

## Deuteronomy 4:15-31 A Warning and a Promise

Introduction: The warning, given in V. 15-28, is that the people of Israel are not to ever go into idolatry. If they do, God will banish them from their land. The promise, given in V. 29-31, is that even after they have been banished from their land to a foreign people, if they will turn back to the Lord and seek His will, they will be restored to their homeland and to their covenant blessings.

### I. A warning given by Moses V. 15-31

- A. The warning is preceded by a reminder that at Horeb (Mt. Sinai) when God spoke to them out of the fire and gave them the 10 Commandments, they had seen no visible image of God, V.15.
  - 1. They had seen a demonstration of God's power in the fire, the cloud of smoke, the lightning and thunder and they had heard the voice of God.
  - 2. There was no doubt that God had spoken and that the law which forbid the worship of other gods was from God -- from the real God.
  - 3. But they had seen no image of God which they could copy.
  - 4. If God had wanted them to build an image to represent Him, He would have shown them an image which they could copy.
- B. Moses warned them not to corrupt themselves by worshipping idol gods, V.16a.
  - 1. The Hebrew word which is translated "corrupt" means corrupt in the sense of ruining or destroying.
  - 2. They would ruin or destroy their nation if they should go into idolatry.
- C. The practice of idolatry often involved the making of human images and worshipping those images, V.16b.
  - 1. The practice probably started from kings who proclaimed themselves to be gods and required the people to bow in worship to their images.
  - 2. The practice of building human female images probably began as a means of providing a companion for the male gods. They then began to look upon these female gods as being able to bestow certain blessings. (To make the people fertile and to make the fields productive.)
- D. The base character of the people later led to the worship of all manner of animals, V. 17-18.
- E. Additionally men looked up into the heavens and imagined the heavenly bodies to be gods and made images to represent them, V.19. (For instance, in Egypt "Ra" was worshiped as the sun god. They built an idol to represent him.)
- F. But the Lord did not take Israel out of Egypt to worship Ra or any other idol god. He took Israel out to worship Him only, V.20.
- G. For the third time Moses mentioned that God was angry at him and for the people's benefit would not allow him to go into Canaan, V.21-22.
  - 1. If God let Moses get by without punishment the people would be encouraged to sin and would bring punishment upon themselves.
  - 2. But the punishment of Moses should discourage the people from committing sins, such as idolatry.
- H. They were to take special heed not to forget that God's law forbid them to worship idols, V.28. (They might forget but God would not forget to punish, V.24.)
- I. The people of each generation were to make sure that the oncoming generations were warned about the danger of worshipping idols, V.25-28. (If the people go into idolatry, the nation will go into captivity to a foreign power.)

### II. The promise V. 29-31

- A. Yet even in captivity if they repent and turn back to God, God will deliver them and allow them to return to their homeland, V.29.
- B. Moses then speaks of end-time events when the Israelite people will be in tribulation and says that if they will turn to Him, He will be merciful to them and will return their covenant blessings to them, V.30-31.
  - 1. This speaks of The Great Tribulation which is called “The time of Jacob’s trouble.
  - 2. During that time the Jews will repent and acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ.
  - 3. The few surviving Jews will be saved from the Anti-Christ; their soul’s will be saved and their nation will enjoy it’s greatest glory during the millennial reign of Christ.

### III. Warnings and promises for today’s Christians

- A. Just as there was danger of the Israelites turning to false gods, even so there is the danger that Christians may turn to false doctrinal teachings. (Idolatry as such may not be as prevalent today, but false worship through false doctrine is at it’s peak. There is much false Christianity in the world today.)
- B. Each New Testament church should not only stand true to New Testament doctrines, but should make sure that the on-coming generation is taught Biblical truth (sound doctrines).
  - 1. If New Testament churches go astray doctrinally, they will not be in danger of going into captivity to another nation, but they will be in danger of losing their identity as being a scriptural New Testament church.
  - 2. Individuals who go into false doctrine will not lose their salvation, but they will lose favor with God and will be punished for not remaining true to Biblical truth.

#### Conclusion:

- 1. May this church always be true to God and His truth.
- 2. May the churches of our ABA fellowship also remain true. (local and national)
- 3. May we as individuals always remain true.