

Deuteronomy 4

Verses 1 – 4

“Now, Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I am teaching you to perform, so that you will live and go in and take possession of the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, is giving you. ² You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, so that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I am commanding you. ³ Your eyes have seen what the Lord has done in the case of Baal-peor, for all the men who followed Baal-peor, the Lord your God has destroyed them from among you. ⁴ But you who clung to the Lord your God are alive today, every one of you.

Now, Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I am teaching you

In the first 3 chapters Moses gave a brief summary of the last 40 years.

Now Moses is about to give a long discourse on the Law

A reminder of what they need to know and obey as they enter the Promised Land

You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, so that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I am commanding you

The person that ignores or gives little thought to God's word is usually guilty of nullifying His word. They do this because they want to live according to their own rules.

The person that adds to the word of God is most likely legalistic or overly pious. The Pharisees were well known for their traditions that superseded the word of God.

See Mark 7:9 - 13

Numerous false doctrines multiplied during the middle ages. This happened because the church of that time restricted the word of God to those in the priesthood.

The reformation corrected some of these false doctrines but some of them still exist yet today. The only cure for this dilemma is for people to study the word of God.

Your eyes have seen what the Lord has done in the case of Baal-peor, for all the men who followed Baal-peor, the Lord your God has destroyed them from among you. But you who clung to the Lord your God are alive today, every one of you.

This is a good example of why God's word should be followed.

Those who do not follow God's word suffer the consequences of their actions. It may not always happen quickly as it did in this example but the law of reaping and sowing will eventually catch up with all of us. Our choice is to decide if it will be for good or bad.

In this case 24,000 Israelites died in a plague. This event had taken place just 4 months earlier in Num. 25.

Verses 5 – 8

⁵ “See, I have taught you statutes and judgments just as the Lord my God commanded me, that you are to do these things in the land where you are entering to take possession of it. ⁶ So keep and do *them*, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ ⁷ For what great nation *is there* that has a god so near to it as is the Lord our God whenever we call on Him? ⁸ Or what great nation *is there* that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole Law which I am setting before you today?

So keep and do *them*, for that is your wisdom and your understanding

For what great nation *is there* that has a god so near to it as is the Lord our God

What great nation *is there* that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole Law

Three main points here

1. Obeying God's law brings wisdom and understanding.
2. No other nation had the kind of relationship with God that Israel had.

God was there to deliver, bless, correct and sustain them.

3. They were given the Law so they might be righteous and be a light to the world.

Now this has been transferred to the true sons of Abraham, all believers.

Verses 9 - 14

Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them. ¹⁰ Remember the day you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, when he said to me, “Assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children.” ¹¹ You came near and stood at the foot of the mountain while it blazed with fire to the very heavens, with black clouds and deep darkness. ¹² Then the Lord spoke to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a voice. ¹³ He declared to you his covenant, the Ten Commandments, which he commanded you to follow and then wrote them on two stone tablets. ¹⁴ And the Lord directed me at that time to teach you the decrees and laws you are to follow in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess.

Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live

The older generation has passed away so Moses is speaking to those who were 20 year old or younger at the time of the rebellion.

That generation is now 38 to 58 years old. So many in this generation had seen all the miracles from the 10 plagues in Egypt, the Red Sea Crossing, the giving of the law at Sinai, the manna for 40 years, water coming from rocks, and the recent victories east of Canaan

Moses is warning them not to be like their parents who saw all these signs but forgot or failed to see the significance of these miracles.

Remember when Moses was gone for too long (40 days) and the people lost their way and had Aaron mold a golden calf out of their jewelry. That took place 4 months after the Exodus and one month after receiving the law (make no idols).

Moses tells them how they can avoid being forgetful or losing interest.

Be careful and watch yourselves closely.

That takes some discipline, effort, and self-reflection.

It also helps to remember the good things God has done for us.

Remember the day you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb

This took place during the 4th month in the wilderness.

See chart 405

Exodus	Event	Year 1 - 1446	Place
16:1	Manna and quail	3-15-01	The Desert of Sin
17:1	no water, Amalekites defeated		Rephidim
18	Judges appointed		Near the Mountain of God
19:1	Camped in front of the mountain	4th month	The Desert of Sinai
20	The ten commandments		The Desert of Sinai
21-23	Laws and regulations		The Desert of Sinai
24	Covenant confirmed	40 days and nights	The Desert of Sinai
25-31	Tabernacle envisioned		The Desert of Sinai
32	Golden Calf	Month 5 or 6	The Desert of Sinai

¹¹ You came near and stood at the foot of the mountain while it blazed with fire to the very heavens, with black clouds and deep darkness.

All thru the Book of Deuteronomy Moses is talking to the 2nd generation of people. Here he has jumped back to the beginning of the 4th month in the wilderness so the people he is talking to would have been from newborn to 19 years of age at the time.

The very young would not remember this event at all but the rest of this generation would remember varying amounts depending on their age at the time.

¹² Then the Lord spoke to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a voice.

Moses was trying to remind the people that they saw no image of God so they should not try to make a carved image.

That makes a lot of sense since it's hard to make a copy of nothing (no image).

On the other hand, this didn't stop their parents from making a golden calf and worshipping it. The ignorance of mankind is hard to comprehend at times.

¹³ He declared to you his covenant, the Ten Commandments, which he commanded you to follow and then wrote them on two stone tablets

Each tablet may have contained all the Commandments. The idea being that both parties to the covenant got a copy.

In this case, both tablets were placed in the Ark because the Ark of the Covenant was where God met with Israel.

¹⁴ And the Lord directed me at that time to teach you the decrees and laws you are to follow in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess.

As it turned out, Moses had over 38 years to accomplish this goal.

Hopefully, some of those who refused to enter Canaan repented of their lack of faith.

They would still die in the wilderness but they had a chance to get right with God.

Verses 15 - 20

¹⁵ “So be very careful yourselves, since you did not see any form on the day the Lord spoke to you at Horeb from the midst of the fire, ¹⁶ so that you do not act corruptly and make a carved image for yourselves in the form of any figure, a representation of male or female, ¹⁷ a representation of any animal that is on the earth, a representation of any winged bird that flies in the sky, ¹⁸ a representation of anything that crawls on the ground, or a representation of any fish that is in the water below the earth. ¹⁹ And *be careful* not to raise your eyes to heaven and look at the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the heavenly lights, and *allow yourself* to be drawn away and worship them and serve them, *things* which the Lord your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven. ²⁰ But the Lord has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, from Egypt, to be a people of His own possession, as today.

So be very careful, since you did not see any form on the day the Lord spoke to you at Horeb so you do not make a carved image for yourselves

Again Moses warns them not to make any kind of image that is meant to represent God.

No human image, no animal, no heavenly lights.

But the Lord has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, from Egypt, to be a people of His own possession, as today.

God had taken Israel out of slavery so they might be His people.

Verses 21 - 24

²¹ “Now the Lord was angry with me on your account, and He swore that I would not cross the Jordan, and that I would not enter the good land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance. ²² For I am going to die in this land; I am not crossing the Jordan, but you are going to cross, and you will take possession of this good land. ²³ So be careful yourselves, that you do not forget the covenant of the Lord your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of anything *against* which the Lord your God has commanded you. ²⁴ For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

Now the Lord was angry with me on your account.

Moses brought this up in Chapter 1 verse 37.

The fact that he is doing it again so soon indicates this was hard for Moses to accept.

But as was mentioned then, Moses only had himself to blame.

Yes, Moses was tired of their constant complaining, but God pointed out to Moses that he had failed to trust in Him.

Also, God had given Moses 70 elders to help lighten the load.

On the other hand, Moses had led these people for 40 years and now he could not cross because of a sin he committed in the last year. It would be difficult to accept.

²³ So be careful yourselves, that you do not forget the covenant of the Lord your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of anything *against* which the Lord your God has commanded you.

Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land because of one sin.

This should be a warning to the people who enter Canaan that God will punish them if they sin by worshipping false gods.

Verses 25 - 31

²⁵ “When you father children and *have* grandchildren, and you grow old in the land, and you act corruptly, and make an idol in the form of anything, and do what is evil in the sight of the Lord your God to provoke Him to anger, ²⁶ I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you today, that you will certainly perish quickly from the land where you are going over the Jordan to take possession of it. You will not live long on it, but will be utterly destroyed. ²⁷ The Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the Lord drives you. ²⁸ There you will serve gods, the work of human hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear, nor eat nor smell *anything*. ²⁹ But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find *Him* if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul. ³⁰ When you are in distress and all these things happen to you, in the latter days you will return to the Lord your God and listen to His voice. ³¹ For the Lord your God is a compassionate God; He will not abandon you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them.

When you act corruptly, and make an idol in the form of anything, you will certainly perish quickly from the land. The Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the Lord drives you.

When God says quickly what kind of time frame should we expect?

This prophecy was spoken in 1407 B.C. The book of Joshua covers 1406 to 1350 BC.

During that time Israel took over Canaan and was faithful to the Lord until Joshua and the elders of his time passed away.

During the next 300 years that is covered in the book of judges Israel experienced times of subjection to others nations around them, but when they repented God would raise up a Judge that would lead them to victory over their enemy.

But this verse refers to deportations when the Jews are defeated by foreign powers and taken into captivity to serve in distant lands.

Assyria captured the Northern kingdom and deported the people in 722 BC

Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and deported the people in 586 BC

See Map 410



Assyria and Babylon are about the same distance from Jerusalem. (550 miles)

Only a small remnant, the poorest among them, was left in Israel.

So what does God mean by quickly? It depends on when we count from.

The reign of David was good overall but his son Solomon introduced many foreign gods by building temples for his foreign wives to worship their gods.

So if we count from the middle of his reign 950 BC and count to the two deportations by Assyria & Babylon it should be close.

For the Northern kingdom it was 228 years.

And for the Southern kingdom it was 364 years.

The difference between the two is that The Southern kingdom had 8 good kings that slowed or reversed the worship of false gods while the north had 19 bad kings and 0 good ones.

²⁹ But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find *Him* if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul.

As far as we know, the exiles in Assyria never came back. This would suggest that the Northern tribes did not seek God with all their heart.

However we should mention that many of the faithful Jews in the North moved to the Southern kingdom before the deportation to Assyria. So the 10 tribes were not “lost” as some say.

Some of the Jews that were exiled to Babylon returned to Jerusalem 70 years later.

³¹ For the Lord your God is a compassionate God; He will not abandon you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them.

This applies to those who seek God with all their heart & soul.

Verses 32 - 40

³² “Indeed, ask now about the earlier days that were before your time, since the day that God created mankind on the earth, and *inquire* from one end of the heavens to the other. Has *anything* been done like this great thing, or has *anything* been heard like it? ³³ Has *any* people heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire, as you have heard *it*, and survived? ³⁴ Or has a god ventured to go to take for himself a nation from within *another* nation by trials, by signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand, by an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, just as the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? ³⁵ You were shown *these things* so that you might know that the Lord, He is God; there is no other besides Him. ³⁶ Out of the heavens He let you hear His voice to discipline you; and on earth He let you see His great fire, and you heard His words from the midst of the fire. ³⁷ Because He loved your fathers, He chose their descendants after them. And He personally brought you from Egypt by His great power, ³⁸ driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in *and* to give you their land as an inheritance, as *it is* today. ³⁹ Therefore know today, and take it to your heart, that the Lord, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other. ⁴⁰ So you shall keep His statutes and His commandments which I am giving you today, so that it may go well for you and for your children after you, and that you may live long on the land which the Lord your God is giving you for all time.”

Ask now about the earlier days that were before your time, since the day that God created mankind on the earth.

Who would you talk to about creation?

The information in the book of Genesis was not written down until the time of Moses but it had been passed down orally among people of faith.

Adam & Eve passed it on to their sons and daughters

After the global flood (3098 BC) only 8 people had that information.

Then Noah and his family passed it on to their kids and grandkids.

Then Abraham became the father of the Jews (1900 BC) and passed it on to his kids.

Then it was written down by Moses.

We have a brief history of mankind in the scriptures but we have all of the important events from creation until the coming of Christ and the early history of His church.

Has *anything* been done like this great thing, or has *anything* been heard like it? Has *any* people heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire, as you have heard *it*, and survived?

This is a reference to the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai.

The people were overwhelmed by the physical signs and asked Moses if he would speak to them because they were afraid they might die if God spoke to them.

See Exodus 20:18-19

Has a god ventured to go to take for himself a nation from within *another* nation by trials, by signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand, by an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, just as the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?

False gods are believed to give his/her followers certain benefits but the only true God does things that these false gods could never do.

God delivered a group of slaves from Egypt, the greatest military power of its day. This is real proof that He is the only true God.

You were shown *these things* so that you might know that the Lord, He is God; there is no other besides Him.

Only the true God who made heaven and earth could free slaves from Egypt.

He personally brought you from Egypt by His great power, ³⁸ driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in *and* to give you their land as an inheritance, as *it is* today.

Moses is referring to the land of Sihon and Bashan, because they haven't entered Canaan yet.

So you shall keep His statutes and His commandments which I am giving you today, so that it may go well for you and for your children after you, and that you may live long on the land which the Lord your God is giving you for all time.

God is saying that Canaan is their land for all time.....**If they keep his law**

The land of Canaan was always conditional.

Any nation that forgets God and becomes corrupt will lose their land in time.

Verses 41 - 43

⁴¹ Then Moses set apart three cities across the Jordan to the east, ⁴² for one to flee there who unintentionally killed his neighbor, without having hatred for him in time past; and by fleeing to one of these cities he might live: ⁴³ Bezer in the wilderness on the plateau for the Reubenites, Ramoth in Gilead for the Gadites, and Golan in Bashan for the Manassites.

Then Moses set apart three cities across the Jordan to the east, ⁴² for one to flee there who unintentionally killed his neighbor

The 3 cities on the east side of the Jordan River were Bezer, Ramoth and Golan

Golan is across from the Sea of Galilee

See Map 415



Golan is a city east of the Sea of Galilee whereas the **Golan Heights** refers to the area captured from Syria **and** occupied by Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War

See Map 420



The following are a few pics of that area in recent times.

See pics 425,430 and 435





Verses 44 - 49

⁴⁴ Now this is the Law which Moses set before the sons of Israel; ⁴⁵ these are the testimonies and the statutes, and the ordinances which Moses spoke to the sons of Israel, when they came out of Egypt, ⁴⁶ across the Jordan, in the valley opposite Beth-peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites who lived in Heshbon, whom Moses and the sons of Israel defeated when they came out of Egypt. ⁴⁷ And they took possession of his land and the land of Og king of Bashan, the two kings of the Amorites, who were across the Jordan to the east, ⁴⁸ from Aroer, which is on the edge of the Valley of Arnon, even as far as Mount Sion (that is, Hermon), ⁴⁹ with all the Arabah across the Jordan to the east, even as far as the sea of the Arabah, at the foot of the slopes of Pisgah.

Now this is the Law which Moses set before the sons of Israel

Moses had given the Law 39 years ago at Sinai but that generation refused to enter Canaan and died in the wilderness.

Here in Deut. 5 thru 26, Moses repeats the law to a new generation.

They have already conquered the land east of the Jordan River, all the land from the Arnon Valley in the south to Mount Hermon in the north.