

PRECEPTS FOR PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN

September 8, 2013

Deuteronomy 4:1-31

“Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy son’s sons.” Deuteronomy 4:9

The book of Deuteronomy was written weeks, perhaps days, before Israel entered the land of Canaan. God promised that land to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob centuries earlier. Jacob’s descendents had since grown from a family of twelve sons into a nation numbering possibly two million. That growth had taken place during four centuries in Egypt, where Israel became slaves of Pharaoh.

Forty years before Deuteronomy, Israel was delivered miraculously from Pharaoh’s dominion. Equally miraculous was her preservation during those years in the harsh desert wilderness. At the beginning of that desert sojourn God gave them His law, accompanied by an astonishing manifestation of His presence on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19). Just before their entrance into Canaan, that law was repeated by their leader Moses in a “second law-giving,” which is the meaning of the word “Deuteronomy.”

Moses’ knew that adherence to God’s law is the only formula for success as a nation and as individuals. The precepts that he reaffirmed provide infallible instruction for every generation.

I. “Hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you” (Deut. 4:1).

The statutes and judgments are God’s Word. The instruction is very clear: heed God’s word and be blessed or disregard God’s Word and suffer God’s displeasure. Life, individually and nationally, is not about individuals or nations; it is about God. He created all things for His own pleasure, and upholds all things by His power. Creation, time and eternity are all about God Himself, and He must be supreme in all (Psa. 24:1, 2; Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:3; Rev. 4:11).

II. “Teach them unto thy sons, and thy son’s sons” (Deut. 4:9).

Hearkening unto God’s law includes teaching His law to our children and grandchildren. This is an element of parental obedience to God’s law, but is also the formula for the preservation of our children, their families and, ultimately, the land in which God has placed us.

III. “I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation” (Deut. 5:9).

Failure to instill God’s law within our children initiates a multi-generational cycle of disregarding God’s truth and suffering divine displeasure. Descendents of ungodly parents often reap the consequences of their parents’ unfaithfulness.

IV. “Honour thy father and thy mother, as the Lord thy god hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may be well with thee” (Deut. 5:16).

Children must honor the instruction of their parents to ensure the continuation of the blessing that accompanies obedience to God’s law.