



### **Deuteronomy 4:8-14** **That They May Teach Their Children**

In Homestead, Florida, there is a place called the Coral Castle. It was built by a Latvian immigrant to America named Edward Leedskalnin. He was engaged to a sixteen-year-old girl, but one day before the wedding, she bailed on him.

Putting that life behind, in the early 1920s, he moved to America and eventually came to Florida. There, he began working on his home, which was a monument to the lost love of his life.

Ed was only 5 feet tall and weighed around 100 pounds, and yet, the house he built includes blocks of Oolite Limestone, meaning fossilized coral, over 25 feet tall, and weighing over 30 tons. Thus, some of the stones are taller than those in Stonehenge and heavier than the heaviest stone in the great pyramid of Giza.

The entry gate for the house weighs 9 tons and could be spun by a slight push by a child with a single finger. It is carved so that it fits within a quarter of an inch of the walls. In 1986, it stopped working, and so a crew was called in to repair it.

It took six men and a 50-short-ton crane to pull it out. After repairing it, it was set back in place. That lasted about 20 years and it had to be repaired again, but it has never rotated as precisely as it once did.

It has never been discovered how he was able to do the work he did, and his secrets died with him. A lesson we can learn here is that great things must be passed on to another generation, or they will die off and be lost – maybe to never be recovered again.

**Text Verse:** “But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, <sup>22</sup> even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:21-23

In our verses today, both the Lord and Moses note the importance of parents teaching the children what they know concerning the words of the Lord. If we find it a loss to think of not knowing how Ed Leedskalnin did what he did, how much more of a loss should it be considered when the word of the Lord is not passed on to the next generation!

Or maybe even worse than that would be incorrectly passing on the word of the Lord. Who knows, someone who was not trained in the word of the Lord might find a copy of it, read it, and come to find Him in it. That actually will be seen in today’s sermon.

But if someone is incorrectly taught the word of the Lord, the chances are likely that his doctrine will never be corrected. This is evidenced all over the world in people who learned incorrectly, and who continue on in the incorrect pursuit of the word for the rest of their lives.

Let us be sure to not only pass on the word of the Lord, but let us be absolutely sure that we are passing it on properly – to the glory of God who gave it to us in the first place. Such 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. Gather the People to Me (verses 8-10)**

The final verse of the previous sermon asked, “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?” That verse forms the middle of the ongoing chiasm which began in verse 3:25 and which will end in verse 4:22.

Moses just asked which nation has God so near to it. It was a rhetorical question which demanded the answer, “No such nation exists.” Starting off where we left off, Moses now continues in this same line of thought by asking another rhetorical question...

<sup>8</sup> And what great nation *is there* that has *such* statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law

Moses asked concerning the nearness of God to the people, noting that for whatever reason, they might call upon Him. Now, he asks concerning the “statutes and righteous judgments.” What nation possesses any that are comparable to that which is contained in their law? Again, it demands a negative answer. “There is no such nation.”

The question is dependent on two different thoughts. The first is concerning the statutes and judgments which the Lord first commanded Moses. That was seen in verse 4:5. There Moses said, “Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the Lord my God commanded me.”

The second thought is that it is those same laws that Moses is giving to teach the people. That was seen in verse 4:1, saying, “listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe.” Both rhetorical questions are given in relation to the Lord God.

The Lord is Israel’s God, and He is near to them as a people. And the statutes and judgments find their source in the Lord God. Both of these together are what make them a great nation.

Israel cannot claim the nearness of God as a right to call upon Him unless they acknowledge – meaning hear and obey – the statutes and judgments which He has given. They are a reflection of Him, and a condition of a right relationship with Him.

The two questions asked by Moses show that the greatness of a nation is not truly based on size, military power, wealth, or any other such thing. Rather, it is based on its relationship with God and on its form and structure of government – meaning its statutes and judgments which form the basis of it – both of which are available to Israel.

At times, Israel had great military power, and Israel also had the greatest of wealth – especially under Solomon – but neither of these defined them, and neither of these could save them. Only in holding to the Lord and not false idols, and only in observance of His law and not in deviating from it, could Israel be considered a great nation. Moses says, it is these statutes and judgments...

8 (con’t) which I set before you this day?

*liphnekhem* – “before you.” It is second person plural. Moses is setting these things before the people. There was a time when the Law of Moses did not exist. The nations set up kingdoms and

governments, and they conducted their affairs according to their own set guidelines. Many of them had noble laws, some of which mirror the laws found in the Law of Moses.

The expectations of God are often natural laws which are known even to those who do not have the law. Paul shows this is true in Romans 2 –

“...for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves,<sup>15</sup> who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves *their* thoughts accusing or else excusing *them*)” Romans 2:14, 15

However, not all of what God expects of man is found in nature. And further, with the introduction of sin, corruption of what is right is introduced into even what is evident from nature. Thus, the otherwise noble laws of the nations contained corruptions of what is right, and they also lacked the fulness of what God expected.

This would not be the case with the Mosaic Law. The laws of the nations could not provide life. They could only constrain or guide the people during life. The Law of Moses, however, was given to give life, if it was adhered to. Hence, Moses implored them to be attentive to what he set before them...

<sup>9</sup> Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself,

*raq hishamer lekha u-shemor naphshekha meod* – “Only take heed to yourself, and watch your soul exceedingly.” First, this is a double imperative, using the same Hebrew word, *shamar*, twice. Secondly, the words are second person singular. Each individual, forming a collective whole, is to do so.

They are to watch their actions, and they are to exceedingly confine the actions of their souls. A good parallel to this thought is found in 1 Timothy 6 –

“O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane *and* idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge.” 1 Timothy 6:2

Thirdly, Moses will again use the word *shamar* in verse 4:15 in conjunction with the nature of God. No image bears His likeness, and therefore there is to be no image made attempting to reveal any likeness of anything which is to then be worshipped.

It is the soul of the man which is tempted to fall into idolatry, and so each man was to carefully guard his soul from doing so. This is what Moses begins to speak of now...

<sup>9</sup> (con't) lest you forget the things your eyes have seen,

Although all but Joshua and Caleb of those twenty and above had died in the wilderness, those nineteen and younger were spared. Those twenty and above had seen all of the events – from the Exodus through until arrival at the border of Canaan, and yet they forgot what their eyes had beheld.

However, at the time of Moses' words, those who were around forty-five, up to those who were in their late fifties would have vivid memories of the Exodus, of the giving of the law, of the coming of the manna for the first time, of the water flowing from the rock, of enough quail coming to the camp to feed them all for a month, and on and on and on.

Moses, however, will focus only on the giving of the law for his words here. It is that display, and the events which surrounded it,

that established them as the Lord's people under His rule and authority.

Their young, impressionable eyes would have seen those things. And in seeing, Moses implores them to not forget. And not forgetting was to be based on an active process of remembering by keeping and guarding themselves through observance of the laws that same Lord, through Moses, set before them.

9 (con't) and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life.

In the Bible, when the heart is mentioned this way, it never speaks of the organ which pumps blood, nor does it speak of the seat of emotions as we use it today. Rather, it speaks of the place of reason and intellect. The words here may have been on the mind of the psalmist when he wrote –

“Your word I have hidden in my heart,  
That I might not sin against You.” Psalm 119:11

Each individual was to take heed to himself, and to watch over his soul diligently in order to remember the precepts of the law. If any of you has ever learned another language, you know that unless you actively maintain that language, you will forget it – very quickly. This is what Moses is telling the people.

“If you don't actively pay heed to the law, and if you do not actively watch over yourself and your actions in relation to the law, the precepts of the law will depart from your mind, and they will be absolutely gone. You will not even have a memory of them unless you are once again schooled in them.”

Further, a knowledge of the law, like a knowledge of maintaining a free society itself, is not congenital. It must be carefully guarded and passed on...

9 (con't) And teach them to your children and your grandchildren,

*v'hodatam l'vanekha v'livne vanekha* – “and teach them to your sons, and to your sons’ sons.” This is the first time that Israel is instructed to not only pay heed to the word of the Lord but to actively pass that word on to their children after them. However, the same thought will be seen again several more times throughout Deuteronomy.

If a person fails to keep guard over what he knows, he will forget it, having it crowded out by all kinds of other things that come in and replace whatever that knowledge is. And, even if that person actively and carefully guards his knowledge, unless he passes it on to those who come after him, that knowledge will perish with him.

Further, this isn't just something that will happen to each individual. Rather, it is something that will happen to the entire nation collectively as well. Even though spoken in the singular, it is referring to the nation as a whole.

Unless the law is remembered and heeded by those under it, and unless it is taught to those who come after them, it will die from both the individual and the collective memory.

While Moses is speaking these words, his coming replacement, Joshua, is sitting right there with him. And yet, we read this in Judges 2 –

“When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.” Judges 2:10

Within one generation of the exhortation by Moses, the very thing that he implores for them to do is the very thing that they failed to

do. An entire generation did not know the Lord, nor those things that He had done, because the parents failed to protect, keep, and pass on that which they knew.

This was corrected, from time to time, through the Lord's chastening hand, or His active intervention more than for any other reason. But no sooner would they turn back to the Lord, then they would fall away again. One generation to the next, failing to instill in their children the things that would keep them from His wrath.

Eventually, the knowledge of His statutes and judgments was so far removed from them, that they didn't even know that they existed. This is seen at the time of King Josiah and the entire chapter must be read to understand both the situation, and the ramifications of what transpired because of it. (**2 Kings 22**).

Moses' is imploring them to do these things now, because the Lord had already done so forty years earlier. He gave them a display which was intended to impress His glory upon their minds, and which was then intended to be passed on as a truthful account to each subsequent generation...

<sup>10</sup> *especially concerning* the day you stood before the LORD your God in Horeb,

The words "especially concerning" are not in the original, and they are an unnecessary insert. Moses is referring to the law, the Source of the law, and beginning of the giving of that law.

It is this Day in Horeb that is the basis of everything Moses is relaying concerning the law. The people stood before the Lord, and they became a people under the law at that time. In verse 9, Moses referred to *ha'davarim*, the things, that their eyes had seen. Now, he explains what those "things" are that he was referring to.

It is important for us to remember that the giving of the law at Sinai came at the same time of year that the descending of the Holy Spirit came to the church – Pentecost. The two occurrences at this time, spanned by almost fifteen hundred years, was to teach us a lesson. It is a lesson detailed throughout the New Testament.

In Romans, Paul says that the law, which was intended to bring life, actually brought death. Later, Paul refers to this in 2 Corinthians –

“Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some *others*, epistles of commendation to you or *letters* of commendation from you?

<sup>2</sup>You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men;

<sup>3</sup>clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.

<sup>4</sup>And we have such trust through Christ toward God. <sup>5</sup>Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as *being* from ourselves, but our sufficiency *is* from God, <sup>6</sup>who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” 2 Corinthians 3:1-6

Again, in Galatians 4, Paul compares the two covenants and calls the Covenant at Sinai bondage, but he says those of the New Covenant are free. In the book of Hebrews, the author time and again speaks of the superiority of the New Covenant over the old, and in Hebrews 12, he specifically refers to the account which Moses will now remember.

We don't want to get our minds too far away from these New Covenant truths as we evaluate what Moses will say. This is because the very covenant which was promised to be life for the people turned out to be death for them.

It is not that the fault is with the law, but with man's inability to live by what the law says. The initial giving of this law is what

forms the basis of the entire law, and it is that initial giving that Moses appeals to...

10 (con't) when the LORD said to me, 'Gather the people to Me,

This is a condensed version of what is stated in Exodus 19. There, the people were told to consecrate themselves, including not coming near their wives, meaning intimately, and they were to wash their clothes. After the consecration, the Lord was to appear to them on the third day atop Sinai...

10 (con't) and I will let them hear My words,

The words here tie in with “the things” their eyes saw which Moses referred to in verse 9. The word he used there, *ha'davarim*, literally means “the words.” When hearing, one doesn't actually see the words, but to us things are made up of words, and so our minds can make a mental picture of things we hear.

The Lord here says *v'ashmiem eth devarai* – “and I will let them hear my words.” In the Bible, and in both testaments, the words “see,” “heart,” and “eyes” are used again and again in the same verse. The heart discerns and understands what the eyes see. And sometimes, the eyes see without visually beholding something.

Here we have the Lord, coming to reveal Himself to Israel in two ways – 1) through His spoken word, and 2) in a terrifying display of His glory through sight and sound. This was to impress upon the people that the law, which is being given, did – in fact – proceed from the Lord.

Thus, as much as the sight and sound revealed the power of the Lord, the words revealed the nature of the Lord. The people will not see the Lord, but the words He speaks will convey to them images nonetheless.

It is these mental images that come with the commandments that will – at the same time – be intended for convicting them of holding fast to what they are told, and yet also bring to mind possibilities of breaking the very laws they are to hear.

Paul explains that, in detail, in Romans 7, and it is what we will consider in the verses ahead. The Lord, at the giving of the law, understood this. Because of this – and known to us now, but unknown to Israel at the time – the law is only an interim step in the panorama of redemptive history.

Thus, despite the next words of the Lord, which seem like the purpose of the law, the actual purpose of the giving of the law was to identify this problem in us, to teach us that it is the case, and then – by taking that information – it is intended to lead us by the hand directly to the cross of Christ where we can find grace. Not knowing this at the time, the Lord next says...

10 (con't) that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and *that* they may teach their children.'

The word *lamad* (meaning learning, teaching, instructing) that was introduced in 4:1 and which was repeated in 4:5 is used again here two times – learn and teach. As we have seen, it comes from a primitive root signifying “to goad,” which is what is done to prod an animal along. The Lord intends to prod the people through this law to 1) fear Him, and 2) to teach their children.

But this prodding isn't confined to the land of Israel. Instead of the word *ha'ertz* or “the land,” He says, *ha'adamah*, or “the earth.” Though almost interchangeable at times, the word *adamah* speaks of the ground itself, without distinction to a specific location.

When under the law, wherever one goes on the earth, he remains under the law. The physical boundaries of the lands of the earth do not end the spiritual confines of the burden of the law.

The same is true with the generations under the law. The burden of the law does not end with the death of the parent. It continues on to the children. Thus, whether the children are taught the law or not, the burden of the law remains. Therefore, the Lord includes them in His words now, both in word and in a visible manifestation...

*In the hearing of these commands, I find no hope  
Even from the first one I was done in for sure  
I used to think I was pretty great, but I see I am just a dope  
Compared to God's standard, I am certainly impure*

*I tremble to think of my guilt, how it weighs me down  
I fear to face God on my own deeds for righteousness  
I once thought God would at me smile, but no! It will be a frown  
I bear such heavy guilt, My God! I am such a mess*

*Oh, but then I heard of Jesus, sweet Jesus  
He lived the life that I could never ever live  
And He gave it up for sinners like me! Yes, for all of us  
In exchange for my life of sin, His perfect life He did give*

*Oh! What a Savior! What a friend He is to me!  
Oh! My Lord Jesus, the One who has set me free!*

## **II. Darkness, Cloud, and Obscurity (verses 11-14)**

<sup>11</sup> “Then you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain,

Exodus 19:17 says, “And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.” It can be assumed that this means “all the people,” including women and children.

The entire congregation was brought out and stood before the Lord. Before this, however, they were given explicit instructions –

“You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, ‘Take heed to yourselves *that* you do *not* go up to the mountain or touch its base. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. <sup>13</sup> Not a hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot *with an arrow*; whether man or beast, he shall not live.’ When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come near the mountain.” Exodus 19:12, 13

That alone would have been terrifying to the people, but the awesome sight they beheld would have been even more so...

11 (con’t) and the mountain burned with fire to the midst of heaven,

The Hebrew is much more expressive, saying, “and the mountain was burning with fire to the heart of the heavens.” It is as if a continuous raging burning reached up beyond the eyesight of the people. The display of a mountain actually burning would be beyond the ability of the people to mentally grasp.

The thought of the fire here is that of judgment burning up everything that approaches it. The law is given, and thus infractions of it bear a deserved penalty. It is the opposite of the picture seen in the coming of Christ –

“Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” John 4:13, 14

Though the law burns with fire, that can be quenched through the fountain of water which comes through the grace of God in Christ. But at the giving of the law, there was more. The fire came...

11 (con’t) with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness.

*khoshek anan v'araphel* – “darkness, cloud, and obscurity.” The imagery here is that of being completely unable to see. The Lord, and everything about Him, is totally hidden from the eyes. This, even though they strain with all intent to obtain the slightest view. It is exactly the opposite of what John writes about concerning Christ –

“And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” John 1:5

The idea of the word John uses is that the darkness is unable to overtake the light. Though the law brings complete darkness, the grace of Christ brings complete light. Paul speaks of that in 2 Corinthians 4 –

“For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2 Corinthians 4:6

Until the coming of Christ, however, the people were faced with the overwhelming yoke of knowing that the same Lord who presented Himself in judgment and total obscurity did so with accompanying words...

<sup>12</sup> And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire.

The fire of judgment, with implied ceaseless and complete destruction, is where the Lord speaks from. The eyes were unable to see anything in the gloom and darkness which would allow them to know the Lord behind it.

Instead, they only knew Him through the words of law which bring forth death, and that from the midst of the fire of judgment. What a

terrible prospect to consider. The display resulted in what I mentioned a few minutes ago. From Hebrews 12 –

“For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, <sup>19</sup> and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard *it* begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. <sup>20</sup> (For they could not endure what was commanded: ‘And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow.’ <sup>21</sup> And so terrifying was the sight *that* Moses said, ‘I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.’).  
Hebrews 12:18-21

The people were terrified at what they beheld. And even their leader, who represented them before the Lord was left utterly afraid at the giving of the law. What a marked difference to that which Christ left His people at the giving of the New Covenant –

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” John 14:27

<sup>12</sup> (con’t) You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; *you* only *heard* a voice.

The lesson of the law is found in these words. The law speaks, it speaks words of bondage, expected judgment, and that – then – leading to death. The only place to appeal a violation of the law is to either precepts within it, or to the unseen Lord who gave it in the first place.

The Lord will tell them in the coming verses that because they saw no form, they were not to make any image of anything in order to worship it, serve it, petition it, pray to it, or call it a god. A person under the law was only to worship the unseen Lord.

But for those after the first generation, this means a completely new dynamic is introduced. Without seeing the Lord, or a representation of the Lord, one must have faith that the Lord actually exists.

Such a state will lead to one of a few inevitable paths a person can follow. The first is to believe in the Lord and to follow Him in some measure – be it wholeheartedly, partially, or failingly. The second would be to not believe in the Lord and ignore the commandments of the law. Another would be to not believe in the Lord and obey the law anyway. And so on.

None of these are unlike the state of the believer in Christ today. We have not seen Jesus, and – like those under the law – all we have are the accounts which tell us of what occurred in the past. Either way, whether under the law, or in Christ, the key to a right relationship with the Lord is through faith. David understood this after having violated the law –

“For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give *it*;

You do not delight in burnt offering.

<sup>17</sup> The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit,

A broken and a contrite heart—

These, O God, You will not despise.” Psalm 51:16, 17

The law demanded sacrifices for sin, but David knew that a sacrifice was only as good as the heart attitude behind it. Thus, we can see that the same day that the law was introduced a spirit of self-worth, because of the law, was also introduced.

For those who looked to the law for their justification, it wasn't because they took to heart the terrible display of judgment which came with the giving of the law. If they did, they too would quake and fear at their infractions of it. Rather, they look to the

allowances within the law, or even beyond the law, for their justification.

“Yes, I may have sinned, but this goat will take care of that. And further, the more perfectly I adhere to the law, the more God will favor me.”

This is the principal error of what we might call Pharasaism. It comes from the self-righteous attitude which springs forth from going through the motions of the law without a care about having offended the One who gave the law in the first place. It is what Jesus stated to the people in Luke 18:10-14 –

“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup> The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. <sup>12</sup> I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ <sup>13</sup> And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ <sup>14</sup> I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Whether the Pharisee believed in God at all or not, he did not look to God as the source of his righteousness. Rather, he looked to the law, additions to the law, and his observance of those things as his righteousness. The tax collector, like David, looked beyond the law to the Giver of it. “This law cannot forgive me, but You can.”

Unfortunately, the same spirit which filled the Pharisee fills much of the church today. The grace of God, and His tender mercies, are set aside by and through law observance. None of us deserve the grace and mercy of God which is found in Christ Jesus. And we prove that point in one of two ways –

- 1) We can trust in Christ and only in Christ for our justification, thus proving that we are saved by Christ.
- 2) We can trust in our adherence to certain precepts within the Law of Moses, thus showing that Christ's grace does not matter to us.

We cannot have it both ways. The giving of the law of which the Ten Commandments is the basis, demonstrates this to us...

13 So He declared to you His covenant

Here it says *berito* – “His covenant.” There is no exchange between the Lord and the people. It is solely the Lord's pronouncement. Nothing can be added to it by them. They are words of law coming from an unseen Source, and in a terrifying display of power.

But the display is not the Lord. The display is simply that – an effect produced by the Lord. But the words are a reflection of the Lord. And, as the words form the covenant, then the covenant itself is a perfect – even if incomplete – reflection of the Lord.

If the people were told to not approach the mountain lest they die, then what a greater horror could be expected if they violated the words of His covenant! This is all the more poignant because these were not mere admonitions – “Try to do these things.” These were unalterable commandments...

13 (con't) which He commanded you to perform,

The display of power was to impress upon the people the terror they should feel at violating the covenant. It was spoken by Him, it was imposed upon them, and they were to understand the consequences for failing to adhere.

13 (con't) the Ten Commandments;

*asereth ha'devarim* – “ten the words.” What would happen if the Lord never said, “You shall not murder”? Then murder would not be a violation of the law. And what happens in one’s mind when the words, “You shall not murder” are spoken?

The mind makes a mental image of doing just that. Thus, it shows that we know what murder is. And what is it that we do when we get in an argument with someone and we really hate him. It may be that in our mind, we form an image of killing him, just as we did when we were told to not murder.

This is what Jesus was referring to when He spoke of committing adultery, one of the Ten Words –

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’<sup>28</sup> But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” Matthew 5:27, 28

This is what the law does. It condemns us through mere thought. And this is what Paul writes about in Romans 7 –

“I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.<sup>10</sup> And the commandment, which *was* to *bring* life, I found to *bring* death.<sup>11</sup> For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed *me*.” Romans 7:9-11

It is certain that every person standing there receiving the Ten Words did exactly this as the Lord spoke them out. He said, “You shall have no other gods before Me,” and some of the people’s minds went to the gods they had set up in their tent, or to a god they once worshipped in Egypt.

He said, “Honor your father and your mother,” and some of them at that very moment thought in their minds, “My father is a loser and my mother is pathetic.” On down the line of the Ten Words,

each one brought to mind a thought which caused some person to violate it, even while he was receiving it.

This is the infection in us known as “sin.” And it is what Paul refers to. The commandment, which was to bring life, brought death because sin took the occasion by the commandment, deceived them, and killed them, even while they stood there receiving them. But it didn’t end there. The commandment which brought death was made permanent...

13 (con’t) and He wrote them on two tablets of stone.

This is what Paul wrote about in 2 Corinthians 3 – the letter, meaning the tablets of stone, kills. Only the Spirit can grant life. The entire history of Israel is given to show us that we need Christ, and that without Him, we will remain in a state of death.

Stone is unyielding and when something is written on it, there it remains. Thank God for the Stone of Israel, Jesus Christ, by whom those commandments were fulfilled, and whose body was then broken for us so that we might be brought out from such bondage and terror and into new life and a heavenly hope.

14 And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments,

There is an emphasis in the words in regard to Moses – “And me Yehovah commanded at that time.” This is certainly stated this way because of the people’s reaction after hearing the Lord speak out the law –

“Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw *it*, they trembled and stood afar off. <sup>19</sup> Then they said to Moses, ‘You

“speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.”  
Exodus 20:18, 19

The display was sufficient to accomplish its intended goal, and so from then on, Moses was given the words of the Lord which he then passed on to the people as instruction to prod them along.

These statutes and judgments began immediately after that in Exodus 20, and they continued on through Numbers. They now resume once again in the book of Deuteronomy. And this instruction was so...

\*14 (fin) that you might observe them in the land which you cross over to possess.

The intent of these statutes, judgments, commands, ordinances, and so on, was to lead the people through their lives in Canaan. They are a unique and perfect form of instruction – if the people adhered to them. But even from the first days after having crossed the Jordan, they began to violate them.

During the first battle to subdue the land, even during the battle itself, one of the people violated the tenth commandment, coveting, and he also violated other precepts which had been laid down in the forming of the government as well.

This pattern continued all the way throughout the time of the law, and it continued through the time of the coming of Christ as well. And, it continues on in the world today. Where law is given, law is violated. And with the violation of law, there is the imputation of sin.

The only way to be freed from this bondage is to be freed from the law. And in order to be freed from the law, one must be given

grace. The law and grace are mutually exclusive. Either one is under law, or he is under grace.

Not only has Israel had innumerable laws laid upon them already, but Moses is going to heap more on them in the many chapters ahead. There is nothing wrong with the law though, Paul says that the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. The problem does not reside in the law. Rather, the problem is in us.

In order to correct this problem, God sent His Son into the world to do what we could not do – live out the law as God expects. The remarkable thing about it is that the law itself proclaims its own ending in Him.

That was seen in our text verse today, and it will be confirmed in our closing verse. For now, please understand that if you are caught up in a church that asks you to come under the precepts of the Law of Moses, you are excluding God's grace by doing so.

Come to God through Christ and be reconciled to Him through His fulfillment of this terrifying law which was given by an infinitely holy God. His justice must be satisfied, and it will either be through Christ's fulfillment of it on your behalf, or your failure of it being reckoned to you. Choose wisely. Choose Christ.

**Closing Verse:** “And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*.” John 1:16-18

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 4:15-24 *Can you shape it with stone, metal, or a wood board?* ... (The Form of the Lord) (15<sup>th</sup> 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.

### **That They May Teach Their Children**

And what great nation is there  
That has such statutes and righteous judgments, please do say  
As are in all this law  
Which I set before you this day?

Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself  
Lest you forget the things your eyes have seen; all that has been  
And lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life  
And teach them to your children and your grandchildren

Especially concerning the day you stood  
Before the LORD your God in Horeb, when the LORD said to me  
Gather the people to Me  
And I will let them hear My words spoken plainly

That they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth  
And that they may teach their children  
-----of their incomparable worth

Then you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain  
And the mountain burned with fire during my address  
To the midst of heaven  
With darkness, cloud, and thick darkness

And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire  
You heard the sound of the words all around  
But saw no form  
You only heard a voice; one that shook the ground

So He declared to you His covenant  
Which He commanded you to perform; these He made known  
The Ten Commandments  
And He wrote them on two tablets of stone

And the LORD commanded me at that time

To teach you statutes and judgments; to you them I did express  
That you might observe them in the land  
Which you cross over to possess

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...

<sup>8</sup> And what great nation *is there* that has *such* statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day? <sup>9</sup> Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren, <sup>10</sup> *especially concerning* the day you stood before the LORD your God in Horeb, when the LORD said to me, ‘Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and *that* they may teach their children.’  
<sup>11</sup> “Then you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire to the midst of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness. <sup>12</sup> And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; *you only heard* a voice. <sup>13</sup> So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone. <sup>14</sup> And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you

statutes and judgments, that you might observe them in the land which you cross over to possess.