

Dt. 30:11-14 (WCF 1:7) "Bread and Butter with Hidden Gems"

For the Children: The Bible is like a bowl of stew. Much of it you can eat, even when you are young. You get the benefit you need from what you can swallow. But there may be some pieces of meat that are more chewy. You may not be able to handle those when you are young – or when you are old. The Lord has put the harder bits in the Bible to remind us that we don't know very much; that we need His help to understand His Word; and to encourage us to study the Bible more so that we grow in understanding. He has put the easier bits in so that we learn all we need to know to be saved – though even with those parts, we need His help. **Questions:** What is it in God's character that makes Him want to explain the truth clearly to His people? What is the purpose of His Word? If God has made the Bible clear enough for us to be saved, why bother trying to learn more about it?

Introduction:

First Point: Near to Hear

- 1) Something to be Heard: "This commandment" refers to the whole word of covenant-renewal that Moses is delivering to Israel before they cross into the Promised Land. There is an emphasis on Israel being able to *hear* this word (vss 12 and 13.).
- 2) Not Too High or Too Far: Israel is assured that the covenant-word is not too high or too far for them to hear it. It hasn't been retained in heaven by an unapproachable God; and it isn't so lofty that only a few specialists can understand it. They do not have to go on an epic journey across the seas in search of enlightenment.
- 3) Revealed on Earth: For God has revealed His Word, through prophets (and apostles). He has caused it to be written down and preserved. He sent His Son, the Word-made-flesh, to fulfill it and complete it. He ensures that the elect receive it, with the aid of the poured-out Spirit. Already in that OT time, Moses could say that "The Word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (v. 4).

Second Point: Near to Observe

- 1) God's Character Demands Clarity: The Lord is glorious and wants to be glorified by His creatures. He is gracious and wants to save sinners – therefore we must learn about His Son. He is holy and wants us to learn about holiness so we can walk in His ways. This requires a perspicuous revelation.
- 2) Designed for Living: It also shows that the Word is designed to be observed (vss. 12, 13 and 14). It is given so that Israel may "choose life" and walk in His ways (vss. 15-20). The Word is a Lamp to show us how to walk (Ps. 119:105; Prov. 6:23; 2 Pet. 1:12). It is designed to "make wise the simple" (Ps. 19:7-8). It is for covenant-renewal. This, too, requires perspicuity.
- 3) Designed for Salvation: This is more than a matter of clear laws. Israel had to learn about the blessings as well (v. 19). These are promises, grounded in Christ. Perspicuity is therefore required for all that is necessary to be known, believed and observed for salvation (WCF 1:7). This is against the RC teaching that the Bible needs the church and its traditions to make it clear.

Third Point: Not Too Difficult

- 1) Mystery and Clarity: The things we need to know for salvation are not too difficult, even for the uneducated. However, particular passages in the Bible may be more-or-less difficult (2 Pet. 3:16, WCF 1:7). Scripture has a mixture of mystery and clarity, so that we are kept humble and excited to further study – without becoming totally discouraged. What we need to know will be explained clearly in some place in the Bible.
- 2) The Use of Means: The difficult parts spur us to make better use of the means God has provided for increasing our understanding – searching the Scriptures, prayer, the church's ministry, commentaries etc. Laziness in this area will not help us to learn and grow.
- 3) Only with Help: Above all, we need the Lord's help – through His Son, His Word and His Spirit. The doctrine of perspicuity does not deny the need for this help.

Conclusion: