



Deut 8:1-10

Man Shall Not Live By Bread Alone

NKJ Deuteronomy 8:1 "Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers.

2 "And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

3 "So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.

4 "Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.

5 "You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the LORD your God chastens you.

6 "Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him.

7 "For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills;

8 "a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey;

9 "a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper.

10 "When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you.

Twenty seven years ago, a Rabbi by the name of Harold Kushner wrote a book called "***When bad things Happen to Good People***" It sought to explain why those bad things happened, and how a good God could allow them. It suffered from a number of problems, for instance it assumed that people were all basically good, not fallen, and that they deserved good things to happen to them all the time and that only having good stuff happen would be really good for you.

But it also made the fatal error of assuming that hardships or sad providences and tribulations could never be used for our good. The answer therefore that Kushner came to was that bad things happen *not because God had ordained them* but because God could do nothing to stop them. God is doing His best, we must believe that, but when something bad happens it is because he could not have kept it from happening, after all Kushner concluded, if God could have kept it from happening, He would have done so.

You would expect better from a Rabbi, given that the Old Testament is full of examples of God using hardship and "bad things" for the good of his people. For instance in these verses we see that God used their time in the wilderness to teach and chasten his people, to prepare them and to cause them to trust in Him and to obey Him no matter what the circumstances of life are.

The short answer to why bad things happen to those who truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is found in Romans 8:28 – “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

The hardships of God’s people were no different. Their years in the wilderness were a time of testing. In the desert God Removed all of the natural supports that the natural man depends on. If they would not depend on God, they would never be able to survive. It was designed to teach them the critical lessons that they could not live without God and they would not experience the blessings of the covenant without obedience to God’s commandments. As we have said before, the covenant is not something we enter into by obeying god’s commandments. We are saved because of God’s electing grace and we enter into the covenant by faith alone, a faith which he provides. But we are saved to love and obey the Lord, and if we will not, we have no right to expect blessings. A good parent does not bless his son’s disobedience, neither does God a loving God fail to chasten his children when they disobey.

Now as far as the “testing” of verse 2 was concerned, in a very real sense God knew what was in their hearts, but they did not, the testing that they endured was part of the training of the Lord.

Often it is only in times adversity that we discover our own shortcomings and learn how great is our need of God. It is only when a man realizes how weak and sinful he truly is, that his need of God becomes clear to Him and He seeks him.

I am reminded of Paul who had to be shown that far from being a friend of God he was an enemy who fought against Him. He had to be cast down and blinded before he could be restored and built up. And then throughout his life, Paul was taught in the School of tribulation, so that near the end of his life he was able to write from prison:

“I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Phil. 4:11-13)

Paul also knew how important this process was in taking this once proud and self-sufficient man in making and keeping him humble, ***“And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”*** (2 Cor. 12:7-10)

All of this was also designed to teach them how unnecessary compromise was, if the Lord said “Go” he also made provision for them to be able to do it. ***We can’t go there, we can’t follow the Lord, there’s no food*** there became an empty excuse. The lesson they were taught in those years of wandering are taught complete dependence upon God and His word. Walk by faith and obey His commandments no matter what, you never need to compromise.

The experience of Jesus in the wilderness teaches us that lesson as well:

Matt. 4:2 And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.

3 Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, 'If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.'

4 But He answered and said, 'It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "

Christ trusts in the will of the father, and in His promises. He knows His needs will be met by God, so rather than compromising, he endures. Because of what God has promised and done that we have already tasted and seen, we can trust Him in the times when we must walk by faith and not by sight.

“Let none of God's children distrust their Father, nor take any sinful indirect course for the supply of their own necessities; some way or other, God will provide for them in the way of duty and honest diligence, and verily they shall be fed.” – Matthew Henry

The Lord caused both their garments and their footwear to last, and the feet that wore them as well. Normally they would have worn out and caused them to leave the wilderness, but they were never in rags. It has been my experience to that God always provides for and relieves the needs of those who trust Him:

Psalm 34:8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!

9 Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him.

10 The young lions lack and suffer hunger; But those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good thing.

This testing was done out of love, and the daily chastening – kids chastening is discipline, when your parents punish you for disobedience they are chastening you. They seek to correct you and turn you into the right path, and the Lord did with his people then and now.

God disciplines as a man discipline his son, not because he hates him, but because he loves him and wants him to do well, It is *not* disciplining that indicates a lack of love or concern. Admonition and correction are critical or the people will not survive and prosper.

Moses outlines that the end of this process will be our good, our trust and obedience, and ultimately the Lord's blessings. In this case it was the blessing of a fruitful land filled with abundant good things after a hard time. But they are also cautioned:

10 "When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you.

Moses knows that the problem with abundance, is we forget who it came from. Therefore do not forget to thank him

Applications:

Our time here on earth is a time of testing, where we will often endure hardships, none of these are accidental.

John 16:33 "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Heb. 12:6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives."

7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?

8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?

10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.

11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

2 Cor. 4:8 *We are* hard pressed on every side, yet **not crushed**; *we are* perplexed, but **not** in despair;

9 persecuted, but **not** forsaken; struck down, but **not** destroyed --

And we press on like the saints of old, but we do not merely want an earthly country stocked with good things, and for those who know Christ, it is not earthly blessings that fade away that are our great desire. We want a treasure that does not fail, and a country in which we may dwell forever.

In Hebrews 11:16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

So Teach your children the value of hardship: As Al Mohler has said "we must not protect our children from the process of growing up into adulthood. While we are charged to protect our children from evil, and to guard them from harm, we are not to shield them from reality. As our children grow older, they should demonstrate an increasing maturity that allows them to deal with the problems of life--not to run from them."

We are raising up a generation of Christian kids who, the moment they experience tribulation and adversity, tend to run from it. That is one of the reasons why they refuse to endure shame and mockery that comes from following and proclaiming Jesus Christ. They discover the truth of what Paul said: ***2 Tim 3:12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*** And their response is to abandon godly living.

Note, God did this lest the abundance he was giving them would ruin his people. As Matthew Henry said ***Those that bear the inconveniences of an afflicted state with patience and submission, are humbled by them and prove well under them, are best prepared for better circumstances.*** You too need to remember that without the heart being prepared blessings spoil us.