

Message #15

Deuteronomy 10:1-22

Over the years we have had fellowship dinners, in which we would go to people's homes and eat a meal and have fellowship with each other. At many of those meals, I would ask people were you ever in a situation when you thought you were going to die. We heard some interesting stories. Several had to do with car wrecks. One of the most amazing stories was a man in our church in Idaho who got lost in the mountains for days. There were search and rescue teams out looking for him and his guide and he finally was found on the other side of a mountain range north of Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

If we could have sat down with the people of Israel and asked them were you ever in any situation when you thought you were going to die, most of them would have said, no. Never. But if we would have asked Moses, he would have said this nation was on the verge of being obliterated by God and had it not been for my intercession, this nation would have been completely destroyed; God would have killed them all.

That point is very clear from this passage. Moses wanted the people of God to realize that:

IN THE AFTERMATH OF MOSES' INTERCESSORY PRAYER, GOD GRACIOUSLY ANSWERED HIS PRAYER AND HE DID NOT DESTROY ISRAEL, BUT GAVE HIS PEOPLE HIS WRITTEN WORD AND HE GAVE THEM ANOTHER CHANCE.

I doubt seriously that we even begin to grasp the grace involved in us having a relationship with God. It certainly is not something we merit or deserve. I also doubt that most people understand how important the word of God is to any relationship with God.

In this passage there are four amazing grace provisions that God makes for His people so that they could have a proper relationship with Him.

GRACE PROVISION #1 – Once again, God gave His people His written word. **10:1-5**

Why do you think God starts with this? These people had so angered God that they were almost destroyed. So why does God start with this? **Because, if God's people are to have any relationship with God, they must have God's written word and they must take it very seriously.**

The fact that God called Moses back up the mountain to once again give His people His written word clearly shows that point.

God did listen to the intercessory prayer of His servant, Moses, who had been praying that God would not abandon His people. When God called Moses back up the mountain to again get a copy of God's word, God had answered Moses' prayer.

Moses was responsible to prepare two stones that were like the first stones. He had to do his part to chisel them out. Then he needed to carry them up the mountain where God promised He would again write on them.

By this invitation God is giving to Moses, means that He is not seeking to destroy Israel.

In **verses 2-5** we learn that Moses was to also make an ark box so he could bring the stones back down the mountain to put in the box.

This was an additional mandate different from Exodus 34:1-9. This new container was to be constructed so that once the word was written, it could be housed in the box. **This clearly showed the importance of carefully reverencing and protecting the word of God.**

God's word was to be taken very seriously. We learn from Exodus 37:1 that eventually a man named Bezalel carefully designed and refined and beautified the ark box, but the original was made by Moses.

What this showed Israel is that the leader needs to set an example for the people that the word of God is sacred and it is to be carefully reverenced and guarded and taught. Most people who go to church have no idea as to how sacred and important the word of God actually is in regard to the people being right with God.

If you were to ask most people what is the ideal leader, most would not say one who carefully guards and protects God's written word.

In fact, we live in a time when many ministers think it is stylish and contemporary to walk around a platform with a microphone and talk and tell stories without even having the word of God in their hands.

This kind of ministry may entertain a crowd, but it will never lead God's people into a right relationship with God.

GRACE PROVISION #2 – Once again God gave His people His priests. **10:6-9**

Not only did God's people need the written word of God but they needed leaders who could continue to point and direct people to true righteous worship.

After Aaron died, God once again made provisions for the priesthood. God determined that Eleazar, Aaron's son, would succeed him in the priesthood.

By virtue of the fact that we read "Aaron died" (v. 6), we know that no priest was perfect because death is a penalty for sin and the reason we all die is because we have all sinned. But having said that, God still uses human leaders to lead His people into the true, pure and right ways of God.

We learn from **verses 6-7** where these things occurred. Although it is difficult to pinpoint exactly where these places are, most who have studied this conclude that these areas were located down by the Gulf of Aqaba, near the eastern top of the Red Sea.

Now it is clear from **verses 8-9** that God wanted these leaders serving Him and leading the people in sacred things. They were to carry the Ark of the Covenant and they were to stand in the presence of God and serve Him and bless Him.

As Moses came down the mountain, he announced that it would be the tribe of Levi who would have the priestly responsibilities. Now the reason Moses brings this up is because Aaron died because of his sin (Num. 20:24) and Levi was promoted because of his obedience (Ex. 32:26-28).

GRACE PROVISION #3 – Once again God gave His people His direction. **10:10-11**

Moses again stresses the grace in that God gave them another chance. God was once again willing to lead them to the Promised Land.

It was almost as if Moses was totally amazed that God would listen to him and not destroy them. He said, “the LORD listened to me” (**v. 10**). What grace.

If you see God answer prayer, this is the right attitude to have. You mean the Lord listened to me? That is grace.

GRACE PROVISION #4 – Once again God gave His people His expectations. **10:12-22**

Moses says, now in view of the fact that God has once again given you another opportunity to experience His amazing blessings, there are 12 expectations for His people.

Expectation #1 - God expects His people to fear Him. **10:12a**

This expectation is specifically stated two times in this chapter (**v. 12, 20**). The Hebrew word fear is “yare” and it does include the idea of reverencing God at such a high level that one trembles (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 364). Brown, Driver and Briggs bring out the fact that there is a literal fear factor in this word (*Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 431).

The Greek Septuagint uses the verb fobew from which we get our English word “Phobia.” So this is more than just a reverence, this is a trembling reverence.

God expects His people to fear Him. As we have already pointed out, this is a critical key to a right relationship with God in both the O.T. and the N.T.

- 1) Psalm 33:10 - fearing God causes God's protective eye to be on one who fears Him.
- 2) Proverbs 1:7 - fearing God is the beginning of knowledge.
- 3) Proverbs 9:10 - fearing God is the beginning of wisdom.
- 4) Romans 3:18 - not fearing God is the mark of one unsaved heading to eternal destruction.
- 5) Romans 11:20 - fearing God is the key to a right grace relationship with God.
- 6) II Corinthians 7:1 - fearing God is a critical key to holiness.
- 7) Colossians 3:22 - fearing God is the key to pleasing God in your work.
- 8) I Peter 2:17 - fearing God is the will of God.
- 9) Revelation 19:5 - fearing God is the key to praising God even in heaven.

There is a lot at stake in fearing God. No wonder it is twice mentioned to His people concerning His expectations.

Expectation #2 - God expects His people to walk in all His ways. **10:12b**

God expects His people to govern their lives step-by-step daily by walking in **ALL** the ways of God. To walk in all the ways of God, one must know what those ways are and to know what those ways are, one must know the written word of God from Genesis to Revelation.

God has given us His Spirit and His written word. Those two things work in harmony together. The more we know of God's written word, the more the Holy Spirit can direct us.

Expectation #3 - God expects His people to love Him. **10:12c**

Fearing the Lord, obeying the word and loving the Lord go hand in hand. The Greek Septuagint uses the word agape for love, which is the highest kind of love and the Hebrew text uses the word "ahab" which describes a love that desires something and delights in something so much that it breathes after it (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, pp. 15-16).

God wants His people loving Him. He wants His people delighting in Him.

Expectation #4 - God expects His people to serve Him. **10:12d**

God wants His people serving Him with all your heart and all your soul. Whatever we do in serving the Lord we are to do wholeheartedly. God must be sick of seeing people who say they love Him, who not only don't serve Him, but most of them are sporadic about even going to church to worship Him. In every church, there are ministry opportunities to serve God and there is begging and pleading and announcing those opportunities because getting anyone to do it is like pulling teeth. If you don't want to serve God with all your heart and soul, then don't. But you will miss out on the kind of relationship God wants to have with you.

Expectation #5 - God expects His people to guard and obey His word. **10:13**

This is the crux of Deuteronomy. Here is our word “shamar” carefully guard and keep watch and protect God’s word in your life “for your good.” To be serious about God’s written word is for your own good.

Expectation #6 - God expects His people to acknowledge His sovereign supremacy. **10:14-15**

A few weeks ago, I shared in a Sunday evening service that I have been trying to think through all the books of the Bible with the idea of coming up with one theme of the Bible. My conclusion is if there is one theme that all books of the Bible present, it certainly is “the sovereignty of God.” What we mean by this is that God is Supreme Ruler over everything and everyone. He is supreme ruler over creation, He is supreme Ruler over history, He is supreme ruler over the future. In these verses, God reveals two areas of His sovereign supremacy:

(Sovereign Supremacy #1) - God is sovereign over all the heavens and the earth. **10:14**

God expects His people to remember that He is the sovereign God over all the heavens and the earth and everything in it. By using the plural noun for heaven, “heavens” God says I am the sovereign God who controls the atmospheric heaven, the stellar heaven and the My throne heaven. God says I control everything in the heavens and everything on earth and I expect My people to acknowledge this reality.

(Sovereign Supremacy #2) - God is sovereign over whom He loves and chooses. **10:15**

God is a God of love and God is a God of election. He decides in His sovereignty whom He will love and He decides in His sovereignty whom He will save. God’s people need to stand in awe of the fact that God loved them, chose them and saved them.

Expectation #7 - God expects His people to circumcise their hearts and not be stiff-necked. **10:16-19**

God expects His people to have hearts and minds that are not in proud rebellion, but in humble obedience and submission to His word and will.

(Explanation #1) - Because your God is the only great, mighty, awesome God. **10:17a**

God says, I do not want My people proud. God says I expect My people to know that I am the “God of gods and the Lord of lords.” In other words, God is revealing that I am the only true God that exists.

(Explanation #2) - Because your God does not show partiality or take a bribe. **10:17b**

No one may have a relationship with God except a circumcised heart. No one can bribe their way into a relationship with God. If you do not have a circumcised heart, no matter who you are or how religious, you will not get into heaven.

(Explanation #3) - God is a God who executes justice for widows and orphans. **10:18a**

God is the God who defends people no others defend. He is a defense for the defenseless.

(Explanation #4) - God cares for the aliens. **10:19**

There is no room for pride in a relationship with God. God's people can thank God for this because at one point they were alienated from God.

Expectation #8 - God expects His people to fear Him. **10:20a**

God again reinforces this point by using the same word He used in **verse 12**. This is a key point God's people must remember if they want God's blessings.

Expectation #9 - God expects His people to serve Him. **10:20b**

When you serve God because you love God and you fear God, you will be blessed by God. There are many ways to serve God. People have different gifts and abilities, but all who want God's blessings are to serve God.

Expectation #10 - God expects His people to cling to Him. **10:20c**

The word "cling" (dabaq) is a word that means God wants His people glued to Him. He wants His people attached and firmly adhering to their relationship with Him (*Ibid.*, p. 185). God wants His people totally cemented in their relationship with Him.

Expectation #11 - God expects His people to defend His name. **10:20d**

God's people need to take God's name seriously. God's people need to take His name as being sacred. Oaths should be taken in His name. His names should always be revered.

Expectation #12 - God expects His people to praise Him. **10:21-22**

God wants His people worshipping Him and praising Him.

(Praise Motive #1) - God is our God. **10:21a**

(Praise Motive #2) - God has done great and awesome things which we have seen. **10:21b**

(Praise Motive #3) - God has expanded our numbers. **10:22**

This God of grace was a God giving His people another chance. If they would commit themselves to God's written word right here, they would experience all of the blessings of God.