

Deuteronomy 4:1-15 The People Encouraged to Keep God's Law

Introduction: Moses is still presenting his first speech to the children of Israel prior to their entering into Canaan. In our previous studies Moses had sought to encourage the people of Israel to be of good courage and to be brave. He pointed out to them the good things that God had already done for them to help them. In this text Moses begins to encourage the people of Israel to be faithful to God to keep the law of God.

I. The challenge to keep God's laws because the law could preserve life. V.1-4

- A. The law itself had promised them long life in the land which God had given if they would honor father and mother.
 - 1. This promise was now renewed and enlarged to include all of God's laws, V.1.
 - 2. The law could not give eternal life, but it could give a lengthy physical life.
- B. Yet they were to keep the laws of God as God had given them and they were not to change them, V.2.
 - 1. They were not to take from them the laws which were not to their liking.
 - 2. Nor were they to add to them their own laws. (As did the Pharisees, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.)
- C. They themselves had recently seen an example of this principle in the incident at Baal-peor, V. 3; Numbers 25:1-9.
 - 1. Those who followed after Baal-peor died. (25,000 of them died in the plagues.)
 - 2. Those who followed the Lord were still alive. (Their lives had been preserved by following God's laws.)

II. They were to keep the law because the law could exalt the nation. V.5-6

- A. Moses, as the mediator of the law, had taught the law to the people, V.5a.
- B. Yet the law was not from Moses, it was from God, V.5b.
- C. Keeping the law of God would cause the nations of the world to consider Israel to be a wise and understanding people, V.6.
 - 1. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, Proverbs 9:10.
 - 2. The keeping of God's law (God's will) increases wisdom.
 - 3. The queen of Sheba was astonished at the wisdom of Solomon and Solomon's wisdom came from God. (The same kind of wisdom was available to them all through the keeping of God's law.)

III. Already Israel had achieved greatness in the eyes of other nations because of her relationship with God. V.7-8

- A. What other nations had achieved the greatness which Israel had achieved even at that early stage of her existence? V.7a.
- B. What other nation had a God who was so near to help them? V.7b.
- C. What other nation had a God who heard and answered prayers as did Israel? V.7c.
- D. What other nation had laws which provided such justice and fairness in dealing with its citizens? V.8 (Most nations had cruel tyrants for rulers.)

IV. The Israelites were warned not to forget God and His laws, V.9-14.

- A. They were not to allow their hearts and minds to forget the things which they had already seen and experienced, V.9.
 - 1. They were to remember the punishment they had received for their sins.
 - 2. They were to remember the blessings they had received for their obedience.

3. They were to teach these things and God's laws to their children and grandchildren.
- B. They were to remember their experience at Horeb (Mt. Sinai) when God made His covenant with them, V.10.
 1. Many of the adults present now had been children at Horeb and could remember.
 2. God had commanded them to gather at the foot of the mountain.
 3. They had heard the voice of God as He made His covenant with Israel.
 4. They watched as the whole mountain seemed to be afire and a huge cloud of smoke arose, V.11.
 5. God had spoken to them from the fire and they heard and understood His words but had seen no image of any kind, V.12. (God is Spirit and there is no image or form. Therefore they were to never attempt to make an image of Him.) (What other nation has had such an experience?)
 6. God declared orally to them the Ten Commandments as the terms of His covenant with them. (Later He provided them with two tables of stone on which He had written the Ten commandments), V.13.

V. Moses commanded to teach the commandments to the people, V.14.

- A. He was to teach the Ten Commandments.
- B. He was to teach all of the other laws which related to the Ten Commandments and explain in great detail how the Ten Commandments applied to their daily lives, their religious life and to civil laws and regulations.
- C. The people were to keep those laws not only during the 38 additional years they would be in the wilderness, but also after they had gone into the promised land.
- D. Moses had already spent those 38 years in the wilderness teaching these laws to the people.
- E. Now, for his last time, he is teaching it once more; this time for the special benefit of the younger generation.
- F. After this time, it would be up to them to teach the younger generation.

Conclusion:

1. We see how vital it is to know God's word. (Not just the law only, but all of God's word.)
2. We see how vital it is for us to follow the teachings of God in our own lives. (It will bring blessings to us both in this life and in the life to come.)
3. We see how vital it is to take God's word just like it is, without taking away the parts we do not want to hear or want to obey, and also without adding man's doctrines to it.
4. We see how vital it is to teach God's word to the younger generations. (To the children and also to the grandchildren.)