct that we were above the level of the world (like the roof in our chapter), and without realizing it, they fell, and today they are living in the world. They have fallen from the position of heavenly men and women altogether.

Eli is a sad example of this. He corrected, but he did not restrain, the evil of his sons, and his whole household came under the judgment of God. Dear Christian, parents, let us not forget or shirk our responsibility in these things. The days are growing darker as the Lord’s coming draws nearer, and the enemy is doing all he can to wreck every Christian home. How much we need grace from above to set up our “battlements,” in these days of radio and television, with all the evil things they bring into so many homes.

After noticing the need of watchfulness as to what is allowed in our homes, we now come to the matter of serving the Lord as typified in the sowing of the vineyard. If our homes are not in order there will be a lack of power as to our service, and undoubtedly that is why the home comes first. Then the children of Israel were told not to sow their vineyard with a mixture of seed. God hates the mixing of things He has made to differ, and we need to watch against these mixtures in spiritual things. We are not left in doubt as to what kind of seed we are to sow for we read in 1 Peter 1:23, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.” God uses this kind of seed and this only — His own Word — for the new birth of a soul. If we are going to work in His vineyard in a way that is acceptable to Him, let us be sure we do not use a “mixture of seeds.” Let us “preach the Word” 2 Timothy 4:2, and especially in a day like this. As we look around in Christendom we cannot help but feel keenly the sad mixture of seeds that is being used.

Further Meditations

1. What did Israelites need to build on their roofs, and why?
2. What does it mean to sow a mixture of seeds? Why does God hate the mixing of things He made different?

3. In the Audio book Living Wholly for God, J. G. Bellett sweetly presents the need to separate ourselves from every practice, principle and person contrary to Himself. You would find it a soul-searching extension to your study of this passage.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 21:21-22:5: Consideration for Others (21:21-23)

Deuteronomy 21:21-22:5

We were considering the stoning of the stubborn and rebellious son, and we need hardly remark that this was law and not grace. Yet it is surely true that sin is just as serious under grace as it was under law — indeed it is more serious because more light means greater responsibility. The grace of God, known in the soul, ought to give a new and powerful motive to live for the Lord's glory. May the Lord cause any thoughtless, disobedient, young reader of this paper to consider his or her ways.

We are also told that if a man had committed a sin worthy of death, and they hanged him on a tree, they were not to leave his dead body on the tree all night, for he was "accursed of God." Surely we have committed sins worthy of death — we were guilty — and all those under the law are cursed by it, too, since they have not kept it. But wonder of wonders, we do not have to bear the punishment, for God has provided a Substitute. The blessed Lord Jesus was made a curse for us on Calvary's tree (Galatians 3:13), taking our guilty place and bearing our judgment that we might go free. Dear reader, have you claimed Him as your Saviour — your Substitute? If not, and you continue rejecting Him, then you must bear the judgment of God yourself, and that forever in the lake of fire. Do not reject God's marvelous grace.

How wonderful to see that God would have His people, who were called by His Name, considerate of others. There is so little consideration of others today that it is well to take notice of what the Lord says here. Often our thoughtless ways bring dishonor upon the Lord, without us realizing it. We may be thoroughly upright in our dealings, and yet lack in that thoughtfulness and kindness which we ought to show to our neighbors. The Israelite was not even to pass by one of his neighbor's cattle, which had fallen into a pit, without stopping to help it out, and he was to care for any of his neighbor's cattle that might have wandered onto his farm until they could be returned to their owner. He was to show this same care with anything belonging to his neighbor. It is beautiful to see the Spirit of God giving instructions about all these "little things" in our lives, for it is well to remember that the Word of God not only tells us how to be saved, but also marks out the path for our feet step by step.

The next verse shows us that there was to be a distinction in clothing between men and women. Men were not to wear women's clothes, nor women those pertaining to men. One sees in this the wisdom of God in guarding us against the moral disorder to which our natural hearts are so prone. The awful corruptions that filled the heathen world (as recorded in Romans 1) were the result of men and women casting aside restraint, and living in their lusts. Men left the natural use of the women and filled the earth with corruption which brought down the judgment of God.

And don't we see the same tendency today? Women dressing like men is but another step in this direction in these so-called Christian lands. Dear young Christian, let us be warned so that we walk circumspectly. Since God has told us that those who do these things are "abomination unto the Lord" it is our wisdom to hearken to the voice of God.

Further Meditations

1. What are some examples of the kindness an Israelite was to show to his neighbor?
2. How can we show tender thoughtfulness toward our neighbors? What is a necessary prerequisite for showing a meaningful kindness to a friend? How does this relate to the fruit of the Spirit?
3. The kindness of the Lord as the perfect example can be enjoyed simply and quickly in the refreshing leaflet The Loving-Kindness of the Lord taken from Footprints for Pilgrims.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 20:8-21:21: The Seriousness of Sin (20:8-20)

Deuteronomy 20:8-21:21

We learn here that there is no use seeking the help of those who are not whole-hearted in serving the Lord, for their very presence will only be a hindrance. Paul saw this in Acts 15:38 when he refused to take John Mark with them on a missionary tour because he had turned back previously. May we ever follow the wisdom of God's Word in these things, for His glory as well as for our own good and blessing.

In warfare, when they came against a city, they were first to proclaim peace to it. Then if the inhabitants refused to make peace, they were to fight and capture the city, killing all the men in it. If it were one of the cities of the land which the Lord had given them, against which they were fighting, they were to utterly destroy it, lest they should learn some of the evil ways of the people, for if we keep just a little of the world near us, it will soon lead us astray. Let us be watchful about the little things!

They were not to destroy the fruit trees in their warfare, for God had given them for food. It is never right to be willfully destructive of what God has given.

If a person was found dead, and no one knew who did it, then the city which was nearest to the place of the crime was to be held responsible. The elders and judges of the city were to take a heifer which had never been under a yoke, and bring it to a rough valley. There they were to

cut off the heifer's neck, and then wash their hands over its dead body, while the priests, and Levites, looked on. They were to declare their innocence in the matter, and ask God to be merciful to them and forgive them. There was to be no passing over sin, or lightness about the seriousness of it.

These instructions remind us so forcibly of the One — the guiltless One — whom the Jews put to death. Then after they had done it, they tried to excuse themselves (Acts 5:28). But God cannot pass over sin — it must be judged. Either the guilty one must die or a substitute must die in his stead, and so the heifer died in the place of the guilty man here. What a picture of the Lord Jesus, the One who was never under the yoke of sin, but who died that we, the guilty ones, might go free! What a "rough valley" it was for Him, as He became our sin-bearer upon Calvary's cross! In matchless grace He put down Israel's sin as a sin of ignorance (Luke 23:34; Acts 3:17), and therefore all those who call out for mercy, as the elders did here, will be forgiven and brought into blessing. Have you called out for mercy? Are you under the shelter of the blood of the Substitute whom God has provided?

In all the people's dealings there was to be the fullest consideration for others, and no one was to be abused. They were not to show any favoritism as parents, but to give the right of the firstborn to the one whose it was.

If, however, a man had a stubborn and rebellious son who would not obey his father or his mother, even when punished, he was to be brought to the elders of the city. The parents were then to tell before them all about his naughtiness, and then all the men of the city were to stone him to death for his stubbornness. How awfully solemn this is! If there is anyone reading these lines who is showing a stubborn and rebellious attitude to his or her parents, is this not a warning to you?

Further Meditations

1. What were the children of Israel to do when they came against a city?
2. Describe how the Israelites refused to pass over sin in the case of Achan in Joshua 7.
3. The subject of holiness and dealing with sin is often misunderstood. You might gain a deeper understanding of it by reading Holiness and Communion by C. H. Mackintosh.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 1:1-3:20: God's Call to Obedience (1:1-46)

Deuteronomy 1:1-3:20

The book of Deuteronomy, which we begin today, is most interesting.

It gives us God's call to Israel to walk in obedience, and a rehearsal of His faithfulness which should have given them every cause to want to obey. Sadly, it only revealed that they had no heart for God or His Word, and that they earned the curse pronounced for disobedience. There are many reminders of God's mercy throughout the book, for He was ever ready to forgive and bless if they would only turn to Him, but, as we have remarked, they had no heart to walk in His ways. In spite of this, it is beautiful to turn to the end of the book and read of the promises of future blessing in that day when God gives them a new heart (Jeremiah 31:33-34), and blesses them according to His own purpose in grace, and not according to what they deserved at all.

The first chapter reminds the people of how they could have crossed the wilderness in eleven days and entered the land, but unbelief kept them out of it. They did not count on the power of God, but thought only of the difficulties which were too great for them. How often we look at difficulties in this way, and suffer, as Israel did, under the government of God for our unbelief, but if we would only turn to Him we would find Him greater than all our difficulties, and He would overcome them for us. When the children of Israel saw the position in which their unbelief put them, they sought ways of their own to get out of it, but all in vain. It is a blessed, yet serious, thing to have to do with the living God, and human prudence is useless in this path "which the vulture's eye hath not seen: the lion's whelps have not trodden it," (Job 28:7-8). Truly man's wisdom or strength could neither find it, nor walk in it.

After rehearsing their journeys, we come to the point where the people are about to start in their advance toward the river Jordan, which they had to cross in order to enter Canaan. They passed by the land of Esau, Moab, and the children of Ammon, buying food and water from them, but not entering into any conflict. It is wonderful to see in all this how God is the disposer of hearts and kept these hostile nations from harming them as they passed by. Let us remember that His Word says, "When a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him," (Proverbs 16:7). Sometimes we are asked, "What would you do if...?" but that is reasoning and not faith. God may never put us in such circumstances, and if He does, His Word will guide us, and His arm is able to protect us.

When they came to the country of Sihon, king of Heshbon, Moses sent messengers asking that they might pass through his land peaceably, but Sihon refused and came out against them to battle. As a result of this, God told the children of Israel to destroy them utterly, killing every man, woman, and child among them, and keeping only the cattle alive. They then took possession of their land for the two and a half tribes who settled on the wilderness side of Jordan. Og, king of Bashan, also came out against the children of Israel, and he and all his people were destroyed, as those of Heshbon had been. The children of Israel then took their land for a possession also. How foolish to oppose God or His people!

Further Meditations

1. What kept the people from crossing the wilderness in only eleven days?

2. Why can't we count on human prudence to find our way through this world without dishonoring God? What makes it essential to obey the Lord in everything?

3. Obedience: The Saint's Liberty is a short little booklet by J. N. Darby that covers the essential nature of obedience from a Christian and not a legal perspective.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 19:14-20:8: Law and Grace (19:14-21)

Deuteronomy 19:14-20:8

The children of Israel were taught to respect the property of others, and not remove the neighbors' landmarks. Boy and girls, and older ones too, can learn from this to be careful with what is not their own. We should always take special care of anything that is loaned to us, so that it does not get spoiled or broken. Nor should we spoil our neighbors' lawns or gardens, since they do not belong to us. These are little things that boys and girls often forget about, and yet thoughtlessness in these very things often hinders one's testimony to Christ a great deal.

If anyone was accused of doing wrong, one witness was not sufficient to prove it. There must be two or three witnesses before the man was charged with guilt, and they were also to be careful lest any of the witnesses were false witnesses. They were to make careful inquiry to be sure that the man was really guilty before he was punished. God is just, and He taught the people these things that they might be just in their dealings, too. How solemn it is, when we stop to think of it, that the very people who were given these laws once took the Lord of glory to prison to judge Him. He came in humiliation, sent by God His Father in love, and they hated Him without a cause (John 15:25). When they could not find anything against Him, they sought false witnesses (Matt. 26:59), and even their false witnesses did not agree among themselves — yet still they condemned Him to die. What injustice! And now, knowing that they treated our blessed Lord in this way, can we expect anything different ourselves? Let us not expect righteousness from this "present evil world," and then we will not be disappointed.

In the end of the nineteenth chapter we can plainly see the difference between law and grace. Under law it was "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," but grace has taught us to love our enemies. We, as Christians, are not to "pay back," but to show the kindness of God even to those who wrong us (Matthew 5:38, Romans 12:19-20).

The children of Israel were an earthly people, looking for an inheritance on the earth. It was therefore right for them to fight for the possession of their land — the land of Canaan. Our conflict as Christians is a spiritual one. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12). We are not to fear the spiritual enemies in the way, but to do as the children of Israel were told, and go boldly forward, counting on the Lord to undertake for us.

Moreover, the Lord did not want His people to go forward with faint or divided hearts. If they had their hearts set upon a home, a vineyard or a young lady whom they had promised to marry, they were not to go into the battle line. Or if they were afraid, and would discourage others by their faintheartedness, they were told to turn back before they faced the enemy. These instructions have a lesson for us, showing that God wants our whole-hearted service to Him. How often someone who is earthly-minded, or afraid to endure any hardships for Christ's sake, has been the means of discouraging others, or causing them to turn back to earthly things, too.

Further Meditations

1. What was necessary before a man was charged with guilt?

2. Whole-hearted service for the Lord can be a real encouragement to others. Describe how Jonathan brought a great victory to Israel by his personal devotedness to the Lord's cause.

3. Eric Smith in the Audio CD *Lovest Thou Me More Than These?* presents a very touching message to your heart. The aged missionary encourages you to follow Christ with a full heart.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 18:9-19:13: God's Gracious Provision (18:9-22)

Deuteronomy 18:9-19:13

How easily we, like the children of Israel, are influenced by those around us, instead of quietly living for the glory of God our Father who has made us a peculiar people to Himself (1 Peter 2:9). Among the heathen there were many very attractive delusions of Satan, which God told His people, the children of Israel, He would not allow among them. May we be warned against the evils of our day too! We need to be watchful against the little things that would rob us of the love of Christ in our souls, for they creep in so easily and unnoticed.

It is beautiful to find the promise of the true Prophet whom God would send — even the Lord Jesus Christ. God knew the people could never keep His holy law, and He always had before Him the One in whom He could, and would, find all His delight. That Prophet was coming, and they must not treat Him with indifference. God said He would require it of those who rejected Him. It was a serious thing to break God's holy law, but it was, and is, far more solemn to reject the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Saviour, for God has no other Saviour but Him. To reject Him means eternal judgment.

If a prophet rose up and spoke in the name of the Lord, they could test and see if what he spoke came true. So God has given us “many infallible proofs” as to the Person and work of His beloved Son. To reject Him is to reject the truth, and those who reject Him are without excuse. Is this statement clear? Surely we do need to be afraid of evil teachings because they are a snare. “Thy Word is truth” (John 17:17).

We now come to the instructions about the cities of refuge. They were to be conveniently located so that the slayer could flee to them. How gracious of God to provide cities of refuge for His erring people, but how much more wonderful that He has provided a shelter from coming judgment for all who flee for refuge to Christ (Hebrews 6:18). He is the true “City of Refuge” for all who put their trust in Him.

There is another point of interest of which we would like to take notice. These cities of refuge in Israel were only for a person who killed someone else unintentionally. There was no pardon under law for presumptuous sins, that is, for people who knew they were sinning and continued in it. Now the Lord Jesus was the One who was killed by His people Israel, and yet in order to provide refuge for them from the judgment they so justly deserved, He said, while hanging on the cross, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). He called it a sin of ignorance, so that future blessing could be assured to them, instead of judgment. How wonderful His grace! These cities were within easy access of anyone who fled to them, but if someone claimed refuge in one of them, whose heart was full of hatred toward the one he killed, he would not be kept in it. He was to be put to death, for the city provided no refuge for such. And so those who continue to be willful rejecters of Christ will be cut off in judgment, and their portion will be eternal hell. An empty profession is no use, just as a man who pretended innocence could not hide in Israel’s cities of refuge.

Further Meditations

1. For what purpose were the cities of refuge?
2. How is the Lord Jesus a good picture of a city of refuge for a believer?
3. A search for “city of refuge” on bibletruthlibrary.org will provide you with many excellent articles on the subject.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 17:17-18:9: Instructions for a King (17:17-20)

Deuteronomy 17:17-18:9

When the children of Israel had a king, he was not to have many wives, for they would turn his heart away from the Lord. Of course in Christian lands a man cannot have more than one wife, but still there is a warning for us here, for many a young man has been turned away from following the Lord by the pretty face of some girl. The Lord knows our weaknesses and warns us in His Word, for an unsaved wife can have a tremendous influence over her husband, and that is why Christians are warned not to marry unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14). We would save ourselves many a sorrow by obeying the voice of God in His Word.

Nor was the king to multiply silver and gold. This is another cause of departure from the Lord, for His Word says, “The love of money is the root of all evil” (1 Timothy 6:10). How many have been turned aside from following the Lord through the riches of this world. Young people often think that if they had all the money they wanted, then they would be perfectly happy, but nothing brings about a young person’s ruin any quicker than plenty of money, unless there is a real purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord, instead of using the money for self and popularity.

It is instructive, though sad, to notice how Solomon the king sought all those forbidden things, and the result was just as God warned—departure from Him.

The king was also to write a copy of God’s law with his own hand. Moreover he was to have it with him and read in it every day of his life. How needful that we too read and write verses from God’s holy Word, the Bible. In those days there was no such thing as a printing press, and it had to be written by hand, but today we can secure a Bible very easily. Do we value it as we should? Do we read it every day? The instructions to read it were not given just to teach the king the law in his mind, but that he might walk in obedience to it. It was also to keep him from pride. We are naturally proud, and our poor hearts seek a place above others. God wants us to be humble. Even if He has given us more ability than some others, His Word would teach us not to boast, but rather to thank Him, using the ability He has given us to help those in need.

The Lord did not give the priests — the Levites — any inheritance of their own, for they were to live off the offerings of the Lord. This is a beautiful picture of how the Lord provides for those who serve Him now. We are not to seek an inheritance here, for our true inheritance is above. God does, however, provide for all our needs as we pass through this world, and gives us to find our truest joys in serving Him. Let us remember His faithful promise to supply all our needs “according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19), and step out in faith at His call.

There was an ever present danger of the people copying the nations around them. They, like us, could see the evil and questionable things practiced around them and would be in danger of doing the same. How many boys and girls and older ones too, are caught in this snare. They say, “I want to do what Jimmy does. I want to have a television set like all the others on the street.” Let us learn to first say, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6).

Further Meditations

1. What was a king in Israel to do with God’s law?

2. How did Solomon get himself in trouble with his excess of money and luxury? Was it having a lot of money or his attitude toward it that caused the problems?

3. George Muller was a man who was wonderfully used of the Lord to spend money very wisely. His lessons in faith are an encouragement to read in The Autobiography of George Muller.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 16:22-17:16: God's Standards (16:22)

Deuteronomy 16:22-17:16

If the children of Israel planted groves near their altars, this would lead to idolatry itself, and so they are warned against this as well. How careful we have to be to watch against the small beginnings of evil, for one thing leads to another. A grove of trees might not appear to be anything, but it was just copying the heathen, and God could not allow an imitation of idolatry to be mixed with worship to Him. This is a warning, surely, to Christendom with all its observances.

Again the children of Israel were told not to offer the lame and blemished animals to the Lord. These sacrifices figured Christ, and they must therefore be without blemish, for He is the holy, harmless, and undefiled Lamb of God. Then, too, it would not be fitting to offer blemished animals to the Lord, for He should have our best. It would be like men and women saying they want to enjoy the world while they have their health and strength, and then when they get old, after Satan has had their best, then they would like to be saved. It is indeed a sad decision.

The people are warned here against any among them who offered their sacrifices to the sun, the moon, or the stars. Any who did these things were to be put to death. Some people think very lightly about such things, but God measures sin by the standard of His own glory, and not by the thoughts of men. If a man were to murder someone, or steal, they would consider it an awful sin (and it is) but it is far worse to turn one's back on God. You may be a respectable boy or girl, or man or woman, but remember this: if you are a Christ-rejecter, there is death and judgment before you, just as surely as death was the penalty for the one who forsook the true God in Israel. If there were any doubt of a man's guilt, witnesses must be brought to prove it. There was to be no indifference to evil.

If a matter came up which was too hard for them to decide in one of their cities, they could take it to the place where the Lord's name was to be placed, and then, when decided, they were to act upon the decision. This is an important consideration for us today, for the Lord has put authority in to the hands of those who are gathered to His precious name (Matthew 18:18) and we are responsible to recognize it even in a day of ruin. Authority does not mean infallibility — though needless to say no assembly has the authority to set aside the Word of God, but rather to act upon it. There is, however, the possibility of an assembly's being mistaken in its judgment, and in this case we are to bow to their decision, while waiting upon God, as long as the truth of God is not given up.

Although the Lord Himself was Israel's king, He knew beforehand that the people would want a man to be their king, so as to be like the nations around them. He therefore told them what the king was to do, and what he was not to do. He was not to have many horses. Horses were primarily used in battle in those days, and the nations were confident of victory if they had many horses, but God did not want His people to trust in horses, but in Him. These horses came from Egypt, and so we know there is much that comes from this world in which we might put our confidence, but the Lord would have us trust in Him. His Word says, "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God" (Psalm 20:7).

Further Meditations

1. Why were the children of Israel not to offer lame or blemished animals to the Lord?
2. What did Solomon do with horses? How does this show what was happening in his heart and his trust in God?
3. You might be refreshed by reading the simple and encouraging poem The Peace of a Perfect Trust.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 15:19-16:21: The Feasts in Type (15:19-23)

Deuteronomy 15:19-16:21

The children of Israel were told to set apart the firstborn males of their herds and flocks for the Lord. If, however, the animal had a blemish, they were not to sacrifice it to the Lord, for they must only offer the best to Him. How important this is for us too, for we ought to give our best to the Lord, being constrained to do so by His matchless love.

Next we have the mention of some of the feasts of the Lord which the children of Israel were to observe. First of all there was the Passover. They were never to forget that they were once slaves in Egypt, and the cost of their deliverance. How needful it was for them, and for us too, to be reminded of what we were by nature, and of the grace that sheltered us from judgment. Moreover the Passover was to be killed in the place where the Lord put His Name. They were to eat it with the bread of affliction (unleavened bread), for this would be the constant reminder of the solemnity of the occasion, which God intended them to feel. They were to kill it in the evening, roast it, and eat it before the Lord, and then return to their tents in the morning. It was a solemn observance.

Then there was the feast of weeks. In this feast they were to rejoice in the blessings of the harvest, and to give their freewill offering to the Lord according to the way He had blessed them. This beautifully represents Pentecost, when the Spirit of God came down to bring us into the

good of what is ours in Christ. In the measure in which we lay hold of this, praises return to the Lord. We are led to say like David of old, "Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee" (1 Chronicles 29:14). Their sons and daughters and even their servants, and all in connection with the household were to rejoice too. May we who are saved be exercised that those in our family circles, and those with whom we come in contact should share in the joys we have found, that they may be saved and led into the path of the truth. The people were then exhorted to obedience, for we need to be careful not to allow things in our lives that hinder our joy in Christ.

Next there was the feast of tabernacles. It was the last feast of the year, and tells us of the fullness of the blessing, as they thought of all the Lord had done for them the whole year through. Thus the Spirit of God would lead us to enjoy the fact that we are even now, "blessed ... with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3). He would have us know what is "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height" of our blessings even now, and the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, too. But there is a day coming above when we shall "know even as also we are known," and then we shall be able to relax and enjoy all that is around us in fullness, without any hindrance. This is the day for which we wait, and when we apply the feast of tabernacles to ourselves, it looks on to that day — for Israel, to their future blessing on earth.

The people were to see to it that justice was maintained in all their cities, and thus blessing would come to them. They were also warned not to plant any grove of trees near an altar to the Lord, for this would be copying the heathen, and God warned them against these beginnings of idolatry.

Further Meditations

1. What was the Passover meant to remind Israel of?
2. We've learned that the feast of weeks foretold the day of Pentecost when the Spirit of God came to dwell in the church. What are some of the services that the Spirit of God performs for the believer?
3. You can get good, simple and in-depth teaching on the feasts mentioned in this chapter from the book *The Seven Feasts of Jehovah* by G. C. Willis.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 13:14-15:18: Care for Others (13:14-18)

Deuteronomy 13:14-15:18

Any matter that concerns the glory of God is to concern us too, not for gossip, of course, but for action according to God. And so here, when the facts were established, judgment was to be carried out upon all those who consented in the evil.

Any abuse of the body in mourning was forbidden of God. Believers are never to neglect their bodies for they are now the temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Colossians 2:23).

We have remarked before, in our talks on Leviticus 11, about the clean and unclean foods mentioned here. They are figures for us, and have necessary and helpful lessons in a spiritual way as to our walk through this world.

It is beautiful, in the end of the chapter, to find the Lord making provision for those who had a long journey to travel to the place where He put His Name; also to see His care for those who served Him, and for the poor and needy of His people. How thoughtful divine love is, and what a lesson for us to be thoughtful of others. There is so much self-seeking on every hand that it is needful at times to remind our hearts to think of others, and to cultivate the spirit of kindness and consideration for them at all times. Let us not forget the simple acrostic for JOY,

Jesus First
Others Next
Yourself Last

At the end of every seven years the children of Israel were to set their slaves free. They were also to release any of their brethren from debts, and the Lord told them that if they did these things He would bless them abundantly. He would give them plenty, so that they could lend, but would not have to borrow.

Moreover they were always to consider the need of a poor brother, and not refuse to help him. Even if it were near the year of release and they might never be repaid, they were to help their brother, if he were in need.

When they set their Hebrew servant free at the end of his six years of service, they were not to send him away empty-handed. They were to give to him generously of what they had at the time of his release. Moreover, they were not to let him go grudgingly. Sometimes if a man has served his employer well, the employer does not want to let him go to another job, or even promote him to another department, but here the Israelite was charged to consider the good of his help. How many labor troubles would be saved if these principles were carried out! Sadly, selfishness rules the world and all suffer for it.

If the servant (or slave) chose to remain with his master, instead of going out free, then his ear was to be bored through with an awl and he was to serve him forever. This is a wonderful type of the Lord Jesus, who perfectly served His Father as man here, and could have gone back to heaven alone, but He would not. He loved His Father, whose perfect will He always did, and He loved His own here too, so He went to the cross to put away our sins. Now He is serving us in glory as our Great High Priest and Advocate (Hebrews 4:15-16; 1 John 2:1).

Further Meditations

1. What principles were to be followed in setting a Hebrew servant or slave free?
2. How does selfishness stop true joy in our Christian lives? Describe how Absalom acted selfishly and the effect it had on his life.
3. You might enjoy thinking more on the subject of joy by reading the pamphlet Joy by D. F. Rule.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 13:1-14: Rejecting Deception (13:1-14)

Deuteronomy 13:1-14

The people were warned that evil men would rise up, pretending to be prophets with special revelations. They were not to listen to them, since they were trying to turn the hearts of the people from the true God to false gods. Even when the signs and wonders actually took place, they were not to be deceived by them. While admitting they were real signs, they were to recognize that it was Satan's power used to turn their hearts after false gods. The Lord told them He allowed these things to prove them, whether they would serve Him and cleave to Him.

One feels this has a warning for us. People go in crowds wherever there are visible signs, and often forget the test, 'Is this to turn people to the true God revealed in Christ?' If the deity of Christ and His finished work are denied, let us reject the whole thing. In Israel the false prophet was to be put to death, but in Christianity "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds" (2 Corinthians 10:4). We are therefore to use "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17), and reject what is false. Let us never forget that Satan has power. God will soon allow him to display it very definitely — indeed we see some of it now. Men rejected God's power revealed in Christ when He was here. The Lord Jesus said, "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John 5:43). Since men would not have the blessed Son of God, God must give them over to a delusion. Today "the gospel of Christ ... is the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16), and those who reject it are exposed to the delusions of the day. Let us test everything by the Word of God.

Even if the deceiver was one of a man's own family circle in Israel — brother, son or daughter, or his own wife, or perhaps a near friend — he was to be rejected. They were not to consent to him in any of his wickedness, or even listen. They were not to feel sorry for him (or her) or act differently because of the close relationship. He was to be stoned to death, the near relative being the first to lift his hand against him. How often family ties hinder loyalty to Christ! Because of a near relationship people will keep quiet about the most frightful utterances and deeds. If my own boy goes wrong, I ought to be the first to take a stand against him, and not try to hush it up. These are solemn facts, but they are the truth of God and one feels they should be spoken forth. Many a testimony has been weakened by lack of faithfulness in these matters. It may seem hard to do it (and it is!) but not half so hard as the government of God which falls upon unfaithfulness.

Then there are instructions about reports. We are warned elsewhere not to spread false reports, but here we are told that any uncertain matter of evil was to be fully investigated. Inquiry and diligent searching were to be made as to the facts, for there was to be no indifference about evil. It is not enough to say such things are none of our business, but we are to act for the glory of God.

Further Meditations

1. How were the Israelites to treat a deceiver?
2. Honesty is incredibly important in Scripture. What did the Lord Jesus call Satan? What does the book of Proverbs have to say on the subject?
3. You can find a good little article on Honesty in the Concise Bible Dictionary which can be read at BibleTruthLibrary.org.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 12:11-32: The Ground of Gathering (12:11-32)

Deuteronomy 12:11-32

This place which the Lord would "choose ... to put His Name," is mentioned more than twenty times in Deuteronomy. This would show us how important a matter it is. Ought we not to be exercised about the scriptural ground of gathering today? A common expression in Christendom is very misleading. People are told, "Go to the church of your choice." How contrary to the truth of God! The Church is not a building, or an organization of men, for the Word tells us Christ is "the head of the body, the church" (Colossians 1:18). The true Church is composed of all who are saved and indwelt by the Spirit of God (Acts 2:47; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

Knowing this, we are not of our own wills to choose where to go, but we are to be guided by the Word as in all things. Like the disciples, when the feast of remembrance was first instituted, we must ask the Lord, "Where wilt Thou that we prepare?" Many meeting places of Christendom are not founded upon the truth of God, but upon the thoughts of men. They are not gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus, but instead meet under man-made names and have leaders of their own choice and appointment. Such are like those spoken of in Colossians who were not "holding the Head" (Colossians 2:19).

Some persons think lightly of these things, but God's Word is clear. If He charged Israel so definitely and often about that place, how can we consider it unimportant? Has He not exhorted us to be found "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3)? Let us be exercised before Him about these things! Are you gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus?

Although the Israelites might have a long distance to travel to the place the Lord had chosen, it still was the only place God acknowledged. We are not just to look for a place of gathering nearby, but for the place chosen of the Lord — in accordance with His Word.

The people are reminded here of the importance of not eating blood. It was to be poured out upon the ground, for in this way they acknowledged that life belongs to God.

They were also warned not to copy the nations around them. We sometimes want to do things just to be like others. Christian boys and girls, and we who are older too, are in danger of copying the world in our ways, of wanting to go places and do things they do, but we, like the children of Israel are to be a separated people unto the Lord. We are particularly warned, as they were, not to be “conformed to this world.” We read that the Lord Jesus “gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father” (Galatians 1:4). May the Lord give us grace to be “imitators of God as dear children” (Ephesians 5:1, JND), instead of being imitators of this poor Christ-rejecting world!

There was to be no change made in what God had commanded. The people were told again, as they had been before, not to add to it, nor to take from it, for it was the Word of God. What a warning to any who would set aside any part of God’s Word, as well as to those who tell us of further revelations. Let us cling to the Bible.

Further Meditations

1. Why was it important for the Israelites not to eat blood?
2. What’s wrong with going to the church of my choice as long as there are real Christians there and they don’t deny the Trinity and key fundamentals of the gospel? What Scriptures can you give that show that we aren’t left to make the decision on our own?
3. Another excellent booklet that you might find helpful in considering the subject of the ground of gathering is Christ the Centre: Why Do We Meet in His Name Alone? by C. Stanley.

The Place of Blessing: Bible Talks on Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 11:22-12:11: The True Ground of Blessing (11:22-32)

Deuteronomy 11:22-12:11

God then told the children of Israel the full extent of the land He was about to give them — all was to be theirs — and yet, in reality, only that upon which the soles of their feet would tread could they say they really possessed. And so with us; we are “blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3), but we only possess, in reality, the truth in which we walk. This is important for us to remember, for although we are truly “rich” in Christ, we can walk through the world enjoying very little of our portion, to our own shame and loss. The children of Israel never really possessed all the territory God gave them — indeed they lost it altogether when God allowed them to be carried away captive for their disobedience. Nevertheless, God told them they need not fear their enemies, for He would make their enemies afraid of them, if they walked in His ways.

Once again we are reminded that the children of Israel were under law, and blessing was made conditional upon their obedience, with a curse for disobedience. Little wonder that they finally lost the land altogether, for if blessing is upon the ground of man’s faithfulness, all is hopeless. How good to turn to the Lord Jesus, and see His finished work on Calvary as the true ground of blessing. Through this Israel will possess the land again in a future day, and through it we also shall have our place in eternal glory. Salvation is all of grace.

The children of Israel were told that the first thing they were to do when they entered their land was to destroy all the altars and groves, and every trace of the idolatrous worship of the heathen. There was to be no mixture of things in their worship; it must be carried out as God had appointed, and not copied from the heathen. One feels this has a voice for us, for, what a mixture of things we see today in Christendom! We see pictures and images (under Christian names, of course) used quite commonly. Inquiry would show that these things, along with some so-called Christian feasts, had their origin in heathendom. If these things were forbidden to the children of Israel, undoubtedly they are not pleasing to the Lord today (Colossians 2:20).

We now find something very important and remarkable brought before the people. They were told that when they entered the land, the Lord would choose a place from among their tribes where they were to offer their sacrifices. No other place would do but the one God chose. They were not at liberty to choose a place themselves, or to build a center as they thought best—such a place could not be called the place the Lord had chosen. They must acknowledge God’s center and there only were they to offer their sacrifices to Him.

We believe that God has a center for His people today too. It is not a geographical one—not some particular city, as in Israel—but His Word tells us about it. The Lord Jesus said, “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them,” (Matthew 18:20). Any other way of gathering would be unscriptural, for God by His Spirit gathers His own to Christ—this is His center,

Further Meditations

1. What was the first thing the children of Israel were told to do when they entered the land?
2. Why weren’t the children of Israel permitted to worship wherever it was convenient to them?
3. How Should Christians Meet According to the Bible? by J. R. Gill and T. A. Roach provides an excellent and simple introduction to the question of where a Christian should meet with others.

Deuteronomy 9:23-11:21

The people are reminded here of how Moses interceded again for them at Kadesh-barnea, when they murmured at the report of the spies, and would not go into the land. There again God had come in and spared them, as at Sinai.

Moses told them of how he went up into the mount the second time, and of how God gave him the law again, but on this occasion it was put into the ark. This is a beautiful type of how the Lord Jesus (the true “Ark”) is the only One who could meet God’s holy requirements, and — blessed be His Name — He has done this, magnifying the law and making it honorable.

Since God had been gracious to them and shown His patient love, the people are called upon to show their appreciation by walking in obedience. Moreover Moses told them that it would be for their own good to do so, for God could then bless them abundantly, as He desired to do. It was not just the outward form of circumcision that God wanted, but a heart that walked in His ways. This was what He required, but alas they could not give it, for the law could not give new life, and this is what was needed before there could be any fruit for God. Though the people were, of course, still under trial, it was being proven over and over again that “they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Romans 8:8). All God’s pleadings and entreaties, so lovingly given to them in these chapters, did not produce the desired result.

The people had seen the works of God before their very eyes. It was not just something they had heard, but wonders they had seen themselves, so they had no excuse if they did not believe, for full testimony had been given.

Once again we notice that the promised blessings were of a material nature. God promised rain when they needed it, grass for their cattle, and good crops. All this is in direct contrast with our blessings as Christians now, for we are not promised good crops and earthly prosperity, but only food and raiment (1 Timothy 6:8). We are, however, told that we are, even now, “blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). Some day soon, faith will be changed to sight, for we shall rise to meet the Lord in the air — to dwell forever in our heavenly home. Let us not look for earthly blessing, God may graciously grant it at times, but it is not our promised portion.

The charge for the children of Israel to teach their children the law is repeated here. We cannot overestimate its importance, especially in this present day, for as we look around we see so many Christian homes where the children have not walked in the ways of the Lord, but have wandered away into the world. May we not often trace it to a lack of faithfulness in the home? God wants our homes to be happy, as He promised Israel here that they might be “as the days of heaven upon the earth.” There is no sweeter spot on earth than a Christian home where there is God’s order, and as a result of God’s blessing. If, however, we try to arrange our homes according to our own thoughts, seeking the ease and comfort of the world, with position and high education for our children, we shall prove the foolishness of our choice. There will be sorrow instead of blessing. Let Christian parents be warned.

Further Meditations

1. What kind of material blessings were promised to Israel?
2. What are some of the proper attitudes that should be present in a Christian home? You might start your answer by looking at Ephesians 5.
3. Thinking about godly Christian homes is essential for any parent. Surprisingly enough you can find some excellent instruction in The Institution of Marriage and Related Subjects by P. Wilson.

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