

A WARNING AGAINST THE SIN OF SELF-EXALTATION

BIBLE TEXT : Deuteronomy 9:1-29; 10:1-22

LESSON 124 **Junior Course**

MEMORY VERSE: "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Deuteronomy 9:1-29

¹ Hear, O Israel: Thou *art* to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven,

² A people great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and *of whom* thou hast heard *say*, Who can stand before the children of Anak!

³ Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God *is* he which goeth over before thee; *as a* consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee.

⁴ Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the LORD thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee.

⁵ Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the LORD swore unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

⁶ Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou *art a*

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

A Review of Wanderings

In the Book of Deuteronomy Moses reviews before the Israelites all that has happened to them through the forty years since they left Eg'pt. Their parents have died, and the new generation is about ready to enter Canaan.

Moses promised great victories ahead. There were giants in the land, fighting men, who would require more than Israel's comparatively small army to conquer. How then could Israel win? God was going to help them. He was going to destroy the Canaanites before them as quickly as a fire licks up dry grass. Moses warned the Israelites that they must not forget that God was winning their battles for them.

Why was God so good to the Israelites that He would lead their armies to victory? It certainly was not because they had been good and deserved His reward. But God had made a promise to their forefathers to give them the land, and His promises do not fail.

Moses wanted the Israelites to realize that they had not behaved very well; he asked them to remember some of their disobediences since they had left Egypt. What about that time at Mount Horeb while Moses was in the mountain receiving from God the Law on tables of stone? Just before that, they heard the voice of God speak to them from Heaven amid thunderings and fire; and they had promised that all God commanded they would do. Yet a few days later they had already forgotten the God whose supernatural voice they had heard when they could see no one, and they had made a golden calf to worship. Even if they did not know that God was the Creator of the earth and the heavens and all the living creatures, they still should have believed in Him because of the miracles He had wrought in bringing them out of Egypt. With their own eyes they had seen the frogs overrun the Egyptians; and the lice; and the flies; and the water turned to blood. And with their own ears they had heard God speak. And yet in their imagination God was nothing more than a golden calf!

God had told Moses at that time to step aside and let Him destroy that ungrateful, unbelieving congregation. But Moses prayed for them, and God gave them a chance to repent. One would think that they would have been very careful from then on not to displease God, but soon they forgot and sinned again.

We have recorded two instances when the Children of Israel murmured for water, and they wanted to return to Egypt. Another time they murmured for meat. God gave it to them — and they were such gluttons that many of them died. And when they had come to the borders of Canaan and could have gone into their rest, they were afraid and turned and ran.

Mercy

Moses reminded the Israelites of all these sins to show them that it was nothing good that they had done that had earned

stiffnecked people.

⁷ Remember, *and* forget not, how thou provokedst the LORD thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the LORD.

⁸ Also in Horeb ye provoked the LORD to wrath, so that the LORD was angry with you to have destroyed you.

⁹ When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, *even* the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water:

¹⁰ And the LORD delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them *was written* according to all the words, which the LORD spake with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly.

¹¹ And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights, *that* the LORD gave me the two tables of stone, *even* the tables of the covenant.

¹² And the LORD said unto me, Arise, get thee down quickly from hence; for thy people which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt have corrupted *themselves*; they are quickly turned aside out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten image.

¹³ Furthermore the LORD spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and, behold, it *is* a stiffnecked people:

¹⁴ Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven: and I will make of thee a nation mightier

them this grand prize of an inheritance in Canaan. He wanted to show them, too, how much love and mercy God had toward them, to teach them to treat other people with mercy. God was not destroying the nations of Canaan because He hated them but because they had sinned. Anyone who comes to Jesus in repentance can find favor with God. "There is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts" (II Chronicles 19:7). God cannot be bribed with gifts or with pretty promises. He looks at the heart and honors godly sorrow for sin, and repentance. We learned in a recent lesson that God had given the Amorites four hundred years to repent, and waited to execute judgment upon them until their "iniquity was full."

Saved by Faith

We cannot work our way into Heaven. The works of our hands will not find favor in the sight of God if our hearts are not washed clean by the Blood of Jesus. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9). After we are saved, the good deeds we do will show that our hearts are right with God. It was the Blood of Jesus that washed our sins away. No matter how hard we tried in our own strength to make ourselves righteous, our self-righteousness is as "filthy rags" in the sight of God.

Jesus told of a people who would come to Him in the judgment and would say, "Lord, Lord, have we, not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" They were boasting about how much they had done for the Lord. But what was His answer? "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:22, 23). What was the matter with their works? They did not have the love of Jesus in their hearts, and they were proud of the works.

Jesus said there would be other people, too, who had served Him faithfully in love. When He rewarded them for their good works, they would ask, "When saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?" These people were not boasting of their works; in fact, they had forgotten them. Jesus' answer to them was, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:37-40). It was not the work they had done for great people who might do something for them in return, or who might praise them; but it was done for the lowly — a work which perhaps no one had seen but Jesus and the one for whom it was done.

The Humble Exalted

Jesus said, "Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matthew 23:12). Even some of the disciples who followed Jesus were troubled with pride. One day James and John asked Him if they might have the best positions when Jesus set up His Kingdom. One wanted to sit at His right hand and one at His left. Jesus told them that the rewards would be for faithful service, and were prepared in Heaven.

Another time there was arguing among the disciples about who would be the greatest in the Kingdom of God, and Jesus told them, "He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve" (Luke 22:26). He said that among the Gentiles the kings and the people in

and greater than they.

¹⁵ So I turned and came down from the mount, and the mount burned with fire: and the two tables of the covenant *were* in my two hands.

¹⁶ And I looked, and, behold, ye had sinned against the LORD your God, *and* had made you a molten calf: ye had turned aside quickly out of the way which the LORD had commanded you.

¹⁷ And I took the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands, and brake them before your eyes.

¹⁸ And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

¹⁹ For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the LORD was wroth against you to destroy you. But the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also.

²⁰ And the LORD was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time.

²¹ And I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burnt it with fire, and stamped it, *and* ground *it* very small, *even* until it was as small as dust: and I cast the dust thereof into the brook that descended out of the mount.

²² And at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibrothhattaavah, ye provoked the LORD to wrath.

²³ Likewise when the LORD sent you from Kadeshbarnea, saying, Go up and possess the land which I have given you; then ye rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God, and ye believed him not, nor hearkened to his voice.

authority were looked up to and were called their benefactors; but He Himself (the greatest Benefactor) was as a servant among them. That last night before Jesus died, when He instituted the Lord's Supper, He served them, and washed their feet; and He said His people would be happy if they did likewise. More than that, He promised that at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, when the rewards are given to the full overcomers, Jesus will come forth and serve His people.

Let us consider what humility has done for some people. Many years after the Israelites had gone to live in Canaan they grew tired of God's rules and wanted to have a king like the other nations had. God was displeased with their desire, but He let them have their way and told the Prophet Samuel to anoint Saul, who was but a herdsman at that time, to be the king of Israel. Saul said to Samuel, "Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?" (I Samuel 9:21). And he became the king! After he became king, however, he became haughty and did not obey God. When Samuel brought the news of his rejection to him, this Prophet said: "When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?" (I Samuel 15:17). What had happened in the meantime? Saul had become proud and thought his ways were better than God's, and his condemnation was: "Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king" (I Samuel 15:23).

God chose humble people for His great work, and as long as they walked humbly He gave them great blessings; but when they became proud He had to put them down, because pride is an abomination in the sight of God. When God called Solomon to be king, Solomon prayed: "And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in" (I Kings 3:7). You know what God did for him. He made Solomon the wisest man in all the world. And He also gave him very great riches, until the kingdom of Solomon was more splendid than any that had been before. People came from countries far away to see all the wealth and beautiful things that Solomon had. But when Solomon forgot that all his wisdom and wealth came from God, his kingdom was taken from him.

A Reminder

Moses warned the Israelites that after all their enemies were conquered they must not forget that God had given them the victory. Moses told them that there would be a great abundance of food in Canaan for them, and added: "When thou shalt have eaten and be full; then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage" (Deuteronomy 6:11, 12).

The Children of Israel did not heed his words. Many years later Isaiah wrote: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. . . . they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward" (Isaiah 1:3, 4).

Jesus will help us to be humble and be ready for Heaven if we want to be. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" !James 4:6, 7).

²⁴ Ye have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you.

²⁵ Thus I fell down before the LORD forty days and forty nights, as I fell down *at the first*; because the LORD had said he would destroy you.

²⁶ I prayed therefore unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, destroy not thy people and thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed through thy greatness, which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

²⁷ Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin:

²⁸ Lest the land whence thou broughtest us out say, Because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land which he promised them, and because he hated them, he hath brought them out to slay them in the wilderness.

²⁹ Yet they *are* thy people and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest out by thy mighty power and by thy stretched out arm.

Deuteronomy 10:1-22

¹ At that time the LORD said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto me into the mount, and make thee an ark of wood.

² And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest, and thou shalt put them in the ark.

³ And I made an ark *of shittim* wood, and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in mine hand.

⁴ And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the

QUESTIONS

- 1 What is the Book of Deuteronomy?
- 2 Of what does Moses remind the Israelites in today's lesson?
- 3 Whom were they going to have to fight in Canaan?
- 4 How would they win?
- 5 What does God say about the proud?
- 6 What does He say about the humble?
- 7 What position did Jesus say He took among His disciples?

ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me.

⁵ And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the LORD commanded me.

⁶ And the children of Israel took their journey from Beeroth of the children of Jaakan to Mosera: there Aaron died, and there he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered in the priest's office in his stead.

⁷ From thence they journeyed unto Gudgodah; and from Gudgodah to Jotbath, a land of rivers of waters.

⁸ At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister unto him, and to bless in his name, unto this day.

⁹ Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD *is* his inheritance, according as the LORD thy God promised him.

¹⁰ And I stayed in the mount, according to the first time, forty days and forty nights; and the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also, *and* the LORD would not destroy thee.

¹¹ And the LORD said unto me, Arise, take *thy* journey before the people, that they may go in and possess the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give unto them.

¹² And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul,

¹³ To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?

¹⁴ Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens *is* the LORD'S thy God, the earth *also*, with all that therein *is*.

¹⁵ Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, *even* you above all people, as *it is* this day.

¹⁶ Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.

¹⁷ For the LORD your God *is* God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward:

¹⁸ He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment.

¹⁹ Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

²⁰ Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name.

²¹ He *is* thy praise, and he *is* thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen.

²² Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons; and now the LORD thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude.