



Deuteronomy 4:2-7 **For Whatever Reason We May Call Upon Him**

Last week, we got through just one verse, and in all honesty, that could have easily happened again today. There is sufficient detail in verse 2 that it could have been fully fleshed out in a single sermon. But I thought, “If I do this, there will be a rebellion. Eventually, someone is going to go crazy, or shoot me, or both.”

And so, I cut the commentary on verse 2 short. About an hour after having done this, Sergio messaged me and asked if I was sticking with verse 2 alone for the sermon, or if there would be progress. I told him my thoughts about a rebellion and went back to work. He suggested that I not rush it and to just give you one verse. He said that if you have a problem with that, you should email him.

Ok, he didn't really say that, but a few minutes later, he sent me a GIF of a riot – people destroying a car with the caption, “Rebellion on Siesta Key After 2nd One Verse Sermon.” I laughed and got back to work.

But two minutes later, a second GIF came in of a black congregation applauding in the Spirit, saying, “While Sarasota

Protests, SW Satellite Church in Uganda is Like...” meaning that they were all behind another one-verse sermon.

I think he’s implying that folks in the US are lazy about their theology, but those in Africa cherish the word. Can it be? I dare not try to find out because he sent one more GIF with a picture of a person drowning in emails and a caption, “Charlie the Day After the Sermon,” implying that people will, in fact, be upset enough to email by the hundreds.

And so, I have done my best to shorten the comments of verse 2, and to continue on through the rest of what is now our sermon text.

Text Verse: “Oh, how I love Your law!
It is my meditation all the day.” Psalm 119:97

Meditating on the law of the Lord is what brings out the beauty of the law of the Lord. One cannot meditate on what he does not know, nor can he know unless he first opens the word and reads it.

Sermon typing is to be an active meditation on the word which is then intended to be expressed to others concerning what has been considered and brought forth. I can’t think of any other way of expressing myself in a sermon that has more value than to sit and contemplate each word of each verse and then pass that on to whoever is willing to listen.

It is God’s word and it is given for us to find Christ, and/or to marvel in what Christ has accomplished for us. We will see more of that today as we go through our verses. For now, I would like to remind you of the chiasm which spans the verses we’re looking at.

Deuteronomy 3:25-4:22 - Call upon Him.
Israel's Instruction (11/07)

a 3:25 Moses wants to cross Jordan

- b 3:26 Lord angry with Moses
- c 3:27 “Lift your eyes toward the west, the north, the south, and the east.”
- d 4:3, 4 Example of apostasy (idolatry)
- e 4:5 Taught statutes and judgments
- f 4:6 Be careful to observe them (judgments)
- g 4:7 Great nation
- x 4:7 Call upon Him
- g 4:8 Great nation
- f 4:9 Diligently keep yourself (judgments)
- e 4:10-14 Taught statutes and judgments.
- d 4:15-18 Warning of apostasy (idolatry)
- c 4:19 “Lift your eyes to heaven.”
- b 4:21 Lord angry with Moses
- a 4:22 Moses must not cross over the Jordan

We will get through a portion of the verses of this chiasm today, including the central verse upon which it is anchored. What a treasure we have in the word! It is filled with beauty and riches. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Do Not Add to It nor Take from It (Verse 2)

² You shall not add to the word

Here, the “statutes and judgments” referred to in verse 1 are combined into one thought – *lo tosiphu al ha’davar* – “No shall you add to the word.” The word “you” is plural. It is spoken to all of the people of Israel, and what is conveyed to them is a codified body of law which stands alone – *ha’davar*, “the word.”

Despite being made up of many words which then comprise the statutes and judgments that must be individually observed, together they form a single unit. This idea is precisely conveyed by James –

“For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all. ¹¹ For He who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do

not murder.” Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.” James 2:10, 11

Of this, Charles Ellicott says, “The *word* is the substance of the Law. The *words* in which it is expressed may be more or less.” He then continues with, “The law of Moses contains in it the germ of all revelation to the very end.”

In other words, what Moses presents here is what will spring forth into new revelation. The prophets, under the law of Moses, would speak forth more to the people which would be considered further revelation within the framework of the law.

For example, Jeremiah, again and again, would come forward to the people and say, “Hear the word of the Lord.” The book of Jeremiah is a revelation of God, and it is authoritative. His words are incorporated into the body of Scripture which issues forth from the Lord.

At times, what he or others said was simply a call to observe what is already laid out by Moses. At times, Jeremiah would reveal something which would occur because of obedience or disobedience to the word, and so on.

It is the word (singular) of the Lord, spoken with words (plural) which become a continued part of the word of the Lord. However, it is – in fact – the word of the Lord. When the false prophets spoke, it was not the word of the Lord.

Based on these things, one might jump to the conclusion that what is presented in the Law of Moses is the complete and completed word of law which stands alone and for all time.

And indeed, there are those who treat it as such, at least in principle. The Jews of Jesus’ time would hold up Moses as the full

and finished revelation of God, sticking fast to every precept when it was convenient, but then dismissing what the Law of Moses clearly revealed, and what the prophets later continued to reveal.

Even today, many messianics and Hebrew Roots adherents look at the Law of Moses as still binding in every precept. And yet, even they conveniently dismiss those parts of the law which are inconvenient, or impossible, to observe.

What the Jews of Jesus' time, those swayed by the false apostles who came forth to reinsert the law as recorded in Paul's writings, and the pseudo-Christians today who continue to hold to the Law of Moses, fail to see is that the Law of Moses, itself, speaks of its own end. It is merely a steppingstone on the path to a New Covenant, of which Moses Himself speaks of. For example, Deuteronomy 18 says –

“The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, ¹⁶ according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.’

¹⁷ “And the LORD said to me: ‘What they have spoken is good. ¹⁸ I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. ¹⁹ And it shall be *that* whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require *it* of him.” Deuteronomy 18:15-19

A Prophet like Moses is different than any other prophet who would come under the Law of Moses. Other prophets spoke in accord with the covenant, but Moses spoke out the covenant. Thus, a Prophet like Moses would speak out a New Covenant. Ironically, Jeremiah – a prophet under the Law of Moses – spoke of exactly this –

“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—³² not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD.³³ But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.³⁴ No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” Jeremiah 31:31-34

Jeremiah spoke the word of the Lord, with words in accord with the word of the Lord, which support Moses’ words concerning a New Covenant. But such a New Covenant would not be, and indeed could not be, a part of the Law of Moses. This is a truth which was completely missed by the scholar Keil –

“Christ also said that He had not come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil (Matthew 5:17); and the old covenant was not abrogated, but only glorified and perfected, by the new.” Keil

He could not be more wrong in this. As we saw ever so clearly last week, the law was glorified in Christ, but only so in His fulfillment of it. And the law could not be “perfected.” As it is from God, it is perfect in what it teaches, even if incomplete in what it presents concerning His revelation of Himself. The law was abrogated in the introduction of a New Covenant.

Jeremiah said that the sins of the people would be remembered no more. And yet, it is through law that sin is imputed. If the Lord God would no longer remember their sins, then this New Covenant could not be a part of the Law of Moses, meaning the Old Covenant. And this is confirmed, explicitly, in Hebrews with the words, “In that He says, ‘A new *covenant*,’ He has made the first obsolete” (Hebrews 8:13).

And that takes us back to the opening words of the verse, “You shall not add to the word.” Observing the Law of Moses required that it was to be kept, exactly as it was given. But this is the very thing that Israel did as is recorded throughout the prophets, and as is recorded by Jesus’ own words at His time –

“Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:

⁸ ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth,

And honor Me with *their* lips,

But their heart is far from Me.

⁹ And in vain they worship Me,

Teaching *as* doctrines the commandments of men.” Matthew 15:7-9

Both the words of the prophets, and Jesus’ words, show that Israel failed in this. They added in words to the word which were not a part of the word, thus violating the word itself...

² (con’t) which I command you,

The Lord has spoken out the terms of the covenant, and He has relayed through Moses His expectations to the people. This was seen innumerable times in the previous books with the words, “And the Lord spoke to Moses saying.”

From there, Moses would transmit that word to the people. It is the word of the Lord, from the Lord to Moses, and which is then given to the people. However, Moses now says, “which I command you.” What is to be presented is the word of the Lord, and yet it is not the word from the Lord *to* Moses, but the word of the Lord *through* Moses.

Though it is the word of the Lord, it is a completely different way in which the Lord will speak. In Numbers 7, we read –

“Now when Moses went into the tabernacle of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice of One speaking to him from above the mercy seat that *was* on the ark of the Testimony, from between the two cherubim; thus He spoke to him.” Numbers 7:89

When there, we learned that the verb was in a particular form, expressing the reflexive voice where the subject of the verb is both performing and receiving the verbal action. A more literal translation would be “...he heard the voice conversing with him” (Pulpit).

In Exodus 33:11, it said that “the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.” This means that they had open and free discussion. And, in Numbers 12:8, it said that Moses “sees the form of the Lord.”

The Lord conveyed His word to Moses, and Moses then relayed that which he received. But because Moses is speaking in the first person now in Deuteronomy, “which I command you,” it is still divine revelation, but rather than direct revelation “to,” it is divine inspiration “through.”

It is the word of the Lord, and it is not to be added to. This is why the true prophets were not to be stoned to death as if they were violating the covenant, but the false prophets were. A remarkable example of this is found in Jeremiah 26. Jeremiah prophesied to the people words of judgment, they said –

“And the priests and the prophets spoke to the princes and all the people, saying, ‘This man deserves to die! For he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your ears.’” Jeremiah 26:11

However, Jeremiah gave a defense for his words, stating they were, in fact, the word of the Lord and that he was in their hands to do with as they wished. After that, we read –

So the princes and all the people said to the priests and the prophets, “This man does not deserve to die. For he has spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God.”

¹⁷ Then certain of the elders of the land rose up and spoke to all the assembly of the people, saying: ¹⁸ “Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spoke to all the people of Judah, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts:

“Zion shall be plowed *like* a field,
Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins,
And the mountain of the temple
Like the bare hills of the forest.’”

¹⁹ Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah ever put him to death? Did he not fear the LORD and seek the LORD’s favor? And the LORD relented concerning the doom which He had pronounced against them. But we are doing great evil against ourselves.” Jeremiah 26:16-19

The prophet Micah was held to be a true prophet of God. In citing Micah, they had a set precedent which could not be denied without denying that he was a prophet. As Jeremiah’s words both confirmed the word of the Law and were also supported by Micah who confirmed the word of the Law, they could not punish Jeremiah without violating the Law of Moses.

2 (con’t) nor take from it,

There are two things which are to be considered. The first is the performance of what is given. Verse 1 said, “listen to the statutes and judgments.” To listen means more than hearing. It speaks of hearing and acting. For example, in Numbers 15, it said –

“Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners.” Numbers 15:38

In this, there is the possibility of a sin of commission or a sin of omission. If a person made the tassels as instructed, but put a red thread in them, that would be a sin of commission. He purposefully

disobeyed the precept. But if he made the tassels and forgot to put in a blue thread, it would be a sin of omission. Both are violations of the law.

But there is another aspect of the law which is what is now spoken of here, and it is what we have been addressing. There is adding to the law that which is not law, or there is taking away from the law that which is law.

Jeroboam, in order to have the people worship in Israel rather than in Judah, made two golden calves for the people to present their sacrifices and offerings to. He added that which was not law.

King Ahaz, on the other hand, took away the burnt altar made by Moses, replacing it with another, one of pagan design. He both took away from the law that which was mandated, and he added that which was not.

Moses is telling the people to not add to, or take away from, that which he is instructing them, meaning purposeful manipulation of the law. This was so...

2 (con't) that you may keep the commandments

If there was an addition to the law, they could not rightly keep the law. If there was a taking away from the law, they could not rightly keep the law. But in leaving the law – as given by the Lord, either to or through the prophet of God – the people could then rightly keep the commandments.

From that point, it would be up to the people to not commit violations of the law and to not omit doing the commandments of the law. But if the law is manipulated, the people could not successfully do either. The law is God's revelation of Himself, and

it was to be treated as such. As Moses says, they are commandments...

2 (con't) of the LORD your God

Despite being conveyed from Moses to the people, they are ultimately words which form the word of the Lord. And, that the words of the later prophets are a part of that same word is obvious.

The Lord spoke through them His continued revelation to the people, and the words of those prophets carried the same weight and authority as that of Moses, because Moses was not the source of his words, just as the prophets were not the source of their words. In both, they are the words of the Lord God. This is certain based on Jesus' own words –

“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. ¹⁸ For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. ¹⁹ Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:17-19

Jesus refers to the Law and the Prophets, placing them on equal authority. He then confirms this by combining them into one thought – “one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law.” The word of the Lord to Moses is law. The word of the Lord through Moses is law. And the word of the Lord to and through the prophets is law. For now, these are the words of the Lord through Moses, as he says...

2 (con't) which I command you.

Moses had the authority to do so because these are the words of the Lord. However, that authority did not end with his death. Rather, it

was a word binding upon Israel even at Jesus' time. When a question of law arose, Jesus would appeal to the law, asking "What did Moses command you?" (Mark 10:3). Also, He told the people to do what the scribes and Pharisees instructed because they sat in Moses' seat (Matthew 23:2).

The final authority of the Law was Moses, representative of the law, even if the words were of later prophets. This is because the law is one codified body.

Before we go on now to verse 3, you might wonder why this is so important. Why go through all of this detailed analysis over something so simply stated? It is because one must hang his hat somewhere.

One can hang his hat on Moses and thus be obligated to Moses – wholly and entirely. This is the weight and the penalty of the law. No man may add to it, and no man may subtract from it. If one desires the law, he must live and die by the law –

"And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. ⁴You have become estranged from Christ, you who *attempt to* be justified by law; you have fallen from grace." Galatians 5:3, 4

Or, one can come to Christ, find life in His fulfillment of the law, and receive His grace and mercy, as provided to under the law – of which He embodies, as we see in John 1:16, 17 –

"And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

This is not an arbitrary, haphazard, way of spending Sunday morning. Rather, it is an encounter with the God of the universe

and what His expectations are for fallen man, because His expectations are based on His eternal, unchanging nature.

Any violation of the law is reason for condemnation, but through the law mercy could – at times – be given. At others, the just, righteous, and holy standard of God was to be meted out to the people for their willful disobedience of His word...

*Keep the commandments of the Lord your God
This is what you are asked to do
To reject this is thinking that is flawed
These words are life and blessing for you*

*And to every word, you are to pay heed
Not missing a single precept, because they all apply
In the doing of them, life has been decreed
So be sure to cross every “t” and dot every “i”*

*But be sure not to miss what I am telling you
There is one precept you are surely not to miss
When you fail to do what you have been told to do
Come to my Son, and Him you shall kiss*

*In Him it is all accomplished and done for you
Come to Him and be reconciled to Me; so, you shall do*

II. Be Careful to Observe Them (verses 3-7)

³Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Baal Peor;

To continue the chiasm, which is hidden in these verses, Moses now gives a concrete example of what violating the law calls for. He takes Israel back to what occurred in Numbers 25. Something which was still fresh on their memories, because it only happened a short time earlier.

In this, he says, *enekhem ha'root*, “your eyes that are seeing.” It is present tense, plural. The events occurred within the time of law, the plan is set, it is unfolding, and those under the law were active participants. And this was at a time when all of the previous generation had died, except for Moses, Joshua, and Caleb.

What occurred was with the new generation – those who were set to leave Kadesh, head towards Canaan, and eventually enter into the Land of Promise. But along the way, they were seduced to worship the Baal of Peor through sexual sin on a large scale. It happened, and one can assume it is exactly what is expected of Israel in the near future.

A temple will be built, the people will live under this covenant, and they will suffer the consequences of violating what this covenant demands. Although we are not there yet, a portion of the people of Israel today can be expected to play the harlot through sexual sin – maybe it will be at the annual gay parade in Tel Aviv. And the nation will suffer the consequences of their actions.

This isn't idle speculation. The past can be expected to be called forward, and that which has been will be again. Israel was given an example of apostasy leading to death, and it can be expected that they will again be given that same example.

When it comes, it will be to remind them that they, as a collective people, are bound to the covenant... or they can come to Christ and be relieved of its burden in Him.

Moses says it is “what the Lord did.” A plague from the Lord came upon the people because of their harlotry and turning from the law which governed them. In turning from the law, they turned from the Lord. And in doing so, he says...

3 (con't) for the LORD your God has destroyed from among you all the men who followed Baal of Peor.

The events of Peor culminated in the death of twenty-four thousand through the sword and through plague. If this is an event to be repeated once the temple rites begin again, and this is mere speculation, Israel can expect another plague in those who openly sin in some idolatrous and sexual way.

Again, something like the gay parades in Tel Aviv could spawn a sudden plague of death by those who participate in them. But even if this doesn't happen, the fact that it has occurred in Israel, and that it is recorded in the law, is sufficient to apprise Israel that they are bound under this law of penalty, punishment, and death.

However, in contrast to those who sinned...

4 But you who held fast to the LORD your God are alive today, every one of you.

Here, the word of the Lord is equated directly to the Lord. Moses says, *v'atem ha'debeqim Yehovah elohekhem* – “And you, the clinging ones to Yehovah your God.” It is by violating the law that the people died. It is by not violating the law that the people did not die. And yet, it says they clung to the Lord. The Lord, and the word of the Lord, cannot be separated. What He says is a reflection of who He is.

Further, there is a difference between living and being granted life. The law cannot grant life unless one does, and continues to do, the things of the law – perfectly. However, the law can (and does) bring death. In failing to observe the law, death is assured. This is what is being referred to here.

These people did not die, but it does not mean that they have been granted eternal life. Under the Law of Moses, this is impossible. One must be brought out from under the bondage of the law in order to be granted eternal life.

This is stated by John Lange. Understanding that the law cannot give life, he says that this verse only “points to the kernel of all fulfilling of the law, as a living union with the Lawgiver Himself, from which springs, as here, its fruit, life, and life enduring.” It is what Paul writes of in Romans 5 –

“Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, ²¹ so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 5:20-21

⁵ “Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess.

The words of this verse pick up the theme presented in verse 1. Putting the verses side by side will show you this –

* Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers is giving you.

* Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to *them* in the land which you go to possess.

First, he uses the same word here as was introduced there, and which is translated as “teach” and “taught.” It is *lamad*, coming from a primitive root signifying “to goad.” One uses a goad to prod an animal along.

Moses is thus using the word of the Lord to prod the people. However, in verse 1, it was stated as an ongoing act – “which I teach you to observe.” Here in verse 5, he says it in the past tense, “I have taught you.” Why would he do that?

He then uses the same word, *laasot*, that he used in verse 1. It signifies “to do.” Moses taught the people the statutes and judgments so that they could do them.

However, in verse 1, he said, “that you may live, and go in and possess the land.” Here, he leaves off “that you may live” and he says *b’qerev ha’aretz asher atem ba’im shamah l’rishtah* – “in the midst of the land which you go there to possess.”

In verse 1, Moses used a word, *maan*, which signified that the purpose, or goal, of observing the statutes and judgments was two-fold – 1) to live, and 2) to possess the land. He leaves that off now because he is speaking of those who actually cross the Jordan and who will be in the midst of the land.

This is why he changed it from “teach” to “taught.” He is speaking to them as if they have entered and are in the midst of the land. If the purpose of teaching was to live and to enter the land, then when they are in the land, what was taught should be adhered to.

The typology is not to be missed. Moses, representing the law, will be dead when they enter. Joshua, typical of Christ as the leader who replaces the law, will lead them in. They will pass through the Jordan, meaning passing through the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and thus they will have life, and they will dwell in the midst of the land – meaning they will have entered the promise.

This is why Moses speaks of it as a done deal, not one which has a purpose or goal, and that is why he doesn’t say, “that you may

live.” In type, life is granted in Christ – pictured by dwelling in Canaan. However, this is only in type.

The group who is going in will fail to act in the manner expected. In fact, Ezra uses almost the exact same wording, “the land which you are entering to possess” (Ezra 9:11), when speaking of the words of law which Israel failed to heed. In their failure, they were exiled, in their return from exile, they again failed to heed.

This is one of the main purposes of the Old Testament after the giving of the law. It is to show that Israel did not – and indeed could not – meet the demands of the law. Encouragement didn’t work, punishment didn’t work, and the attempts of people like Ezra and others to do their best at simply honoring the Lord through their efforts under the law didn’t work.

Israel didn’t learn, they continued to not learn, and to this day, their inability to learn this lesson has cost them greatly. Though they entered the land, they did not enter their rest. And today, back in the land once again, they have not entered their rest.

For now, and having left off “that you may live” from his words, Moses provides, instead, another reason for observing the law...

⁶Therefore be careful to observe *them*;

The Hebrew is more specific – *u-shemartem va’asitem* – “And you shall keep, and do them.” One can keep and not do – “This is our law, but I am not going to do it.” Or one can “not” keep and yet do – “There is no law that says I should do this, but I am doing it because it is right.”

Israel, however, was given the law, they were to keep the law, and they were to do the law. This goes for common person as well as judge. A person could not do the law, and a judge could fail to

punish him for that. Or, a person could not do the law, and a judge could punish him for that. In the case of the latter, the law is observed, and it is kept through the judge's actions.

This is especially seen and highlighted in the times of the kings. When the people were without restraint, and the kings likewise failed to restrain the people, the Lord would intervene to judge because the laws were not kept.

However, at times, kings would come in and take the necessary action to correct the people and the Lord would bless the land. Kings are known in the record by their conduct before the law.

A good king might have the words "and he did right in the sight of the Lord," recorded in his record. A bad king might have the words, "and he did evil in the sight of the Lord," recorded in his record. At times, David was used as the standard, and a king's record might say, "he did right in the sight of the Lord, as his father David had done." These and other variations are given based on one overarching rule – that of the law...

6 (con't) for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes,

In keeping the law, there is – in the law – a promise of blessing from the Lord. When one is blessed, he prospers. There is contentment, wealth, abundance, and so on. When a person is seen in such a state, it is recognized that he must have wisdom and understanding.

In understanding this, the source of that wisdom and understanding is then observed. It logically follows that when a person prospers, the reason for it will want to be seen. In Israel's prosperity, the framework of law which established them would then be heard and understood.

On the other hand, possessing the law, and yet not doing the law, is of little value. It further shows no wisdom at all. In fact, exactly the opposite is true. Israel had the law, and they – more often than not – failed to do the law.

The problem with this is that in the law are listed punishments for not doing the law. Those punishments came upon the people and the nations were quick to recognize why this had come about. The Lord even warned them, through Solomon, of exactly this –

“*But if you or your sons at all turn from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them,* ⁷ then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight. Israel will be a proverb and a byword among all peoples. ⁸ And *as for this house, which is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and will hiss, and say, ‘Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?’* ⁹ Then they will answer, ‘Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore the LORD has brought all this calamity on them.’” 1 Kings 9:6-9

Either way, the law sets the parameters for how the peoples would view Israel. And the conduct of Israel was guided by the conduct of her leaders. Moses now conveys to them that it is the law, and it is obedience to the law, that will convey a positive image of Israel to the nations...

⁶ (con’t) and say, ‘Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people.’

The psalms speak of the law of the Lord, of the blessings that follow in keeping them, and in the wisdom that is displayed in doing so –

“The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple;
⁸ The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes;
⁹ The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether.
¹⁰ More to be desired *are they* than gold,
Yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.
¹¹ Moreover by them Your servant is warned,
And in keeping them *there is* great reward.” Psalm 19:7-11

Here and elsewhere, this is stated. And throughout the times of the kings, this is validated. This is especially so with Solomon where he is set as the epitome of wisdom and understanding. In this state, the Queen of Sheba sought him out and experienced the truth of what Moses now conveys.

How Israel is viewed by the people of the world is based on this one overarching premise. No one can deny the moral uprightness and greatness of the law. Nations around the world have incorporated portions of it into their own laws.

But the law in and of itself, despite being great, is not what conveys greatness. Rather, adherence to it does. When it is not adhered to, the opposite is true. Israel’s identity is wholly tied up in the law. And, unfortunately, Israel’s failure to adhere to their own law is what brought them scoffing from the nations, exile, and being viewed as pariahs in their places of exile.

But, in their times of obedience, the law provided them something that no other nation had...

⁷ “For what great nation *is there* that has God *so* near to it,

The word *elohim*, or “God,” is a masculine plural noun. It can be translated as “God,” “a god,” or “gods,” depending on the context.

Here, the word *elohim*, and the adjective *qerovim*, or “near,” are both plural. Therefore, this could be read, “that has God near to it,” “that has a god near to it,” or “that has gods near to it.”

Moses could be saying that there is one God, and that he is especially near to Israel – unlike any other nation. Or, he could be mocking the nations concerning their false gods.

What seems likely is that it should be rendered “a god,” or “gods.” It appears from the next clause that by using the name Yehovah, He is set in contrast to what is stated in this clause.

Either way, the statement is defined by the words “near to it.” No other nation was as close to God, or “gods,” as was Israel, and no other nation had a god or gods that were truly near to it. They were false gods that could not come near. Instead, the nations had to be the ones to draw near. But the Lord, in relation to Israel, was always near. That is explained by Moses saying...

7 (con’t) as the LORD our God is to us,

ka’Yehovah elohenu – “as Yehovah our God.” The contrast appears to show that the previous clause is referring to false gods. Otherwise, one would think that Moses would say, *ha’elohim*, or “the God,” as is seen at times. By not using the article there, and by naming Yehovah and calling Him “our God,” he has formed a complete and total contrast to the other nations.

They had no god near, but Israel had Yehovah near...

*7 (fin) for whatever reason we may call upon Him?

b’kal qareenu elav – “in all we may call upon Him.” These words form the center of the chiasm and they demonstrate that the greatness of Israel is tied directly to the Lord. But the word of the

Lord is a reflection of who the Lord is. The two cannot be separated.

Therefore, the greatness of Israel rests solely on their adherence to the word of the Lord, meaning the law. The Lord is near to Israel only when they draw near to Him through obedience to His word. And this, then, brings us directly back to what was discussed in verse 2.

The law, meaning the word of the Lord, clearly and unambiguously spoke of the coming Messiah. And that coming Messiah was clearly revealed in its words. When Christ came, He told them as much –

“Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is *one* who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. ⁴⁶ For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. ⁴⁷ But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?” John 5:45-47

Moses wrote about Him, the prophets wrote about Him, and that is because they were inspired, by the Lord, to write about Him. At this time, there is no prophetic revelation from the Lord to Israel because Israel has rejected the Source of prophetic revelation.

If the Lord is near to Israel at this time, it is only in a protective sense, not in the friendly, relational sense that Moses speaks of here. His word says that they have seven more years of this law – the Law of Moses – ahead of them. That is intended to bring them into the New Covenant, and it will come to pass.

At that time, Israel will be as close to their God as the people of God, meaning the church, have been for the past two millennia. Moses asked, what nation has a god, or gods, so near to them? The answer begs a negative response – “There is no such nation.”

However, through Christ Jesus, a people, even if not a nation, has the God – the true God – near to them. Paul speaks of that in Romans 10 when speaking of those who are the saved of the Lord through the blood of Christ. Citing Deuteronomy 32, he says, “I will provoke you to jealousy by *those who are* not a nation” (Romans 10:19).

While Israel has groaned under the punishment of having rejected the Lord, who is the embodiment of this law, the people of the world have streamed to Christ Jesus. He has been, and He remains, as close to us as the simple call out of a prayer under our breath.

When we need comfort, we can talk to Him and He will provide it. When we need reassurance, He is there to give it. And when we need to lay our hearts out to Him for the things we have done wrong, He is there to listen and to forgive.

Israel has missed this because they have missed Jesus. But the church will be called home, the focus of attention will be on Israel, and they will be brought into that sweet fellowship with their God that they failed to receive in times past. This is so that for whatever reason, all will be able to “call on Him.”

Closing Verse: “Concerning the gospel *they are* enemies for your sake, but concerning the election *they are* beloved for the sake of the fathers. ²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God *are* irrevocable. ³⁰ For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, ³¹ even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. ³² For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.” Romans 11:28-32

Next Week: Deuteronomy 4:8-14 *Something to consider, ladies and gentlemen...* (That They May Teach Their Children) (14th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

For Whatever Reason We May Call Upon Him

You shall not add to the word which I command you
Nor take from it, that you may keep
The commandments of the LORD your God
Which I command you, as my obedient sheep

Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Baal Peor
For the LORD your God has destroyed, for sure
From among you all the men
Who followed Baal of Peor

But you who held fast to the LORD your God
Are alive today, every one of you still on this earth does tread

Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments
Just as the LORD my God commanded me
That you should act according to them in the land
Which you go to possess, from the Jordan to the Great Sea

Therefore be careful to observe them
For this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight
Of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say
“Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people
-----they have got things set just right

For what great nation is there
That has God so near to it, like a man’s own limb
As the LORD our God is to us
For whatever reason we may call upon Him?

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

² You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. ³ Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Baal Peor; for the LORD your God has destroyed from among you all the men who followed Baal of Peor. ⁴ But you who held fast to the LORD your God *are* alive today, every one of you.

⁵ “Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to *them* in the land which you go to possess. ⁶ Therefore be careful to observe *them*; for this *is* your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, ‘Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people.’

⁷ “For what great nation *is there* that has God *so* near to it, as the LORD our God *is* to us, for whatever *reason* we may call upon Him?

