

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Deuteronomy: Moses' Great Appeal For Israel To Obey God For Blessing

Part IV: The General Call For Loyal Obedience, Deuteronomy 4:44-11:32

E. Replacing An Unavoidably Lost, Valued Way Of Life With God's All-Sufficiency (Deuteronomy 8:1-20)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Many people today sense the heartfelt need that they are unavoidably losing a valued way of life:

(1) Keith Hall, 2008 to 2012 commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in a letter to The Wall Street Journal, June 17, 2013, p. A16 wrote: "(W)e are a decade away from a full labor market recovery" due to issues in the "private sector." He added, "If you ask most small-business owners, our biggest job creators, what they see as the single most important problem, you get an amazing answer . . . 'taxes' and 'government regulations and red tape.'"

The fact that such an answer would be termed "*amazing*" by this former official reveals the enormous uphill climb our country faces relative to restored job growth due to the obstacle of the government bureaucracy.

(2) A sense of loss in focus affects the health care industry: in an ad on p. A18 of the same paper, Lloyd H. Dean, President and CEO of Dignity Health was cited as saying, "There's something cold and impersonal happening when we talk about health care. The words *budget*, *cut* and *waste* get used a lot. But the one word that's said less and less, and has somehow lost its meaning, is the word . . . *care*."

(3) President Ronald Reagan's former speech writer, Peggy Noonan, in her article, "Privacy Isn't All We're Losing," *Ibid.*, June 15-16, 2013, p. A15 asserted: "I feel that almost everyone who talks about America for a living -- politicians and journalists and even historians -- is missing a huge and essential story: that too many things are happening that are making a lot of Americans feel a new distance from, a frayed affiliation with the country they have loved for half a century and more . . ." She blamed the president's "lack of care, arrogance, and an absence of any sense of prudential political boundaries" for doing "the most in our time to damage trust in government." (*Ibid.*)

Regarding this same issue, President Obama *himself* voiced concern in a June 7, 2013 news conference when he said, "(I)f people can't trust not only the executive branch but also don't trust Congress and don't trust federal judges to make sure that we're abiding by the Constitution, due process and rule of law, then we're going to have some problems here." (Daniel Henninger, "The Sum of All Fears," June 12, 2013; online.wsj.com)

Need: Thus, we ask, "If I sense I am unavoidably losing a valued way of life, how am I to respond?"

I. Moses' general Deuteronomy 4:44-11:32 call for loyal obedience to God in the suzerain treaty format of Deuteronomy calls Israel in Deuteronomy 8:1-18 to *RECALL* His supply in *PAST TIMES* of *LOSS* for *CONTINUING* to *TRUST HIM* for His *ALL-SUFFICIENCY* in the *PRESENT* and *FUTURE*:

- A. In urging Israel to heed His laws for blessing (Deut. 8:1), God told Israel to **recall** her times of *loss* in the **wilderness** and His **supply** for those losses toward **trusting HIM for ALL needs** in her **future**, Deut. 8:2-5:
1. Israel's wilderness experiences were a **contrasting LOSS** compared *even* to her **past bondage in Egypt**:
 - a. In ancient Israel's era, as it is today, Egypt had a warm, dry climate, but its lowlands never lacked water since they were irrigated by the ever-flowing Nile River, Compton's Encyclopedia, 1973, v. Seven, p. 121.
 - b. Also, Israel had lived for four centuries in the best part of Egypt, the fertile, irrigated land of Goshen in the southeastern part of the Nile delta (Gen. 47:5-6 with Ex. 12:40; I. S. B. E., 1929, v. II, p. 1280-1281).
 - c. So, leaving fertile Goshen for the Sinai wilderness led Israel to sense a "loss" in a past valued way of life as seen in Israel's Numbers 11:5 longing for Egypt's fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic.
 2. God Himself was **very aware** of Israel's *sense* of *loss* in a *past valued way of life*, so, to show He had the ability to give Israel the best in life, just before providing Israel her first serving of manna, He sent her with **quail**, a *delicacy* in that era, Exodus 16:13-15; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Exodus 16:13.
 3. Nevertheless, God **intentionally arranged** for Israel to travel the **LONG, BLEAK** route into the Sinai wilderness **opposite** the quick, easy route up to Canaan since Israel had a limited faith in God, and would have otherwise fled from Canaan's inhabitants were she to have faced war with them, Exodus 13:17-18.
 4. God thus **used** the **wilderness environment** to **make** Israel see her **NEED** to **trust** in **His all-sufficiency**:
 - a. In Deuteronomy 8:2-3, God through Moses showed He wanted Israel to **recall** how He had led her to face humble reliance on Him for her daily, lowly "manna" supply, a provision that arrived by God's **word** and not from the wilderness around her in contrast to how her food had arrived in Egypt. This way, Israel would learn that she needed to rely on the **Word of God** and not on bread only for her very life, Deut. 8:3.

- b. Deuteronomy 8:4 reveals God wanted Israel's people to **recall** how He had **miraculously** preserved their **clothes** and **health** throughout their four-decades-long wilderness journey, not letting their garments wear out nor their feet swell though they walked so much in a hostile land as **proof** of **His all-sufficiency**.
5. Hence, Israel was to learn from these difficult times to keep her focus on **God's all-sufficiency**, Deut. 8:5.
- B. Applied to the future, Israel was to **RECALL** this **divine all-sufficiency** upon entering Canaan, a land of plenty where she could be tempted to **forget His all-sufficiency**, turning faithless again, Deuteronomy 8:6-18:
1. The Promised Land was a land of bounty where Israel could easily forget that her real Source of livelihood was the Lord, and so slip back into relying on the land around her as she did in Goshen, Deut. 8:6-9.
 2. Accordingly, Israel was to recall her need for God as taught to her in the wilderness that when she partook of Canaan's bounty, she would continue to thank the Lord for it, Deuteronomy 8:10.
 3. God again charged Israel that when she entered Canaan and enjoyed its produce (Deut. 8:11-13) not to forget Him (Deut. 8:14a) Who took her from bondage, through the life-threatening, arid wilderness of snakes and scorpions so she might trust Him that in the end He might always bless her, Deut. 8:14b-16.
 4. Indeed, the people of Israel were to realize that their ability to gain wealth of any kind [including that of money] was not the product of their own work, but was itself His blessing to her, Deuteronomy 8:17-18.
- II. **Deuteronomy 8:19-20 closed this section by adding a warning for Israel not to forget her need to rely on the Lord versus looking to false, pagan deities for her livelihood supply and so face God's judgment.**

Lesson: God **ARRANGED** for Israel to **FACE MATERIAL LOSS**, to suffer **LEAN times** in her wilderness travels, to reveal His **ALL-SUFFICIENCY** for her in that lean setting to equip her to **RECALL HIS ALL-SUFFICIENCY** so as to **COUNTER Israel EVER AGAIN** trusting in herself, in pagan deities or in the land about her for blessing.

Application: May we (1) trust in Christ to become a child of God (John 1:11-12) and come under His care, Rom. 8:32. (2) If we sense we are unavoidably losing a valued way of life, know that God has let it occur to teach us to trust Him for all our needs, Phil. 4:19. (3) As He later meets our needs, may we thank Him and keep trusting Him.

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

In our introduction, we mentioned some heartfelt needs many people face today, so to apply this lesson to address them, we can **recall** God's sufficiency in a **past SIMILAR lean era** in **Church History** for our era as follows:

(1) Significant problems we face in America today correspond to significant problems Martin Luther faced in his day in sixteenth century Europe: (a) the huge growth in centralized government in America compares to the rule of Charles V, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire in Luther's time, who ruled a larger realm than any such former "Christian" emperor, Compton's Ency., 1973, v. Four, p. 211; (b) the Islamic terrorist attacks we face today compare to the attacks by Islamic pirates on coastal cities in Spain and Italy in Luther's era, *Ibid.*, p. 211-212; (c) today's widespread economic and political unrest in our country with significant distrust by the people of the government is what Luther also faced, for, in his day, "(t)hroughout Western Europe there was unrest" (*Ibid.*, p. 211); (d) like the frustration small-business owners today express over high government taxes, regulations and red tape, "(m)any tradesmen and peasants" in Luther's time sought "more rights from rulers and landlords," *Ibid.*

(2) Thus, we can learn from what Biblical steps Luther took in his era with God's blessing to know what we should be doing today similarly to enjoy God's blessing (as follows):

(a) According to James Atkinson, a Church History authority, in his work, The Great Light: Luther and Reformation, 1968, p. 88, "Luther never saw it as his role to re-organize the Church or to re-systematize its theology: he simply preached the Word of God . . . believing that this Word would permeate and restore the Church."

Similarly, God will also bless us today if we like Luther heed 2 Timothy 2:4; 3:14-4:2 and stay focused on proclaiming God's Word versus getting preoccupied with many other side issues of concern in today's era!

(b) Atkinson added that "what grieved Luther most was the gross ignorance of the people," *Ibid.*, p. 94. Accordingly, "(f)or the clergy he provided sermons for a year" and "exhorted" them "to teach their folk," also exhorting "the father of every household to take over the responsibility for the whole household, to give this teaching, help its members to pray and inculcate in them thankful hearts," *Ibid.*

We do much the same at Nepaug Church: we post thousands of Bible messages on our web site for use by even untrained Christians throughout the world. We then preach and teach God's Word in our Church ministries, applying its truths to life like Luther directed for the people of his era. Indeed, this last week, I heard several stories of how people who are either in our body or who are affected by it are learning to live by faith in God!

May we **RECALL God's all-sufficiency in lean times that we might continue to trust Him for blessing.**