

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

G. Enjoying Stable Security As God's Obedient Servant

(Deuteronomy 10:12-11:32)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Today, a huge global middle class feels vulnerable to harm on a wide variety of fronts (as follows):

(1) The lead editorial, "The march of protest" in The Economist, June 29, 2013, p. 11 reported that "(o)ver the past few weeks, in one country after another, protesters have risen up. . . They tend to be ordinary, middle-class people . . . Their mix of revelry and rage condemns the corruption, inefficiency and arrogance of the folk in charge."

(2) Francis Fukuyama added in his article, "The Middle-Class Revolution" in The Wall Street Journal, June 29-30, 2013, p. C1 that this middle class feels "alienated from the ruling political elite" and "want not just security for their families but choices and opportunities for themselves."

(3) We face a similar sense of vulnerability in America: after the Supreme Court's recent decisions on race and gay marriage, Mark Tushnet, the William Nelson Cromwell Professor at Harvard Law School, in "Our Rights, Not the Court's," (Ibid., The Wall Street Journal, p. C3) voiced concern about the Court, writing: "(N)o serious observer of the Court can think that the justices are . . . interpreting the Constitution's words" as is their job; rather, "the justices are deciding rather than interpreting." Tushnet believes "There's no good reason to give the justices the last word on race, abortion and gay marriage," and he holds that Congress should even override them by forming new laws, Ibid.

(4) This issue affects us locally: one of our members told me last Sunday that when the Court handed down its decision on gay marriage, it was hard to look at the headlines in the newsstands as the subject was so unnerving!

Need: *So, we ask, "With the vulnerability to harm many sense in regard to various sources, what is the answer?"*

- I. Moses' general Deuteronomy 4:44-11:32 call for loyal obedience to God in the suzerain treaty format of Deuteronomy ends with God's call for Israel to heed Him for full blessing, Deuteronomy 10:12-11:32.**
- II. This call is very revealing in light of the NATURE of the Deuteronomy SUZERAIN TREATY format:**
 - A. The suzerain treaty format upon which the book of Deuteronomy was framed was an Ancient Near Eastern arrangement between a great king and a vassal (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 260) by which the king pledged to **protect** and **provide** for the vassal *IF* the vassal **loyally submitted** to the king, Z. P. E. B., v. Five, p. 810.
 - B. In the case of Deuteronomy where Israel is the vassal nation and God her Great King, this meant that **GOD PROMISED to PROTECT and to PROVIDE for Israel only IF she LOYALLY SUBMITTED to Him!**
- III. Accordingly, Deuteronomy 10:12-13 that begins to conclude the general section on calling Israel to loyal submissive obedience starts with a DEMAND for Israel's SUBMISSIVE OBEDIENCE to the LORD:**
 - A. Moses claimed that God as Sovereign King "required" (*sha'al* = "ask," B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 981-982; *me'imak* = from with you", Ibid., p. 768-769; that is, "require from") Israel to "fear" (respect) the Lord her God, to walk in all His ways, to love Him and to "serve" (*'abad* = "serve as subjects," Ibid., p. 712-713; Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 279) the Lord thy God "with all thy heart and with all thy soul," Deut. 10:12-13.
 - B. The emphasis in this directive is clearly one of total, respectful, loyal submission to Israel's Lord God!
- IV. In return, God promised comprehensive protection and provision for Israel, Deuteronomy 10:14-11:25:**
 - A. Moses reminded Israel that since God was the Lord of the universe (Deut. 10:14, 17a), He was sovereign over it all and thus possessed all the power needed to provide for and to protect Israel.
 - B. God's favor of Israel was granted in grace (Deut. 10:15), and He was gracious to the vulnerable fatherless, widow and foreigner (Deut. 10:18a), giving them food and clothing so that Israel was also to be gracious to these folk as well (Deut. 10:18b, 19). This called for Israel to revere and heed the Lord as the Good Protector and Provider she had known thus far relative especially to oppressive foes, Deuteronomy 10:20-21.
 - C. Moses then reminded Israel how God had multiplied and delivered her from Egypt, especially in regard to His great deliverance of Israel at the Red Sea from Egypt's powerful chariot army, Deuteronomy 10:22-11:4.
 - D. Moses also warned Israel how God had punished rebellion against Him, nearly destroying the nation in the sinful uprising that was led by Dathan and Abiram, Deut. 11:5-7; Ibid., Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 282.
 - E. Moses also urged Israel loyally to heed the Lord to gain His agricultural provisions regarding the Promised Land, for it was not a land irrigated by human effort as Israel had experienced in the land of Goshen in Egypt, but a land that was utterly reliant on God's supply of rain to produce its crops, Deuteronomy 11:8-17.

- F. For these reasons, Moses urged Israel to recall God's Law and to teach it to the children, Deut. 11:18-25.
- V. **Concluding this Deuteronomy 4:44-11:32 general call for loyal obedience, at Deuteronomy 11:26-32, Moses called Israel to dramatize her need to heed God in a special ceremony upon entering Canaan:**
- A. Moses summarized his call, noting that were Israel to obey God's Law, she would be blessed (Deuteronomy 11:26-27), but that if she disobeyed it, she would be cursed of God, Deuteronomy 11:28.
- B. When she entered Canaan, Israel was to dramatize this truth in a special ceremony, Deuteronomy 11:29-32:
1. Two mountains rose 3,000 feet up near the city of Shechem, Mount Ebal to the north and Mount Gerizim to the south, with Shechem in the valley below them, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Deut. 11:29.
 2. We know from Joshua 8:33-35 that half of Israel's tribes stood on the Mount Ebal side and the other half on the Mount Gerizim side as the Law was read likely down in the valley below at the city of Shechem.
 3. Former Professor of New Testament Greek at the Multnomah School of the Bible, Rev. Edward Goodrich, told our New Testament Greek class years ago that these two hills form a natural amphitheater, that one high up on either hillside can hear another person talking down in the valley, that all Israel could hear the Law read, and understood the curses to be avoided and the blessings to be gained by heeding God's Law!

Lesson: Israel was to view GOD as her COMPREHENSIVE Provider and Protector from ALL of her formidable concerns that she might LOYALLY OBEY Him as His SERVANT for COMPLETE protection and provision.

Application: May we (1) trust in Christ as Savior from sin for eternal salvation, John 3:16, thereby coming under God's "much more" care, Romans 8:32. (2) As believers, may we (a) rely upon the indwelling Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16) for the power to (b) will (Phil. 2:12-13) and to (c) do God's will (Rom. 8:3-4) as His servant, and (d) witness God provide and protect us from all that concerns so we that can fulfill His will for us, Philippians 4:19.

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

Relative to this sermon, God gave us great encouragements after my Mom passed away on Tuesday:

(1) After my brother in California contacted the mission my Mother had joined to be a missionary to Africa, Mrs. Ely at mission headquarters e-mailed him a copy of Mom's typed personal testimony she had submitted 67 years ago back in 1945 to apply for joining the mission! He forwarded it to me, and it richly illustrates this sermon.

If anyone had cause to feel vulnerable to harm on many fronts, the need this sermon addresses, it was Mom: her Old Saybrook, Connecticut home was broken up when she was six, and she with her sisters were taken by the police from their home in 1929, the year the stock market crashed in the Great Depression. After six more difficult years in the State orphanage in Hamden, Connecticut, Mom was taken in as a foster daughter by a pastor and his wife.

However, just ten years later, at age 22, in giving her personal testimony to SIM, Mom wrote: "(P)revious to my entrance at Multnomah School of the Bible, I worked at . . . a Christian bookstore in Seattle. My boss was very careful in choosing only those books that we believed were truly Scriptural. I became well acquainted with the finest in Christian literature and I will always thank the Lord for the time of service there." On her year at Multnomah, she added: "I thoroughly enjoyed my studies . . . and it seemed that what I had learned all my life in a Christian home came to life and became a reality in my life . . . Our dean of women was a wonderful Christian and she presented the Word in such a way that the Lord took every word she said and bore it home in my own heart."

Note how these remarks reflect stability and security opposite the upheaval of her early childhood. This is not to say that Mom never battled her past -- it actually hounded her all of her life. However, by God's grace and power, when she yielded to God's will to serve Him in Africa, He gave the stability and security she needed to fulfill His will.

(2) Also, part of Mom's letter says, "I was born again sometime in August, 1935 at a Children's Bible Camp." That news really settled me on our plans for Mom's memorial service: before being forwarded her letter, I had told my brother that we could not fly to California for her funeral during our coming VBS week as it would be a hardship on our Church, so he agreed to schedule a graveside service for later this month. Then, upon learning by her letter that Mom was saved at a Children's Bible Camp similar to a VBS ministry, I saw how fitting it was to delay her memorial service due to our coming VBS week in honor of how she came to the Lord! As we made the commitment to serve Him at Nepaug for VBS, the Lord had gone ahead of us 78 years before in 1935 to arrange for Mom to come to Christ in a children's ministry, giving us the stable security we needed in our era to serve Him this coming week in VBS!

(3) Since our VBS ministry is part of my total ministry at Nepaug Church, I also see the Lord using Mom's 1945 letter in regard to this ministry to direct me in my work here, that I am to continue to make this calling a priority from the Lord even in the face of the passing now of both parents! God still wants me to be His servant in this place!

May we yield to the Lord as His servants, and He will give us the stable security we need to do His will.