



**Deuteronomy 4:32-40**  
***“Witnesses to God’s Redemption”***

32 "For ask now concerning the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and ask from one end of heaven to the other, whether any great thing like this has happened, or anything like it has been heard.

33 "Did any people ever hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and live?

34 "Or did God ever try to go and take for Himself a nation from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?

35 "To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD Himself is God; there is none other besides Him.

36 "Out of heaven He let you hear His voice, that He might instruct you; on earth He showed you His great fire, and you heard His words out of the midst of the fire.

37 "And because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them; and He brought you out of Egypt with His Presence, with His mighty power,

38 "driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land as an inheritance, as it is this day.

39 "Therefore know this day, and consider it in your heart, that the LORD Himself is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other.

40 "You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time."

In speaking to atheists (and kids, an atheist is someone who claims that they don't believe there is a God) one of the things I run into all the time is their conviction that when I say I believe that "Jesus Christ is the Second Person of the Trinity and that he came to earth to die for the sins His Sheep" or even something as simple as "I believe the bible is the word of God" that my statement is either pure speculation based on my feelings, or something along the lines of "I like to pretend that Garden Gnomes are guarding our vegetable patch." *"That's all irrational faith"*, they contend, *"you have chosen to believe something for which you have no evidence at all because it makes you feel better."* For them you see, Religion is make-believe with no basis in reality. You see its very simple, *"You were frightened of dying, so you made up a story about an afterlife."* *"You wanted your children to behave themselves, so you pretended that God told you all to act good"* *"You were afraid there would be a drought and you'd all starve, so you made up an invisible being called a God and pretended he could send rain if you sacrificed something valuable to him."* *"You didn't know why things happened or where you came from, so you created gods who made and governed the universe."* *"Don't you see, Man created gods and now that we have microwaves and cable TV, we don't need them anymore."* Or as the liberal theologian Rudolf Bultmann "sensibly" put it *"It is impossible to use electric light and the wireless and to avail ourselves of modern medical and surgical discoveries, and at the same time to believe in the New Testament world of spirits and miracles."*

Now in one respect Moses would have agreed with these atheists and the practical atheists like Bultmann. Many, many people worshipped gods who had never revealed themselves, never done anything, and for whose existence there wasn't a scrap of evidence. They were fabrications, and he would have agreed that trusting in them was supremely foolish. These so-called gods were in the end just bits and pieces of wood and stone, "*images made like corruptible man -- and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.*" (Romans 1:23)

These so-called gods can't do anything, and they never have, in all of recorded history. The so called gods of Egypt, for instance, never miraculously delivered their people, parted the Red Sea, appeared to the entire nation, fed them in the wilderness, and so on and they were powerless to protect them when the ten plagues came. The people of Israel knew that, and they also knew that something very different had happened to them. **THEY**, not just one or two priests in a darkened temple, or a so-called prophet in a cave in Arabia, or a man alone in the woods in upstate NY, but the **ENTIRE NATION OF ISRAEL** had SEEN God on the top of Mt. Sinai, had HEARD God with their own ears, HAD WATCHED as God miraculously destroyed the mightiest nation on earth, and then had brought them out of their bondage in Egypt. **THEY HAD ALL** passed through the Red Sea. Brothers and Sisters, they weren't being asked to believe in anything for which they didn't have ABUNDANT evidence. Unlike every other nation on earth, they woke up in the morning and their God had dropped breakfast, lunch, and dinner on the desert around them. "*And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light.*" They alone, amongst all the peoples of the earth had a God who had revealed Himself like that, and who made promises to them and was keeping those promises.

For those reasons, and as Moses sums it up, it would be downright stupid not to believe in Him. And supremely foolish to believe in the gods of the nations that all the way back to the creation had never done anything like Yahweh had done for his people. Those so-called other gods could do nothing because they were nothing. All these things were shown them so that they might know that the YAHWEH is God and that there was no other.

But was that all that Yahweh wanted from his people? Is that why Moses is telling them this? So that they might not be Atheists or Polytheists? That they wouldn't believe in no God or many Gods? I mean that is a reason that he revealed himself, we read that in verse 35. But that's just one reason, there are two others that are even more important.

2) God wants them to know he has chosen, elected *them* and no other nation on earth, because he loved them and their forefathers. He didn't select them on the spur of the moment for redemption, he chose them before he even created the world, and his deliverance of them was because of the covenants He made with their fathers, in particular Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Exodus God delivered them in accordance with his Covenant promises. We learn as much in Exodus 2:24 "So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob." And that is why he delivered them, because He had promised He would. He had said he would deliver them and curse those who cursed them, that He would multiply them, that He would give them their own land, and that He would make them blessing to the nations, and all of those promises He had kept, was keeping, or would keep.

You see it was ever God's intention to create for Himself not just a people who knew *about* Him, but a people who *knew Him*, who had experienced Him, who knew his Love and His mercy and His

faithfulness FIRST HAND, who had tasted and seen that the Lord is not just God but that He is Good. As Paul Gilchrist puts it: ***“To know the Lord experientially is different from knowing about God. The Old Testament is not satisfied with theologizing about God, but ever presses for a personal relationship with the Lord. The covenant is given to reveal this unique and incomparable God. God’s love (v. 37) is an electing love. It is not based on merit, but solely on his everlasting mercy and grace (7:7–8; 10:15; 23:5).”*** - Gilchrist

Now you can explain many things to an atheist, but you can never bring the reality of the experience home to them. I cannot make them taste and that the Lord is good, only the Lord can do that by, and if He has chosen someone he does, just as He did with Israel or with you or me. That’s one of the reasons why the presence or absence of that relationship can tell you if someone is saved or not. I can’t tell you how many times I’ve spoken to nominal Christians, who if you asked them “do you believe in God?” would say yes, but if you asked them about their personal relationship with Him have no clue what you are talking about, and consequently assume you are something of a nutbar.

3) But then Moses makes his third point in verse 40 and it’s a logical conclusion to the others. ***God exists, and He has revealed Himself to You and to You Alone amongst all the nations, He Loves them and Has done all these things for them, then their part is to trust Him and obey His commandments.***

God, as Moses has made very clear, has loved them with a gracious love, and is WORTHY of their love, and if they love him, they will show that by obeying His commandments, just as the child who truly loves his father obeys his commands: As Jesus said to His disciples, John 14:15 ***“If you love Me, keep My commandments.”*** But it is only if they Love Him, if they have changed hearts, that they will obey Him. They will never obey out of any other motivation, if he doesn’t have their hearts, he will never have their obedience. So Deuteronomy is going to be very concerned with talking not just about the necessity of obeying God, but first and foremost of Loving God. This is after all the book where we first find the commandment: ***“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.”*** (Deut. 6:5)

So as NT believers what applications can we take away from this?

1) The first is obvious, ***we do not believe in God merely out of some self-delusion. Rather our faith is based on God’s self-revelation of Himself, and the pinnacle of that revelation was the appearing in the flesh of His only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ.*** And make no mistake, the Apostles were just as zealous to point out to believers that their faith is based not on a leap in the dark, but eyewitness evidence:

That is why Luke starts his gospel saying: ***“NKJ Luke 1:1 Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, 2 just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us”***

And Peter writes: ***“For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.”*** (2 Peter 1:16)

2) ***Those who truly know the Lord don’t just know about Him, they Know Him and they don’t just hear His words they Do them.*** Now they don’t do what God says in order to obtain salvation, even

here the Old Testament we see that God is the savior and he saves on the basis of his electing love. And that's a good thing because not only could we never save ourselves by obeying Him, as God makes it clear, were it up to us we would never do so: ***"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be."*** (Romans 8:7)

But if we have been saved, it is because God has given us a new heart. A heart that loves him and which is capable of obeying him – Ezek. 36:26 ***"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them."***

Brothers and Sisters do not be deceived, if you have been saved, you will do good works in obedience to God's commands for that is his will in our salvation. Paul makes that very clear:

***Eph. 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,***

***9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.***

***10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.***

Now we will never do His will perfectly this side of heaven, but make no mistake, *no works*, invariably means *no faith*.

And remember even back in the Old Testament to truly be a child of Abraham, and an heir of God meant not merely descending from Abraham, but rather having a believing heart like Abrahams:

***Romans 4:16 Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all***

Salvation is a matter not of having the name Christian, but of having a living relationship with the Savior Jesus Christ. It is a matter of loving him, believing in Him, trusting in Him, and in obeying Him. Remember before you can obey Christ, you must Love Christ. On the shores of Lake Galilee, Jesus did not ask Peter, do you OBEY me, he asked ***do you LOVE me?*** Let me put that same question to you today – *Do you love Him?*