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BIBLE STUDY

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**“CHECK YOURSELF BEFORE**

**YOU WRECK YOURSELF”**

**Deuteronomy 4:1-9**

***Deuteronomy 4:1 "Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do [them], that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you."***

Chapter 4 is an important hinge in Deuteronomy, pivoting from Moses’s retracing of Israel’s forty-year journey in the wilderness to the lessons the nation needed to learn from this retelling. This chapter transitions to Moses’s formal teaching of God’s laws and commands, which covers the majority of the book (5:1–26:19). Before this second address begins, Moses finishes his first address to Israel with a strong call to respond to God with obedience. This begins a new section (4:1–40) which is a call for obedience to God’s law. The purpose and value of the law are presented. Hearken shows the need for implicit obedience. Teach you literally means, “which I am about to teach you.” First Chronicles 25:8 uses this word as “scholar,” and refers to the 24 divisions of priests. The purpose is, literally, “in order that you may live and that you may go in and possess the land” not that they may obtain salvation life but may physically live to possess the land. Moses keeps reminding them that their eternal life and their wellbeing on this earth is dependent upon total obedience to the LORD. "Hearken", is saying listen attentively. The statutes and the judgements are for all of the people. Moses will teach them before they enter into the promised land, because he will not go into the promised land with them. They must go in and possess the land of promise. They must obey God.

***Deuteronomy 4:2 "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish [ought] from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."***

To the new generation of Israelites, Moses had a message with two simple but powerful points: obey God and worship him alone. In their short time as God’s covenant people, Israel had repeatedly failed at this. Ye shall not add: Here the command makes a sharp distinction between the Word of God (truth) and the word of man (tradition). This was a warning to them, and is, also, a warning to us.

***Revelation 22:18-19***

***18 "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:"***

***19 "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and [from] the things which are written in this book."***

***Matthew 5:17-19***

***17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.***

***18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.***

***19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.***

***Matthew 15:6 “And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.”***

***Deuteronomy 4:3 "Your eyes have seen what the LORD did because of Baal- peor: for all the men that followed Baal-peor, the LORD thy God hath destroyed them from among you."***

Moses reminded them of one example with the mention of Baal-peor. This was the infamous incident in which the Israelite men were enticed into physical and spiritual adultery with Moabite and Midianite women, worshiping the false god Baal. God destroyed every Israelite who followed Baal of Peor.

***Numbers 25:3-5***

***3 "And Israel joined himself unto Baal- peor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel."***

***4 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel."***

***5 "And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal- peor."***

***Deuteronomy 4:4 "But ye that did cleave unto the LORD your God [are] alive every one of you this day."***

Yet Moses made a clear contrast between that group and his hearers: But you who have remained faithful to the Lord your God are all alive today. Obedience to the Lord brings life and blessings; disobedience brings death and cursing. That’s the message of Deuteronomy. We see that only those who were involved in the sin were killed. Those who stayed true to God lived.

***Deuteronomy 28:1-14***

***28 And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:***

***2 And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God.***

***3 Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.***

***4 Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.***

***5 Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.***

***6 Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.***

***7 The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways.***

***8 The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.***

***9 The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways.***

***10 And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee.***

***11 And the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee.***

***12 The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.***

***13 And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them:***

***14 And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.***

***Deuteronomy 4:5 "Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it."***

***Deuteronomy 4:6 "Keep therefore and do [them]; for this [is] your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation [is] a wise and understanding people."***

Moses wants them to clearly understand, that the statutes and judgements God had given them on the trip, were for their practice in the promised land. They are not to forget about God and start living pleasing to their own flesh. They are to keep God's commandments and laws. One of the purposes of God’s statutes and ordinances was to teach Israel to be a light to the nations around them. If the Israelites were faithful to follow these commands, the peoples surrounding them would marvel at their wisdom and understanding. The law and the ordinances were given to the Hebrews. The rest of the world did not get the law from God. The one thing that set the Israelites apart from the rest of the world, was their relationship with their God. The people who lived around them thought of them as a great nation, because God was with them, and because He had given them His law. Their wisdom was a gift from God. Righteousness brings life. The wisest man realizes his need for a Saviour.

***II Timothy 3:15 "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."***

***Deuteronomy 4:7 "For what nation [is there so] great, who [hath] God [so] nigh unto them, as the LORD our God [is] in all [things that] we call upon him [for]?"***

***Deuteronomy 4:8 "And what nation [is there so] great, that hath statutes and judgments [so] righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?"***

This is the only nation in the world, at the time Moses wrote this, that had the LORD dwelling with them. All the nations around them lived pleasing to their own flesh. Every man did what was right in his own sight. The law and statutes God had given Israel was not just to please God, but to cause Israel to live uprightly. There were dietary laws, and civil laws, as well as religious laws. There were over 600 instructions given to Israel in the book of Leviticus to help them live righteously before God and man. God did not want them to have an earthly king. He wanted to be their only King. The one thing that set Israel aside, was the fact that God had entrusted them with His law. After all, their righteous statutes and ordinances were without equal. This pointed not to the greatness of Israel but to the greatness of their God, who is near to his people whenever we call. This is a wonderful indicator that when you faithfully follow the agenda of your divine King, you will experience the comfort you need, and he will receive the glory he deserves. Moreover, those who don’t know him will take notice that there is something different about your approach to life and will seek to learn about it.

***Exodus 29:45 "And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God."***

***Romans 3:2 "Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God."***

***Deuteronomy 4:9 "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 sons' sons;"***

To fulfill their role and live as God’s covenant people, Israel dare not forget the things they had seen and been taught. The human mind has an amazing tendency to forget God’s goodness and fall into sin again and again. One of the ways to help the people avoid this pitfall involved them regularly teaching God’s ways to their children and grandchildren that is, they needed to establish a godly legacy within their homes. Living faithfully as God’s people requires that we transmit our faith to our children. This law is not just for this generation, but for all the generations to come. They must walk in the knowledge God had entrusted them with. They were to keep themselves holy before the LORD. We are all warned to gird up our mind. Sin begins in the heart and mind of men. Sin is the transgression of the law. Sin brings death. They must live by the law that God gave them. We, Christians, must walk in our salvation that we have received. It is important to stay in the Christian walk, after you receive your salvation. It is a dangerous thing to go back to pleasing the flesh.

**QUESTIONS**

1. Hearken, O Israel, unto the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. What does "hearken" mean?
3. What does verse 2 warn of?
4. What happened to the men who followed Baal-peor?
5. What happened to those who did cleave to the LORD?
6. What statutes and judgements had Moses taught?
7. What set Israel aside from all other nations?
8. Righteousness brings \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
9. How did the nations around them live?
10. What, other than religious laws, did God give them?
11. What is important for Christians to do, after they are saved?