

Deuteronomy 10:12-22
(He Is Your Praise, and He Is Your God)

¹² “And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good? ¹⁴ Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, also the earth with all that is in it. ¹⁵ The LORD delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as it is this day. ¹⁶ Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer. ¹⁷ For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. ¹⁸ He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. ¹⁹ Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. ²⁰ You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him, and to Him you shall hold fast, and take oaths in His name. ²¹ He is your praise, and He is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen. ²² Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy persons, and now the LORD your God has made you as the stars of heaven in multitude.

Quite often in Genesis through Numbers, pictures of Christ Jesus flew off the pages. There was the surface story, and then there were reasons why the surface stories were given. The Lord would take a simple story about normal human life, and He would turn it into a picture of what was coming in the greater story of redemption, especially concerning the Person of Jesus Christ.

There has been a little of that in Deuteronomy, but much less so far. But this does not mean that Jesus isn't in the details. Rather, we have seen many hints of Him, even through the speaking out of the law. In verses like today, there are implicit hints of Him and what He would be like as well.

In verse 17, it will say that the Lord is *ha'el ha'gadol ha'gibor* – the God, the great, the mighty. It is an expressive term that clues us into the nature of the coming Messiah. In Isaiah 9, using the same word, *gibor*, it says that His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

The term “Mighty God” is *el gibor*. After writing that out, he must have looked at what he had written and said, “How can that be? Yehovah is the God, the Mighty!” And to further confound him, he wrote, using the exact same words (*el gibor*) in the next chapter of his book –

*“And such as have escaped of the house of Jacob,
Will never again depend on him who defeated them,
But will depend on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.
²¹ The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob,
To the Mighty God.” Isaiah 10:20, 21*

If one takes the Bible as a whole meal, and not just in little bite-sized nuggets, the deity of Jesus Christ comes flying off of the pages. Such is the case with our text verse today...

Text Verse: “I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, ¹⁴ that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, ¹⁵ which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶ who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.” 1 Timothy 6:13-16

Our sermon text says that Yehovah is the God of gods and Lord of lords. The psalmist (136:3) will say that Yehovah is the Lord of lords. Paul says that these titles belong to Jesus, and that is followed twice by the words of John in Revelation.

It is true that such terms, at times, can speak in various ways, but when the context demands that they refer to the same thing – as in these cases – it can only mean one thing: Jesus Christ is the incarnate Yehovah.

And so, while we read and study the book of Deuteronomy, let us continue to search for hints of the nature of God in Christ, pictures of Christ in the word, and also apply the proper context to our theology in matters of law verses grace. The law was given by the Lord for various reasons, and grace comes through the Lord for a completely different relationship with Him.

Let us hold fast to the grace and let us be thankful for the lessons of the law. These are things we just should do – to the glory of God who gave them to us. Such wonderful truths as these are to be found in His superior word. 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. With All Your Heart, and with All Your Soul (verses 12-15)

The last verses we looked at in the previous sermon said –

“As at the first time, I stayed in the mountain forty days and forty nights; the LORD also heard me at that time, and the LORD chose not to destroy you. ¹¹ Then the LORD said to me, ‘Arise, begin your journey before the people, that they may go in and possess the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.’” Deuteronomy 10:10, 11

After the incident of the golden calf, the Lord was upset enough to destroy the people and to make a nation of Moses. But through Moses’ mediation, He relented and renewed the covenant and the promises. The journey to the land of promise would come to pass, and the people would enter and possess. It is with this thought in mind, that Moses now begins an appeal to the people, commencing with these eleven verses...

¹² “And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you,

The words are rhetorical. Moses already knows that Israel has no idea what the Lord God expects of them. If they did, he would not have had to reexplain every detail of what got them to the place where they now are.

They were told what the Lord required of them at Sinai. The words went into their ears, and they went right back out. The pattern repeated itself again and again over the many years in the wilderness.

Moses’ recounting of all of this detail is to, hopefully, get them to pay attention this time. Although, later in Deuteronomy, he will clearly indicate that he knows his words now are wasted breath. But he must speak them anyway. In order to be held accountable for one’s actions, one must first be told what is expected of him.

The word translated as “require” means to inquire or ask for. It is true that this is what is required, but it is stated almost as a treasure hunt – “What does the Lord seek of you?” He is looking for a result, but He is doing it with free-will in mind. And so, Moses’ opens his mouth and speaks out four principles, or precepts...

^{12 (con’t)} but to fear the LORD your God,

Precept 1) The fear of the Lord isn’t merely being afraid of His ability to destroy them. It is understanding that because He could do so, and yet instead tends to them, they were to acknowledge His rightful place above them as such.

Children know that their father has complete power over them, but unless they do wrong, they don’t need to worry. If he is a good father, they will instead know that he has their best interest in mind. They don’t need to walk on eggshells, but rather in confidence – “My father is big and strong, but he loves me. And so, I will fear him in confidence, doing what is right in order to please him.” Paul says likewise to those of the church in 2 Corinthians 7:1–

“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

This reverential fear is then expressed in the next precept...

^{12 (con’t)} to walk in all His ways

Precept 2) To walk signifies the conduct of a person’s life. It is how he acts in relation to his surroundings, interacts with those he encounters, and expresses himself in relation to the expectations placed upon him.

The Lord is placing Israel in a land promised to their fathers. Their fathers were promised it based on faith, and thus the people were to be people who walked in faith.

The people of the land would be their own kin, and any strangers who were not of the inhabitants who were to be removed. Their walk and interactions were to be based upon their status as kinfolk, and as people who were once strangers in a foreign land (as will be explained again in the verses ahead).

And the people were given the law of the Lord. They were not to just be obedient to it, but they were to have their hearts directed toward it, as he will explain in verse 16. Thus, their walk was to be mindful of the Lord in the conduct of their obedience. Paul says as much to us today –

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:10

Obedience without a right heart attitude is as distasteful as willful disobedience. To have one’s heart properly directed to the law of the Lord demonstrates the next expectation of the people...

12 (con’t) **and to love Him,**

Precept 3) Moses refers to a volitional love, but it does not exclude an emotional love. Being obedient to the precepts of the Lord without a love of the Lord leads to rote obedience, and even a contempt, for what is required.

It can even draw one’s attention away from the Lord: The Lord gives the Sabbath. The people don’t love the Lord, but rather observe the Sabbath to themselves. Some don’t observe it at all. In this, those who observe the Sabbath, even though they don’t love the Lord, accuse and mock those who don’t.

The attitude becomes one of self-righteousness and of comparing oneself against others. Only when one observes the Sabbath *because* he loves the Lord is the Sabbath, then, properly observed.

Paul expresses this thought to the church as well, saying, “Grace *be* with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen” (Ephesians 6:24). Service without sincere love will create an atmosphere that is both unhealthy and arrogant. To avoid this, Moses next says...

12 (con’t) **to serve the LORD your God**

Precept 4) The word translated as serve, *abad*, signifies to work or serve. It can include slavery and bondage, or it can mean to till or cultivate. It is a general word that requires context to understand. The context here is that of faithful service with a right heart and certainly to include fear and love of the Lord God. Such is what Paul instructs us concerning the Lord Jesus –

“Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; ¹¹ not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” Romans 12:10, 11

Moses next expresses this in two subpoints, beginning with...

12 (con’t) **with all your heart**

Precept 4a) *b’kal l’vavekha* – “with all to your heart.” The heart is the seat of reason and understanding. Moses implores them to use all of their intellect, reasoning, and wisdom in the service of the Lord. They are to consider him in all they do, and He is to be fixed in the mind’s eye in their service. It is what New Testament believers are to do concerning Jesus –

“My friends, God has chosen you to be his holy people. So think about Jesus, the one we call our apostle and high priest!” Hebrews 3:1 (CEV)

“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.” Hebrews 12:2 (BSB)

Understanding this, Moses continues with...

12 (con’t) **and with all your soul,**

Precept 4b) The soul is what animates a person. It is the drive behind his actions and the strength he possesses. To serve the Lord with all of one’s soul is to expend himself in the service of the Lord. It is a precept likewise taught to those in the church –

“Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.” 1 Peter 4:19

It is these things that Moses directs the people to be conscious of and to put forth in the conduct of their lives. Further...

¹³ and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good?

The commandments of the Lord are those things spoken directly from the Lord, starting with the Ten Commandments, but also all of what the Lord directly spoke to and through Moses.

The statutes include the word of the Lord to Moses and that which is spoken through Moses. They are those things that are prescribed or set forth as an ordinance and the like.

Understanding these things, Moses continues with an obvious reason why Israel should pay heed and do these things. He does it by first explaining the position and power of Yehovah...

¹⁴ Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God,

The words are spoken in the superlative: *ha 'shamayim u-sheme ha 'shamayim* – “the heavens and heavens the heavens.” It is a way of saying, “everything above and in all directions. No matter which way the earth turns, all of it belongs to the Lord.

But more, it certainly is intended to include the spiritual realm itself; the highest, or third, heavens of which man has no free access to, nor understanding of, what occurs there. And more...

¹⁴ (con't) also the earth with all that is in it.

From man's perspective, the earth is where it's at. Before the age of planes and rockets, this was our domain. And even now, it is the center of our universe because it is where we live and move about.

But on this earth, there are animals and sea creatures of great power, ability, and beauty. There are lands far off, there are lands high in the mountains, and there are lands filled with wonder and delight. And there are many nations and peoples and tribes and tongues to fill them. Despite these things...

¹⁵ The LORD delighted only in your fathers, to love them;

There is an emphasis in the Hebrew: *raq ba 'avotekha khashaq Yehovah* – “Only in your fathers delighted Yehovah.” The word is *raq*, which is identical to the adjective signifying thin or lean. Thus, it figuratively speaks of limitation – for example, a teeny portion among a great amount.

Out of all of the heavens and the heavens of the heavens, and out of all of the earth, only in this one line was this attachment formed. The fathers of Israel were selected by the Lord, apart from their own merit. They were given sure and great promises, and they were made to none other...

¹⁵ (con't) and He chose their descendants after them,

In other words, at a specific time in their history, a selection was made. Several generations passed in Egypt, but at the time and generation determined by the Lord, the decision was rendered. This was without any input by those selected, and there was nothing in them that merited the call. And yet the call was made specifically for them...

¹⁵ (con't) you above all peoples, as it is this day.

bakem mikal ha 'amim kayom ha 'zeh – “In you (all) from all the people's as day the this.” From verses 12-15, Moses has been speaking in the singular to Israel (you). In this one word alone, he switches to the plural “in you (all).” He will then continue this plural until verse 20.

The Lord could have drawn Israel out of Egypt at any given time. But it was at this specific time, meaning that point at which this group of people was chosen. Thus, they cannot say they were better than their fathers who died in Egypt, nor than those who would come after them.

The selection of the people was at the sovereign will of the Lord alone. And it was this group out of all groups of peoples on the entire earth. One can see a tapestry being woven in these words. “I am doing a thing in the earth, and I am using you in the process.”

In this, if you think it through to its logical end, the coming incarnation (which we now look back on) is seen here. “I am doing this thing, I am making decisions which are for My own purposes, and those decisions are leading to a particular end and for a particular purpose.” It is what Paul refers to –

“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” Galatians 4:4, 5

Israel thinks it is all about them. But the Lord is showing that the plan, which includes them, is formed for a purpose that they are only participants in. They are actually not the center of attention at all. He is. As this is so, they must pay heed...

*He is your praise, and He is your God
Great and glorious and mighty is He
Perfect are His ways; of them we applaud
The One who was and who is and who yet shall be*

*We shall serve Him with all our heart and with all our soul
We shall serve Him for all eternity
Those whose names are written in His scroll
The One who was and who is and who yet shall be*

*To Him, we look with all delight and all hope
To the One who we shall forever see
In His hand is all of creation’s scope
The One who was and who is and who yet shall be*

II. He Is Your Praise (verses 16-22)

¹⁶ Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart,

This is a new thought introduced into Scripture. Israel bore the sign of circumcision that was passed down from the time of Abraham. And yet, the generation sitting before Moses did not possess it. That is recorded in Joshua 5 –

“At that time the LORD said to Joshua, ‘Make flint knives for yourself, and circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time.’ ³ So Joshua made flint knives for himself, and circumcised the sons of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. ⁴ And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: All the people who came out of Egypt who were males, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way, after they had come out of Egypt. ⁵ For all the people who came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness, on the way as they came out of Egypt, had not been circumcised.” Joshua 5:2-5

Despite their state of uncircumcision, which was contrary to the law and an obvious sign of judgment upon the people, Moses turns not to the flesh, but to the heart. In other words, without the heart, the flesh doesn’t matter at all. This is a precept that will be seen again in Deuteronomy 30 and Jeremiah 4 –

*“Circumcise yourselves to the LORD,
And take away the foreskins of your hearts,
You men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem,
Lest My fury come forth like fire,
And burn so that no one can quench it,
Because of the evil of your doings.” Jeremiah 4:4*

It is used one final time in the New Testament, and it explains much to us concerning what Moses is saying right now –

“For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. ²⁶ Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision? ²⁷ And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law? ²⁸ For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; ²⁹ but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.”
Romans 2:25-29

Moses is telling this generation that they are not right with the Lord at all. They are sitting on the banks of the Jordan because the Lord placed them there despite themselves.

As this generation pictures the generation brought back from exile who are in the land of Israel today, it shows us that they are – even now – as unclean as if they were not circumcised. Their boasting in their heritage is entirely misplaced. For now, Moses speaks on...

16 (con't) and be stiff-necked no longer.

v'arepekhem lo taqshu od – “and your (plural) neck no stiffen longer.” There are lots of people, and they have one giant stiff neck. That must end. But how does that come about?

Of this verse, Charles Ellicott uniquely translates it as a cause and effect, “Circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and ye will harden your neck no more.” That would then be comparable to Galatians 5:16, “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

His translation actually seems justified and appropriate. The cause-and-effect nature is seen in both the Old and the New Testaments –

“Nevertheless they would not hear, but stiffened their necks, like the necks of their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God.” 2 Kings 17:14

“You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.” Acts 7:51

One must first circumcise his heart. In this, the stiffed neck will end. And the reason for that is clearly seen in the next verse...

17 For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome,

Most English versions completely miss the abundant emphasis and poignant nature of the Hebrew: *ki Yehovah elohekhem, hu, elohe ha'elohim, va'adonei ha'adonim, ha'el, ha'gadol, ha'gibor, v'ha'nora* – “For Yehovah your God, HE, God of the gods and Lord of the lords, the God, the great, the mighty, and the terrifying.” Of the term, God of the gods, the Pulpit Commentary notes –

“Not only supreme over all that are called god, but the complex and sum of all that is Divine; the Great Reality, of which the ‘gods many’ of the nations were at the best but the symbols of particular attributes or qualities.”

This is certainly so, but it also includes anything of which the term Elohim comprises – angels, the departed souls of man, human judges, and so on. He is the God above all lesser “gods,” be they actual or invented. Nothing compares to Him.

Being Lord of the lords, means that all powers, sovereigns, masters, owners, and other such designations are all below Him. He is THE GOD, meaning the only true God. To Him alone is the greatness, to Him alone is the power, and to Him alone is the fear. All others receive their station and capability from Him.

Because of this, because all things stem from Him and all things belong to Him, it is He alone...

17 (con't) who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe.

Asher lo yisa panim v'lo yiqah shokhad – “That no lifts faces and no takes bribe.” To lift the face means to regard or show partiality. All flesh stands before God on the same level and all will receive exactly the same treatment based on their conduct, not on their strength, wealth, intelligence, or for any other reason.

And, because this is so, nothing can be offered to Him to change His mind, as if He could accept a bribe. As He is the Possessor of all things, including time itself, there is nothing that can be given Him that He does not own – from eternity past, right now, and to the ages of ages. But despite all of His power and possession, He is not uncaring of His creation or of His creatures...

18 He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing.

The nature of the Lord is drawn out much more clearly here. The same Lord who has told Israel to go in and exterminate every person in the land of Canaan – regardless of age, sex, or any other category, is also the Lord who ensures that those who are not under the ban are cared for, regardless of their lowly station, and indeed especially because of their lowly station. What this means, however, is only next revealed...

19 Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Of the previous verse, John Gill (and others) says –

“...and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment; one that is in a foreign country, at a distance from his native land, and destitute of friends; such God in his providence takes care of, and expresses his love and kindness to, by giving them the necessaries of life, food, and raiment.”

This is incorrect. Although all things are provided by God to tend to humans, He does not actively give these things to such people, nor should it be expected to be so. It would defeat the entire purpose of this verse now.

Moses says that Lord administers justice for them. He then, using the last category – that of the stranger – explains what Israel is to do. They are to love such, meaning “care for them.” He then explains the reason, “for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” As He tended to them in their time of loneliness, so they were to act towards the lonely.

What is implied, but unstated, is that as it was with the stranger, so it is to be with the fatherless and the widow. The word translated as “fatherless,” comes from a root signifying “to be lonely.” The word translated as “widow” is from a word signifying “forsaken.”

Israel was without the Lord until He came forth to Pharaoh and said, “Israel *is* my son, My firstborn” (Exodus 4:22). They were as a widow until He came and betrothed Himself to them. Thus, when the Lord says He administers justice for these people, it is that He places it in the conscience of man to naturally feel compassion. Thus, it is man’s job to care for his fellow man.

The man who hardens his heart to this state is the wrongdoer. In such a state, the Lord will then judge and punish him. For this reason, among others, Egypt was so judged. Canaan will be so judged. And when Israel fails, they too would be so judged. The Lord has stated His character, and Israel is expected to emulate it. Rather than hardening their hearts...

20 You shall fear the LORD your God;

Here, and until the end of the chapter, the words go back to the singular. Israel the collective is being addressed. In this verse, the words are emphatic: *eth Yehovah eloheka tira* – “Yehovah your God you shall fear.”

It brings us right back to the thought of verse 12, Q: “What does the Lord your God require of you?” A: “To fear the Lord your God.” But this time, it is with the emphasis – “Yehovah your God you shall fear.”

With that understood, Moses again explains what that means with three principles, or precepts...

20 (con't) you shall serve Him,

Precept 1) As explained above, and as further defined by Moses – “with all your heart and with all your soul.” In this, the service will be acceptable. Further...

20 (con't) **and to Him you shall hold fast,**

Precept 2) The word is *dabaq*. It signifies “to cleave.” One can think of sticking like glue. When Naomi told Ruth to return to her people, it says that Ruth clung (*dabaq*) to her. She would not let go, and she promised to never let go, but to remain with her always. It is this closeness that is implied in the words now. Further...

20 (con't) **and take oaths in His name.**

Precept 3) It follows after Deuteronomy 6:13 –

“You shall fear the Lord your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name.”

The order of these three precepts is logical. Service is the basis for the relationship. But that service is to lead to holding fast – continuance. Only after that is established in the soul of the person should he venture to take oaths in His name. Otherwise, the oath is bound to be violated and the name of the Lord will be profaned. But such should never be, because...

21 **He is your praise,**

The words are emphatic: *hu tehilatekha* – “HE your praise.” Moses reaches back for a word only seen so far in Exodus 15, just after the crossing of the Red Sea, *tehillah*, or “praise” –

*“Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods?
Who is like You, glorious in holiness,
Fearful in praises, doing wonders? Exodus 15:11*

It is a word found mostly in the Psalms, but also quite a bit in Isaiah. It is where the book of Psalms, or *tehillim*, finds its Hebrew name. In saying, He is your praise, the entire verse needs to be considered. He is both the object of their praise –

*“Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised
In the city of our God,
In His holy mountain.” Psalm 48:1*

But He is also the ground of their praise –

“For as the sash clings to the waist of a man, so I have caused the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah to cling to Me,” says the Lord, ‘that they may become My people, for renown, for praise, and for glory; but they would not hear.’” Jeremiah 13:11

21 (con't) **and He is your God,**

Again, it is emphatic: *v’hu eloheka* – “And HE your God.” It is not another, nor is there another. Though Israel had many gods, and though they still have many gods, it is only Yehovah who is their God. Any other is a lie, and to cling to any other is to profane His name. They are a people because of Him, they are a people named by Him, they are a people called out for Him. It is He alone...

21 (con't) **who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen.**

Again, Moses has returned in his mind to Exodus 15:11, using now the same word as then – “**fearful** in praises” is now “**awesome** things,” or maybe more poignantly, “**fearful** things.” The Exodus is not the only such thing. Indeed, there had been many – all seen by the eyes of the people.

The Lord is to be feared because it is He who does fearful things. If He can do such for Israel, He will do such against Israel. The choice is up to Israel.

22 **Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy persons,**

The word order provides emphasis: *b'shivim nephesh yaredu avoteka mitsraiymah* – “in seventy souls went down your fathers to Egypt.” Moses provides a history lesson to close out our verses today. He notes the diminutive size of Israel speaking of them as in the collective “Your (singular) fathers,” highlighting their insignificant number.

But in this, he also tells them that what happened, and what has come about in Israel now sitting outside of Canaan, was prophesied in advance...

*22 (fin) **and now the LORD your God has made you as the stars of heaven in multitude.**

The Lord had made a promise to Abraham. Along with that promise were certain statements of fact concerning the future. Moses tells Israel that the promise has been fulfilled, and that the factual statements came true. From Genesis 15 –

“And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, ‘This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.’⁵ Then He brought him outside and said, ‘Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be.’” Genesis 15:4, 5

And then just a few verses later –

“Then He said to Abram: ‘Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years.¹⁴ And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions.¹⁵ Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age.¹⁶ But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.’” Genesis 15:13-15

What the Lord had told to Abraham had come to pass. Thus, not only is He “the One who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen,” but He is the One who orchestrated them in the first place.

The divine plan was mapped out, spoken of before it came to pass, and was fulfilled as it was spoken of. Therefore, there is the absolute assurance that what Moses spoke out concerning His nature, was certainly the case. What Moses conveyed concerning their relationship with Him was inviolable, and what he would speak out concerning their future would certainly occur.

However, and this is what Israel needed to understand, the Lord did not determine these things – as if Judah was going to be the largest tribe because the Lord caused more children to be born to that tribe. Rather, the Lord knew that it would occur.

Likewise, the Lord didn’t force the brothers of Joseph to sell him off to Egypt, but the Lord used that for His greater purposes. In other words, Moses is not asking Israel to have a fatalistic view of the world, nor of the life they were to lead.

They were to understand that the Lord transcends the events of human history, and He uses them through His foreknowledge of them coming about to effect His purposes. If He intervenes in human history, as He did at the crossing of the Red Sea, He does so to continue that plan for His intended end.

But Israel was to know that they were accountable to the Lord for the choices they made, the allegiances they pursued, their treatment of His commands, and of others who were to be cared for according to His word.

Later in Deuteronomy, Moses will speak to Israel of their coming failures. Speaking of their future as if it is already past, he says –

*“But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked;
You grew fat, you grew thick,
You are obese!
Then he forsook God who made him,
And scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation.
¹⁶ They provoked Him to jealousy with foreign gods;
With abominations they provoked Him to anger.
¹⁷ They sacrificed to demons, not to God,
To gods they did not know,
To new gods, new arrivals
That your fathers did not fear.*

*¹⁸ Of the Rock who begot you, you are unmindful,
And have forgotten the God who fathered you.” Deuteronomy 32:15-18*

Knowing this in advance, Israel could not say, “The Lord knew it was coming and so it was predetermined and thus not our fault.” Rather, the Lord is letting them know that it is entirely their fault.

They were instructed, they were warned, and they did not heed. He just knew it would happen. His foreknowledge does not negate their free will. What is unfortunate, is that the same is true with the church today – both in doctrine (aka Calvinism) and in practice, such as in a fatalistic view concerning elections, saving for the future, or in a thousand other ways.

We – each and every person alive – are responsible for our actions, and we cannot blame God for those things that come about – even if He tells us in advance that they will happen. And so, let us take a right and reasonable approach to both our lives and our theology.

Let us live our lives before the Lord, honoring and serving Him as we are admonished to do, and let us look at the future with anticipation, not with a fatalistic view that the book is written, and we can’t change it anyway.

Our small part of the story is unknown to us from moment to moment, and our small effort may actually be the seed of something great and marvelous that happens along the pathway taking us to our final stop in the presence of the Lord.

Yes, the book is written, and yes, the end is already set. But we have a part to do until we get there. If giving flowers to someone will brighten their day, don’t withhold your hands from picking them. And if opening your mouth and speaking out the words of salvation will bring someone to the throne of grace, why would you refrain from speaking?

The only thing certain about our future is contained in a book containing 66 smaller books that total 1189 chapters. Outside of that, the possibilities for what lies ahead are absolutely unlimited. And each day that we live in the process is to be lived clinging to the One who gave us that broad and glorious outline of what lies ahead.

To be certain, if you want to share in the promises contained there, you will need to first be reconciled to the One who wrote out the lines of eternity. Make sure you are sure about that today.

***Closing Verse:** Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶ And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written:*

*KING OF KINGS AND
LORD OF LORDS.
Revelation 19:15, 16*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 11:1-12 *You were led by the Lord; by His grace...* (Until You Came to this Place) (36th 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.

He Is Your Praise, and He Is Your God

“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you
But to fear the LORD your God, not a bit but in whole
To walk in all His ways and to love Him
To serve the LORD your God with all your heart
-----and with all your soul

And to keep the commandments of the LORD, so it is understood
And His statutes which I command you today for your good?

Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong
-----to the LORD your God

Also the earth with all that is in it; everywhere you trod

The LORD delighted only in your fathers, to love them
And He chose their descendants after them, so He did say
You above all peoples
As it is this day

Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart
And be stiff-necked no longer; be sure to do your part

For the LORD your God is God of gods
And Lord of lords, these titles to Him we ascribe
The great God, mighty and awesome

Who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe

He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow also
And loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing
-----as you well know

Therefore love the stranger; his good from you shall not be skipped
For you were strangers in the land of Egypt

You shall fear the LORD your God
You shall serve Him, so I exclaim
And to Him you shall hold fast
And take oaths in His name

He is your praise
And He is your God, who has done for you
These great and awesome things
Which your eyes have seen; He is faithful and true

Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy persons
A very small brood
And now the LORD your God has made you
As the stars of heaven in multitude

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...