

Message #16**Deuteronomy 11:1-32**

As most of you know, I had the privilege of having as my friend and my mentor, Mr. John Miles. What an honor it was to know him. His mentor was Lewis Sperry Chafer. Back in 1939, he drove from Michigan to Dallas to be taught by him and it was there that he learned the importance of learning the books of the Bible and Systematic Theology. I want to read some words from Lewis Sperry Chafer: “No substitute will ever be found for knowledge of the Word of God. ... Regardless of the ideals held by many modern seminaries, the preacher is called to preach the word, to be apt to teach, to be one who avoids the traditions of men and to be one who is a right divider of the truth” (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, pp. vi-vii).

That point was driven home to me personally by Mr. John Miles. He stressed you systematically teach the books of the Bible and you systematically teach doctrine and theology. That is what we have tried to do for all these years.

But I must confess the book of the Bible that really drives that point home is Deuteronomy. The emphasis on carefully protecting, knowing and teaching the written word of God so that God’s people may obey it, is the theme of this book. If any school, or any church, or any individual would systematically crawl through Deuteronomy, they would realize we need to be very serious and very careful to understand every word in the written Scriptures.

That point is exactly what Moses wanted Israel to understand in his final message he gave to her before he died. This is the final section of general exhortations.

MOSES REMINDS GOD’S PEOPLE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF ALWAYS LOVING GOD AND KNOWING AND OBEYING THE WORDS OF GOD.

Moses wanted God’s people to carefully guard and obey the word of God right down to the smallest detail. He especially wanted this focus when things were going well.

ADMONITION #1 – God’s people are admonished to love the LORD your God. **11:1a**

That word “love” (ahab) means to so desire something that you breathe after it. It is the thing in which you find your greatest delight (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, pp. 15-16). Now the “and” (waw) that follows this is a consecutive sequential conjunction. Loving God has a sequence that follows.

ADMONITION #2 – God’s people are admonished to always keep the word of God. **11:1b**

That word “keep” is shamar, which means to carefully watch, guard, preserve, protect, esteem and honor the word of God always (*Ibid.*, p. 837). Moses says never lose this intense focus on God’s word. Maintain it at all times in life, especially when things are going well. So no one can love God properly unless one has a serious commitment to the written Scriptures. Moses brings out four specific areas of focus on God’s written word:

Obedience Area #1 - Keep God's charge. (shamirth)—watchful vigilance and guarding one's self in regard to word (*Ibid.*, p. 838).

Obedience Area #2 - Keep God's statutes. (huqim)—specifically inscribed, written (*Ibid.*, p. 301).

Obedience Area #3 - Keep God's ordinances. (mishpatim)—forensic judgments just and right according to God's written word (*Ibid.*, pp. 519-520).

Obedience Area #4 - Keep God's commandments. (mitzvah)—precepts and commands that seem to focus on written and taught prohibitions (*Ibid.*, p. 501).

When we simply look at these words, can there be any doubt that God wants His people very, very serious about His written word? We are to never ease up on our focus on God's written word. We are to have this focus "always"!

ADMONITION #3 – God's people have known, seen and been taught about the greatness of God. **11:2-7**

When Moses challenged God's people to love God and obey God, he was talking to people who had not seen the amazing things God does for those who do that. This instruction was based on things they had not seen and known. They had heard about them, but this generation had not seen them or known them.

They had known of God's greatness and power. They knew of the signs and the wonders God performed against Pharaoh and the Egyptians (**v. 3**). They had known of what He did to Egypt's army, including their horses and chariots and how God destroyed them in the Red Sea (**v. 4**).

They had personally experienced what God did in the wilderness to Dathan and Abiram. Numbers 16 tells the story of how God destroyed them and 250 others who rebelled against Moses and Aaron. They arrogantly started promoting the idea that others were just as qualified as Moses and Aaron and God opened up the earth and destroyed them and their families and all their possessions (**v. 5-6**).

Moses said (**v. 7**) your own eyes saw the great work of God that He did and what you have seen God do should prompt you to love God and be very, very serious about knowing and obeying God's word.

ADMONITION #4 – God's people need to obey every commandment of God. **11:8-12**

The word "commandment" refers to the written word of God, including the prohibitions. We are to be so serious about this that we want to know every one of them.

Moses says there are three reasons why you want to have this focus on God's word:

Reason #1 - You may be strong. **11:8a**

This word “strong” (chazaq) is fascinating. It is a word that describes something that needs to be repaired or restored or rebuilt. The word means that something that is previously weak or broken or damaged is made into something that is strong and mighty and fully recovered from the previous condition (*Ibid.*, pp. 269-270). This is what a commitment to God’s written word can do for any person. When a person gets serious about God’s written word, it will restore them and rebuild them and strengthen them.

Reason #2 - You may possess everything God wants you to possess. **11:8b**

God wants to give His people every good thing. He will give that to those who take His word seriously.

Reason #3 - You may prolong your days on earth in the place God has for you. **11:9**

God presents four realities about this place for His people. He wants them to have a good life and a long life and live in a place He blesses:

(Reality #1) - It is a place promised by God to your forefathers and to you. **11:9a**

(Reality #2) - It is a lush place flowing with milk and honey. **11:9b**

(Reality #3) - It is not like your previous place which was barren. **11:10**

(Reality #4) - It is a place that always has the eyes of God and blessings of God. **11:11-12**

ADMONITION #5 - God’s people are admonished to listen to God’s word and obey it and love God and serve God with all your heart and soul. **11:13-15**

The actual word “obey” (shamah) has to do with listening to something and understanding it and then making a decision to obey it (*Ibid.*, p. 836). The idea behind “serving” is giving intense effort and labor to serving and worshipping God with all one’s heart and soul (*Ibid.*, pp. 598-599). If God’s people would do this, then God says He will Personally see to it that His people prosper in what they have and what they do. Two blessings for Israel would be that:

Blessing #1 - God will give your land the rain that will bless your crops. **11:14**

God would give rain at all times so that they would have their grain and new wine (tirosh) and oil.

Blessing #2 - God will give your cattle lush grass to eat. **11:15**

God would also see to it that the pastures would grow so that the cattle would be well fed.

ADMONITION #6 – God’s people must beware not let their hearts be deceived and turn away from God and worship other gods. **11:16-17**

The word “beware” is again the Hebrew word “shamar.” Just as God wants His people carefully guarding and protecting His word, He also wants them carefully guarding and protecting their own hearts. The specific guarding is against deception that would turn one away from God, His word and would turn one to worship something else.

Now the word “deceive” is one that means to let yourself be persuaded or enticed by something that is not consistent with God’s word (*Ibid.*, p. 696). The tense of the verb is Imperfect, which means this is a continual and unfinished threat (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, p. 125).

God’s people must always be on guard that they do not permit something or someone to seduce them away from God and His word.

Moses gives three reasons why God’s people must not allow themselves to be deceived:

Reason #1 - God will kindle His anger against His own people. **11:17a**

Here is a very valid question to ask every believer—“Do you want Almighty God angry with you?”

Reason #2 - God will stop sending His refreshing rain. **11:17b**

Here is another valid question—“Do you want God to stop blessing your life and work?”

Reason #3 - God will cause His people to quickly perish from His good land. **11:17c**

Here is another question—“Do you want God to take your life away early?”

If you don’t want God angry with you; if you don’t want God to stop blessing you and if you don’t want God to end your life early, then guard your heart and stay focused on God’s word all the days of your life.

In view of all that Moses had instructed, here he begins **verse 18** by using the conjunction “therefore.” There are four logical conclusions for the people of God:

(Conclusion #1) - God’s people need to impress upon themselves God’s words. **11:18**

The word “impress” is one that refers to wrapping yourself up with a garment (*Ibid.*, p. 791). God’s people need to thickly cover themselves with the “words” of God. Notice the noun “words” is plural, which refers to every word in the Scripture. God wants His people to impress His words on their heart and soul. He wants them as a sign on their hand when they work and a frontal to their forehead when they think.

(Conclusion #2) - God's people need to teach God's word to their children. **11:19**

Our children and grandchildren need to hear about the importance of God's words. They need to hear that it is the word of God that will lead them to the blessings of God.

(Conclusion #3) - God's people need to publicly show the importance of the written word of God. **11:20-28**

God's people are to demonstrate that the word of God is critical to personal life, home life and business and political life. You take God's word away and you take the blessings of God away. God says there are six results that will occur if you focus on God's written word:

Result #1 - You and your children will be always blessed. **11:21**

Result #2 - God will give you victory over all enemies no matter how large. **11:23**

Result #3 - God will see to it that you succeed everywhere you go. **11:24**

Result #4 - God will remove all who are against you and cause them to fear you. **11:25**

Result #5 - God will bless you. **11:26-27**

Result #6 - If you don't do that God will curse you. **11:28**

Conclusion #4 - God's people are about to enter a new relationship with God so choose to carefully obey God's word. **11:29-32**

The choice is up to God's people; choose the way of blessing or the way of cursing. There were two mountains—Mt. Gerizim, used as the blessing mountain, and Mt. Ebal, used as the cursing mountain.

God says look at those two mountains and decide which you want—the blessings or the cursing.