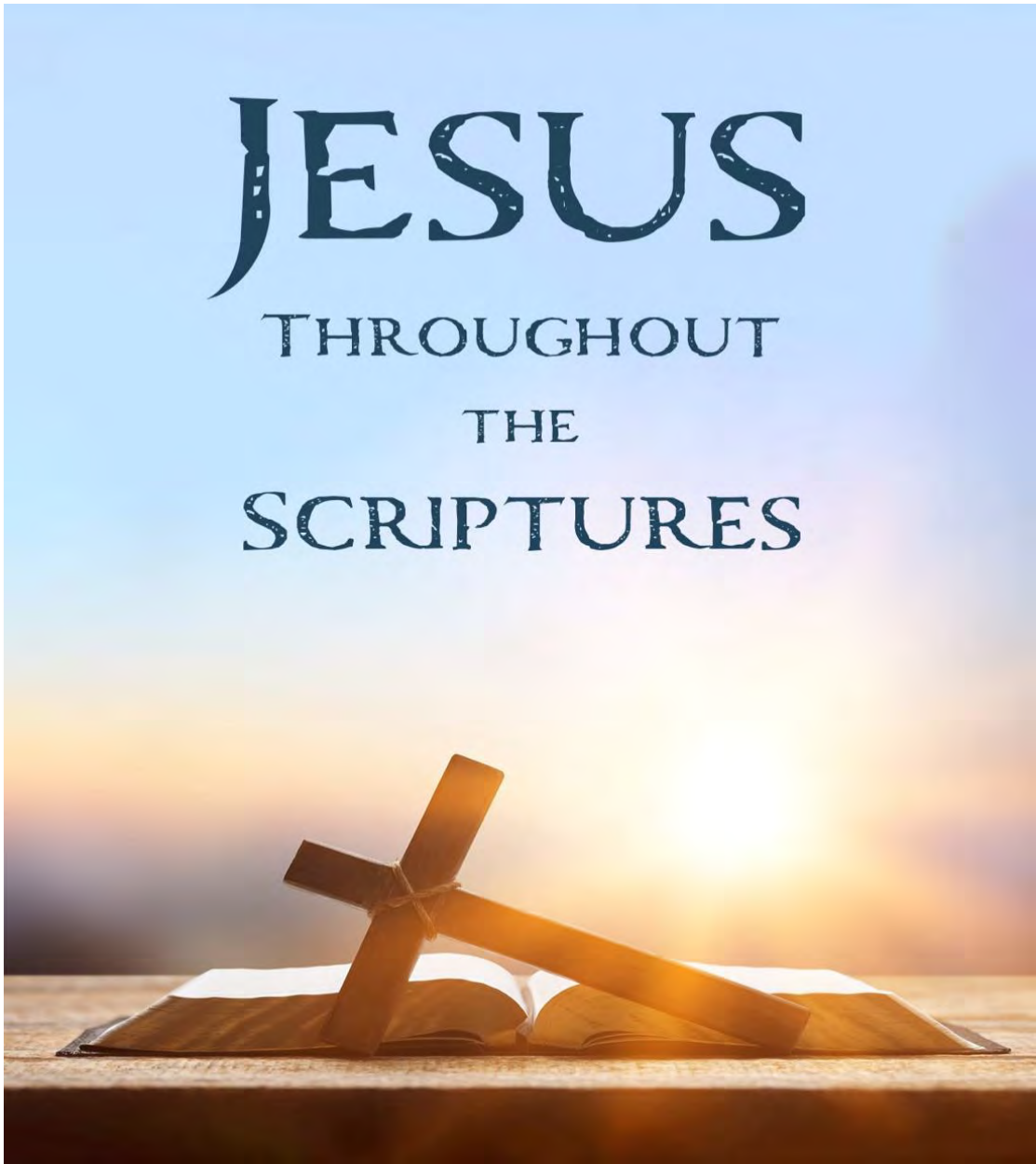


# JESUS

THROUGHOUT  
THE  
SCRIPTURES



Part 4: Deuteronomy

T. M. and Susie Moore

*A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe*

Jesus throughout the Scriptures  
Part 4: Deuteronomy  
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## Jesus throughout the Scriptures: Deuteronomy—Introduction

Moses spoke to the people of Israel—a new generation—on the east side of the Jordan River, in the plain of Moab. They had already been victorious over two kinds and thus had a taste for the land of promise. It was Moses' job to remind them of God's grace, rehearse them in His Law, and review the promises that lay before them if they would obey the Lord.

And in the process, the book of Deuteronomy points us to Jesus in many ways.

We are pleased to offer this resource at no charge to readers, but we encourage to pray and seek the Lord whether He might have you join in supporting the work of The Fellowship of Ailbe. You can use the contribute button at our website to give online, or you may send a check to The Fellowship of Ailbe, P. O. Box 8213, Essex, VT 05451.

We hope you find these studies helpful so that you grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to increase in love for God and your neighbors.

T. M. Moore  
Principal

## 1 Command and Promise

*Pray Psalm 84.1-4.*

How lovely *is* Your tabernacle,  
O LORD of hosts!  
My soul longs, yes, even faints  
For the courts of the LORD;  
My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.  
Even the sparrow has found a home,  
And the swallow a nest for herself,  
Where she may lay her young—  
Even Your altars, O LORD of hosts,  
My King and my God.  
Blessed *are* those who dwell in Your house;  
They will still be praising You.  
*Selah*

*Sing Psalm 84.1-4.*

(Holy Manna: *Brethren, We Have Met to Worship*)

LORD of hosts, how sweet Your dwelling; how my soul longs for Your courts!  
Let my soul with joy keep telling of Your grace forevermore.  
Like a bird upon the altar, let my life to You belong.  
Blessed are they who never falter as they praise Your grace with song!

*Read Deuteronomy 1.1-8; meditate on verses 7 and 8.*

*Preparation*

1. What promise did God hold out to His people?
2. What did He command them to do?

*Meditation*

It is characteristic of God that He led His people by promises and commands. The promises provided a desirable vision of what was to be gained, and the commandments showed how to obtain the promises. The problem with the first generation of those God led out of Israel was that they did not believe God. They doubted they could obtain what He promised, and so they refused to obey His commands. All who did so died in the wilderness.

In these verses Moses succinctly reminded the people what God had promised—the land of Canaan and the promises made to Abram (Gen. 12.1-3)—and what they must do to obtain those promises: “Turn and take your journey...go in and possess the land...”

Jesus embraced this same formula: “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matt. 4.19). “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matt. 11.28, 29). “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me” (Jn. 14.4). “If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you” (Jn. 14.15-17). “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the

Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28.19, 20).

This is not how the religious leaders of Jesus’ day worked. They demanded that people respect their place and stay in line, but they promised nothing. People who heard Jesus making great promises and issuing clear commands would have heard the voice and witnessed the way of the Lord. They would have seen in Him that familiar pattern of promise and command that Israel heard throughout the Old Testament.

It is the same pattern which our Lord Jesus applies to all who follow Him.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (Jn. 14.15). The command.

Jesus also said, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you” (Jn. 16.7). The Promise.

And “when the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth...” (Jn. 16.13).

Jesus also promised, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1.8).

“It is eleven days’ journey from Horeb by way of Mount Seir to Kadesh Barnea” (Deut. 1.2). So, let’s say, for example, if Lewis and Clark should have plotted out this journey, they would have expected to make it in eleven days—maybe even faster since they probably would not have had over a million people in their caravan. Therefore, God in all His wisdom, had figured that the Israelites had enough supplies and gumption to get them to the Promised Land in eleven days. That was His plan.

But the next verse explodes with their disobedience on display: “Now it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spoke to the children of Israel according to all that the LORD had given him as commandments to them...” (Deut. 1.3).

A quick trip turned into a death sentence for an entire generation of people due to their unbelief and disobedience: “because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it” (Num. 14.22, 23). God did make allowances for Caleb and Joshua because they had trusted Him. As He said of Caleb, “But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it” (Num. 14.24; 14.30-Joshua).

And as we recall, neither Moses, Aaron, nor Miriam entered the Promised Land. Only Caleb and Joshua, of the original exodus, entered the land that the LORD had sworn and promised He would give them (Deut. 1.8). All the rest perished in the wilderness just as God said they would. But, God, in the fortieth year, said to the potential possessors of the new land: “You have dwelt long enough at this mountain. Turn and take your journey, and go...” (Deut. 1.6, 7).

When the disciples approached Jesus to ask Him why they could not heal an epileptic, He said to them: “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you” (Matt. 17.20).

Are there any mountains of unbelief we continue to dwell on?

Is there disobedience in our life that keeps us stranded in the wilderness?

If so, we are without excuse, because—like courageous, trusting Caleb being full of a different spirit—we are filled with the Holy Spirit, Who has been given to us to get us off that mountain, out of that wilderness, and into His Kingdom to do the work we have been called to do (Eph. 2.10).

Jesus was faithful in all that He was called to do. He kept all the Commandments, and He is The Promise. And we are His “if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.” But “beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God...” Or we are “hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion’” (Heb. 3.6, 12, 13, 14, 15).

Turn, go in, and possess all the Promises and commandments of God.  
“The promises provide the vision, and the commandments show how to obtain the promises.”  
Jesus did. And we are to “Follow Him” into the Kingdom of Promise. Daily and for eternity.

*Reflection*

1. Which of the promises of Jesus are most precious to you? Why?
2. Which of His commands do you struggle most to obey?
3. Whom will you encourage today with the promises and commands of Jesus?

*When God commands us to go forward in our Christian course, he sets the heavenly Canaan before us for our encouragement.*  
Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Deuteronomy 1.1-8*

*Pray Psalm 84.5-12.*

What promises has God made to you? Review the promises of Genesis 12.1-3 in prayer, giving thanks to the Lord for each one. Then thank Him for the promise of being with you always, and call on Him to make His Presence known to you throughout the day.

*Sing Psalm 84.5-12.*

(Holy Manna: *Brethren, We Have Met to Worship*)

Blessed are they whose strength is founded in Your strength, O LORD above.  
All whose hearts in You are grounded journey in Your strength and love.  
Though they weep with tears of sadness, grace shall all their way sustain.  
In Your Presence, filled with gladness, they shall conquer all their pain.

LORD of hosts, my prayer receiving, hear me, help me by Your grace!  
In Your courts I stand believing; turn to me Your glorious face!  
LORD, our sun, our shield, our glory, no good thing will You deny  
to those who proclaim Your story, and who on Your grace rely.

## 2 Purging in the Wilderness

*Pray Psalm 78.1-5*

Give ear, O my people, *to* my law;  
Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.  
I will open my mouth in a parable;  
I will utter dark sayings of old,  
Which we have heard and known,  
And our fathers have told us.  
We will not hide *them* from their children,  
Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD,  
And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.  
For He established a testimony in Jacob,  
And appointed a law in Israel,  
Which He commanded our fathers,  
That they should make them known to their children...

*Sing Psalm 78.1-5.*

(Foundation: *How Firm a Foundation*)

Give ear, O my people, attend to my word,  
dark sayings and parables sent from the LORD,  
things we have before by our Fathers been told,  
which we would not dare from our children withhold.

The glorious deeds of our God in His might,  
and all of the works He has done in our sight,  
together with all of the words of His Law,  
would we on ourselves and our children bestow.

*Read Deuteronomy 2.1-15; meditation on verses 13-15.*

*Preparation*

1. What did God command His people to do?
2. How did they respond?

*Meditation*

For forty years God bore with the temptations that overwhelmed His people because they would not obey His Word. They whined to Him for food and water. He met their need. They grumbled at His appointed leaders. He purged the rebels from their midst. They gave in to the temptations of pagan women. God punished the wicked.

For forty years Israel roamed the desert until every member of that faithless generation had died. Only Joshua and Caleb obeyed the Lord, and only they survived to enter the land. Forty years of failing every test, and forty years of denying God's promises and disobeying His commands.

This is why Jesus began His ministry with a forty-day struggle in the wilderness of Judea. His was a time of deprivation and preparation, while Israel's was a time of disobedience and destruction. His was because of obedience to the Lord. Israel's was because of rebellion against Him. Israel's ended with the unbelieving

generation vanquished in the desert. Jesus' time in the wilderness ended with the arch-rebel vanquished and bound and Himself attended to by angels.

Jesus was the fulfillment of God's expectation for His faithless people. At the same time, He represented the new generation who would follow Joshua into the land of Canaan. Jesus would emerge from the wilderness to begin His campaign to bring His Kingdom to earth as it is in heaven.

And we are still involved with Him in that struggle today.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.*

Good manners are a big part of Christian character; and Jesus was Exemplar Supreme.

God the Father was teaching the children of Israel good manners during this foray into the land of Promise. "You are about to pass through the territory of your brethren, the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir; and they will be afraid of you. Therefore watch yourselves carefully. Do not meddle with them, for I will not give you any of their land, no, not so much as one footstep, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession. You shall buy food from them with money, that you may eat; and you shall also buy water from them with money, that you may drink." And then God warned them about their behavior toward another kindred family: "Do no harass Moab, nor contend with them in battle, for I will not give you any of their land as a possession, because I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot as a possession" (Deut. 2.4-6, 9).

They were not to behave in an entitled way. They were not to be covetous, nor selfish. They were to be polite and equitable to those with whom they did business.

Also, as an aside, God was gently informing them that He would no longer be providing their daily manna and water provisions. They were to grow up a bit and take some interest in their own sustenance. They were still to trust God daily, but in a new and different way. "For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hand. He knows your trudging through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing" (Deut. 2.7).

This was much the same way Jesus carried out His ministry. And this was what He taught: "Give us this day our daily bread...Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ...But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matt. 6.11, 25, 33).

But back to good manners; we are to have them, for without them we can be seen as boorish, unkind, unloving, and downright irritating to others. We bear the Name of Christ, and we are to strive daily not to be a blot against His good Name. "Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart, and so find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and man" (Prov. 3.3, 4). "What is desired in a man is kindness, and a poor man is better than a liar" (Prov. 19.22). "Love does not behave rudely" (1 Cor. 13.5). "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Lk. 2.52). "I have compassion on the multitude...I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way" (Matt. 15.32). "...having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end" (Jn. 13.1). And even in the throes of death, in agony and pain, He had time to speak to and care about a lowly thief who begged Him to remember him; and He did. "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Lk. 23.43).

Jesus' good manners and love are the highest and loftiest ever to have graced this planet. It is certainly love and good manners beyond measure and comprehension; beyond humanly doing (Eph. 3.20). And yet, we are called to imitate Him.

Jesus never offended anyone through bad manners. He was always the picture of love and kindness. Even



when driving out those in the temple, He exhibited great love for His Father. No doubt, He did offend, but only because He told the Truth to those who did not want to hear it. There is a big difference in the two.

We must strive to be like Jesus. Well-mannered, loving, and kind. It is an important attribute, for even in the direst of situations—no home, no food, no water—God was training His children that good manners must be at the fore of all we do. Surely, no one wants to be guilty of turning another away from the Kingdom simply because we will not see the importance of behaving in a mannerly fashion.

*Reflection*

1. What do we learn from Israel in the wilderness about character?
2. What do we learn from Jesus in the wilderness about character?
3. What specific areas of character and obedience will you be working on today?

*Only a short account of the long stay of Israel in the wilderness is given. God not only chastised them for their murmuring and unbelief, but prepared them for Canaan; by humbling them for sin, teaching them to mortify their lusts, to follow God, and to comfort themselves in him. Matthew Henry (1642-1714), Commentary on Deuteronomy 2.1-8*

*Pray Psalm 78.56-72.*

Wait in silence, asking the Lord if there is anything in your life that is testing or provoking Him. Seek forgiveness and repentance. Call on the Lord to help you serve Him throughout the day ahead.

*Sing Psalm 78.56-72.*

(Foundation: *How Firm a Foundation*)

Yet over and over they turned from His love  
and scorned Him Who ruled them from heaven above.  
His glory departed, they fell to their foes  
and suffered His wrath in uncountable woes.

While they were still suffering, He rose in His strength  
and fought for His people and saved them at length.  
From Judah a king He set for Israel,  
a temple He built with His people to dwell.

Now Jesus, God's servant, is King evermore,  
and we are His people, and He is our Lord.  
His heart is upright as He leads by His hand  
and causes us ever before Him to stand.

### **3 A Foreshadowing of Plunder**

*Pray Psalm 32.1, 2.*

Blessed is *he whose* transgression is forgiven,

*Whose* sin is covered.

Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity,

And in whose spirit *there is* no deceit.

*Sing Psalm 32.1, 2.*

(Hendon: [\*Take My Life and Let It Be\*](#))

Blessed are they whose sins the LORD has forgiven by His Word!

Pure their spirits are within; them He charges with no sin;

them He charges with no sin!

*Read Deuteronomy 3.12-22; meditate on verses 21, 22.*

*Preparation*

1. What had God done for Israel to this point?

2. What did He promise them?

*Meditation*

We sometimes wonder about Israel's destruction of the Canaanites and the appropriation of their property. But consider: The people of the land of Canaan had been abundantly blessed by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When their descendants removed to Egypt, the Canaanites had no qualms about taking over their properties, and God allowed them to do this, so that they flourished on the foundation of God's covenant with Israel. And how did they respond? They became tribal, like the ancient Greeks, and maintained a steady economy of war and plunder. They developed disgusting and cruel false deities to justify their abominable moral practice. They were treacherous, deceitful, brutal, and immoral. They squandered the gifts of God and mocked Him by their idolatries. And they did not intend to change their ways.

Thus, God gave them and their property to His nation of priests, having given them the Law, shown them His promises, and directed them in their way. The good gifts of God would soon be in the hands of His people once again, to be developed and used as He intended. And all who resisted them or sought to destroy them would themselves be destroyed. Only those, like Rahab, who repented and turned to the Lord would be spared.

This great plundering of the Canaanites began on the east side of the Jordan. What happened there, God promised, would happen throughout the land of Canaan if His people would obey His Word. The plundering of the Canaanites east of the Jordan foreshadowed that which would soon follow through the Canaanite lands.

And this plundering of the Canaanites—this restoring of God's good land and resources for Lawful and God-honoring use—foreshadowed Christ's plundering of the devil's kingdom, which Jesus announced had already begun with His drubbing of the devil in the wilderness (Matt. 4.1-11; 12.22-29). And Jesus' initial plundering of Satan's holdings—healings, deliverance from devils, resurrections, and the saving of souls—was itself a foreshadowing of the work He appointed to us, to redeem and restore the reconciled world to God in all its facets, components, peoples, cultures, and lands, for the praise of the glory of our King and Savior.

The plundering has begun, and the weapons of our warfare are sufficient. His Kingdom has come to the Canaan of the wrong-believing world, and nothing can resist His advance.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

If we are to continue the drubbing of Satan that Christ began, we must make sure that we are accomplishing that work in the same way Jesus did. He did it by, through, and with the Word of God:

“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”

“It is written, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’”

“Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve’” (Matt. 4.4, 7, 10).

Jesus was fully dressed in the “whole armor of God” and was “able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

Of what, then, did His armor consist? Was it lots of chainmail? Perhaps Kevlar reinforced? No, it was garb fit for fighting against “principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness.” So, to fight off these enemies, as Jesus did, we need:

- to be girded around our waist with truth
- to put on the breastplate of righteousness
- to cover our feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace
- to take the shield of faith to protect against the fiery darts of the wicked one
- to put on the helmet of salvation
- to carry the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God
- to pray always in the Spirit
- to be watchful in prayer for all the saints
- to be bold to make known the mystery of the gospel (Eph. 6.11-19).

Dressed and prepared for the battle:

“You must not fear them, for the LORD your God Himself fights for you” (Deut. 3.22).

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might” (Eph. 6.10).

Some things never change. From Moses to Jesus to us, the marching orders are the same. Plunder on, trusting in the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit!

This is the work He has appointed for us to do: “to redeem and restore the reconciled world to God in all its facets, components, peoples, cultures, and lands, for the praise of the glory of our King and Savior.” Remembering always that “nothing can resist His advance.”

*And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,  
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us:  
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him; his rage we can endure,  
For lo, his doom is sure;  
One little Word shall fell him.*

*That Word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth;  
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him Who with us sideth:  
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also; the body they may kill:  
God’s truth abideth still;  
His kingdom is forever.  
(Martin Luther, 1529)*

*Reflection*

1. How competent do you feel in using *all* the weapons of our warfare?

2. How would you counsel a new believer to begin each day with all our weapons at the ready?
3. Whom will you encourage today in using the weapons of our warfare?

*Consider what God has done, what God has promised. If God be for us, who can be against us, so as to prevail? Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Deuteronomy 3.21, 22*

*Pray Psalm 32.3-11.*

Pray that you will keep learning, keep growing in Jesus, and continue serving Him faithfully in every aspect of your life. Lay before Him in detail your opportunities for plundering Satan's household today, and call on Him for mercy and grace for all your times of need.

*Sing Psalm 32.3-11.*

(Hendon: [\*Take My Life and Let It Be\*](#))

When in silence I remained, groaning in my sinful pain,  
You Your hand upon me lay; all my strength You drained away,  
all my strength You drained away.

I confessed my sin to You; You forgave me, ever true!  
Let confession's pleading sound reach You while You may be found,  
reach You while You may be found!

When flood waters threaten me, You my hiding place will be.  
O'er them I will rise above, buoyed by Your redeeming love,  
buoyed by Your redeeming love.

Teach me, LORD, how I should live; sound instruction ever give.  
Let me never stubborn be; let Your eye watch over me,  
let Your eye watch over me.

Though the wicked wail and weep, they rejoice whose souls You keep.  
Trusting, we exult with praise, joyfully singing all our days,  
joyfully singing all our days!

## 4 Wise and Understanding

*Pray Psalm 28.8, 9.*

The LORD *is* their strength,  
And He *is* the saving refuge of His anointed.  
Save Your people,  
And bless Your inheritance;  
Shepherd them also,  
And bear them up forever.

*Sing Psalm 28.8, 9.*

*(Angel's Story: O Jesus, I Have Promised)*

Our strength are You, O Savior, our strong defense and sure.  
Anointed with Your favor, we rest in You secure.  
Save us, and bless us, Jesus, upon us turn Your face.  
With shepherd's care, LORD, keep us forever in Your grace.

*Read Deuteronomy 4.1-10; meditate on verses 7-9.*

*Preparation*

1. What did God intend for His people?
2. How would they fulfill that calling?

*Meditation*

It could hardly be clearer than this: The way into God's promises and the blessings of life they hold is through obedience to His commandments, judgments, and precepts, and to all the Word of God. This makes reading, studying, meditating on, and obeying the Law of God and all His Word among the most important things we can do.

However, as we know, obedience and the righteousness that blossoms from it are not available to us except through the Wisdom and Understanding of God.

Israel could not fulfill this calling, and their failure is a lesson to us all. They could have done better at it, but they preferred the ways of the surrounding nations and cultures to the ways of God and His Word—just as we too often do.

Nevertheless, the promise of their being a wise and understanding people by keeping all His Law points forward to the One Who accomplished this calling and who was the very Wisdom of God and the Treasury of all understanding. When we are being transformed into the image of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 3.12-18) and our churches are becoming communities of love and service for Jesus (Eph. 4.11-16), the watching world will see something not only different but desirable. (cf. Mic. 4.1-8).

But for now, churches do not have much wisdom and understanding to display to their communities. Many of us are shrunken in our view of the Gospel, withdrawn into our own little worlds, and too comfortable to be troubled by our neighbor's needs. All that could change if, like Jesus, we took God's Law and all His Word more seriously (Matt. 5.13-19). For then we would see Him and, by the inward working of His Spirit, become more like Him.

It is so good to start the day with the Word of God, and to resort to it frequently throughout the day, to

delight and rejoice in it, to be confronted and convicted by it, to gain insight into every next step so that we may do the will of God with joy. For in doing so, the Wisdom and Understanding of God will make us a light to our world.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

When each part of the Body of Christ is functioning as it should—each one daily in the Word and continuously in prayer—the world will look and say, “Surely this great nation [church] is a wise and understanding people” (Deut. 4.6). And imagine if all the church members, of all the churches and denominations, corporately lived according to God’s Law; well, the world would be rushing to be a part of this Kingdom:

“Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths’ (Is. 2.2, 3).

God never put a burden on us to be something or someone that we are not. We are only called to be the person He has created, doing His work, in His Kingdom, to “glorify God and to enjoy Him forever” (Shorter Catechism). Obediently following Him.

How hard is it to keep the Law? We are filled with the Holy Spirit Who wants us to be successfully obedient. “Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, but such as keep the law contend with them” (Prov. 28.4). We can don our courageous capes, contending with evil, merely by quietly keeping the Law.

God said not to add or subtract from His Words.  
God said to Keep His commandments (Deut. 4.2).

And when we do, even “the haters of the LORD [will] pretend submission to Him” (Ps. 81.15).

Everywhere we look in Scripture Jesus is there. He came to earth as God, but in the form of a human being, to show us that God’s requirements can be kept. With His help. His guidance. His leadership. The perfect example for us to follow into this new world of living only for Him. And contrary to what some may teach, this is not a burdensome or onerous task—it is our joy. Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (Jn. 10.10). And, “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (Jn. 16.33).

“Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your Name, O LORD God of hosts” (Jer. 15.16). To be in God’s Word is not drudgery. It is not something that is an ought to; it is an overwhelming want to. To spend time with the Triune God in fellowship, One-to-one, is the best part of every day. It is an amazing privilege. We are invited to converse with The King. To gain our sustenance. It is as Job described: “I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food” (Job 23.12).

And all it takes is for God’s people to observe and do His Law.  
As our accomplished Savior said, “You follow Me” (Jn. 21.22).

*Living for Jesus a life that is true,  
Striving to please Him in all that I do;  
Yielding allegiance, gladhearted and free,  
This is the pathway of blessing for me.*

*O Jesus, Lord and Savior, I give myself to Thee,*

*For Thou, in Thy atonement, Didst give Thyself for me;  
I own no other Master,  
My heart shall be Thy throne;  
My life I give, henceforth to live,  
O Christ, for Thee alone.*  
(Thomas O. Chisholm, 1917)

*Reflection*

1. Can you think of any areas in which you need to grow in wisdom and understanding?
2. Jesus can give us more of each of these. How should you seek these from Him?
3. How do you expect your witness for Christ to change as you grow in wisdom and understanding?

*In order that they may set themselves more cheerfully about the keeping of the Law, and may proceed more steadily in this endeavor, he reminds them that nothing is better or more desirable for themselves. For God is not duly honored, except with ready minds and voluntary obedience, to which we are rather attracted by pleasure than forced by rigor and violence.. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Deuteronomy 4.6*

*Pray Psalm 28.1-7.*

Thank Jesus for His shepherding love. Seek wisdom and understanding for your daily tasks. Pray that He will give you strength to be a light of His love to the people you encounter today.

*Sing Psalm 28.1-7.*

(Angel's Story: *O Jesus, I Have Promised*)

I cry to You, our Savior, O, be not deaf to me!  
LORD, speak to me with favor, lest I should dying be.  
Hear now my supplications when for Your help I cry.  
Receive these, my oblations, before Your throne on high.

LORD, count me not among those who walk in sinful ways.  
With words of peace their tongue glows while evil fills their days.  
Your works they disregard, LORD, while evil fills their hands.  
Destroy them by Your Word, LORD, and let them no more stand.

Blessed be the Name of Jesus, for He will hear our prayer.  
His strength protects and shields us with mercy and with care.  
In You our heart rejoices; You help us by Your Word.  
To You we raise our voices to praise and thank You, LORD.

## 5 The Way to Life

*Pray Psalm 22.6-8.*

But I *am* a worm, and no man;  
A reproach of men, and despised by the people.  
All those who see Me ridicule Me;  
They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying*,  
“He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him;  
Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!”

*Sing Psalm 22.6-8.*

(St. Christopher: *Beneath the Cross of Jesus*)  
Despised by men, the Savior was more a worm than man.  
They mocked, “He trusted God, let Him redeem Him if He can!  
Let God deliver Him if He indeed delights in Him!”  
Thus scorned they Jesus as He died in pain and anguish grim.

*Read Deuteronomy 5.1-22, 32, 33; meditate on verses 32 and 33.*

*Preparation*

1. Why did God give His Law to Israel?
2. What were they supposed to do?

*Meditation*

The nation of Israel throughout the Old Testament is one of the all-time great teachers.

They taught us that we cannot fulfill the requirements of God’s Law. And they showed us that failing to do so is the way to misery, treachery, strife, division, disappointment, and death.

Israel is a great teacher. Her failure to gain life through obedience brings two additional points to the surface. First, if we want to live, we have to find some way to fulfill the requirements of the Law, because, second, God is not going to change His mind.

Happily, One has appeared Who has fulfilled all the Law of God in terms of its righteous requirements (Matt. 5.17-19). But He has also fulfilled all the Law’s penalties against us, especially against us who believe in Him. As we saw in Genesis 15, God took on all the responsibility for fulfilling the terms of the covenant. He would obey the terms of the covenant—which included keeping every Word of God—and He would bear the judgment against His covenant people for their disobedience.

Thus, Jesus fulfills all the righteousness of God’s Law for us, and He bore all the judgment against repentant sinners such as we. Now we can truly live (Jn. 10.10; 14.6), prolong our lives for all eternity, possess all the promises of God, and walk in all His ways.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.*

We have Ten opportunities spelled out clearly for us to please the LORD (Deut. 5.6-21).

Let’s pick one: “Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all you work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work; you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates, that your male



servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day” (Deut. 5.12-15).

God in His wisdom and mercy reminded them that they had been slaves in Egypt, and their authentic suffering and well-deserved moaning and complaining had been heard by Him; therefore, He rescued them. But He wanted them to remember that they despised being slaves. Slaves have no freedom. Slaves never get a day off to rest their weary bodies and souls. Slavery is horrendous.

So, do not do this to another person! Don’t treat anyone else in this fashion, per the slavery *modus operandi*. Don’t work on the Sabbath yourself, and don’t make it necessary for anyone else to work that day either.

For example, if we choose to shop on Sunday, we are encouraging the shop keeper to stay open on that day because it is advantageous for them to do so. But then their employees must work on the Sabbath to satisfy the needs of people who shouldn’t be shopping on that day in the first place. Imagine, if all Christians stopped shopping on Sunday. If no one is shopping, it is not advantageous for the store to keep the lights on, the plumbing going, and the heater or AC running if no one is there spending money. Just a thought.

Granted, this is just an opinion, not holy writ.

So, let’s see some other opinions on this topic:

The leaders that Nehemiah was working with after they had rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem joined together and entered into a curse and an oath “to walk in God’s Law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord and His ordinances and His statutes.” And one of Laws to be kept was about the Sabbath: “if the peoples of the land brought wares or any grain to sell on the Sabbath day, we would not buy if from them on the Sabbath, or on a holy day...” (Neh. 10.31).

God said, “If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken” (Is. 58.13, 14).

And then Jesus added another layer to the joys of the Sabbath, when He answered the Pharisees who were complaining about the disciples picking and eating grain as they were walking through a field with Him on the Sabbath: “Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him: how he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the showbread which is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and also gave some to those who were with him? The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath” (Mk. 2.25-28).

Jesus healed many on the Sabbath and did many other works of mercy on His special day. We have been freed from sin to follow Him. But we have also been charged with keeping God’s commandments. It is up to us to discern how to keep the Sabbath; but keep it we must.

### *Reflection*

1. Since Jesus “fulfilled” the Law of God, why are we still obliged to keep it?
2. The Law was given to Israel to preserve their liberty from bondage and sin. Why is the Law “established” (Rom. 3.31) for us?
3. What is it like to know true freedom and life in obeying God’s commandments as Jesus did?

*[God] desires the welfare and salvation of poor sinners. He has given abundant proof that he does so; he gives us time and space to repent. He has sent his Son to redeem us, promised his Spirit to those who pray for him, and has declared that he has no pleasure in the ruin of sinners. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Deuteronomy* 5.23-33*

*Pray Psalm 22.23-25.*

Give thanks to Jesus for fulfilling the Law and bearing its wrath on our behalf. Praise God for receiving us in Him and for the gift of eternal life. Recommit yourself to Him, to follow the path that Jesus walked, the path of God's commandments (1 Jn. 2.1-6). Devote yourself to Him for this day.

*Sing Psalm 22.23-25.*

*(Darwall: Rejoice! The Lord Is King!)*

All you who fear the LORD, now praise His holy Name!

You children of His glorious Word, declare His fame!

We stand in awe of our eternal God, and on His mercy call.

For He has not despised the anguish of our King,  
nor from Him hid His eyes, Who knew such suffering.  
Let praise arise from all who love and serve the Ruler of the skies!

## 6 Our God, Our Praise

*Pray Psalm 105.8-11, 45.*

He remembers His covenant forever,  
The word *which* He commanded, for a thousand generations,  
*The covenant* which He made with Abraham,  
And His oath to Isaac,  
And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute,  
To Israel as an everlasting covenant,  
Saying, “To you I will give the land of Canaan  
As the allotment of your inheritance,”...  
That they might observe His statutes  
And keep His laws.  
Praise the LORD!

*Sing Psalm 105.8-11, 45.*

(Warrington: *Give to Our God Immortal Praise*)

He will His covenant faithfully guard—His oath, the promise of His Word.  
That which He to our fathers swore, He will perform forevermore!

So let us all in our Savior confide, and in His holy Law abide.  
Let us observe His glorious Word, and praise our sovereign, faithful LORD!

*Read Deuteronomy 10.12-22; meditate on verses 20-22.*

*Preparation*

1. What did God require of His people?
2. What had God done for them?

*Meditation*

We have seen that whatever God commands of His chosen people, He will provide. He commands us to keep covenant with Him, and He has provided Jesus to make that possible. Wherever in the Old Testament we see God commanding His people to do something, two additional matters will typically be present: Some reminder of what God has graciously done for His people in the past, and some rehearsal of what God has promised they can realize through obedience.

This passage is therefore typical of many others in the Old Testament. What does God require of His people? That we should fear, follow, love, and serve Him wholeheartedly (v. 12). But Israel could not do this, nor can we. Israel needed a new heart, as God made clear here and elsewhere (v. 16; cf. Deut. 5.29). But how could they “circumcise the foreskin of their hearts”? Here is a mystery, designed to lead to contemplation and waiting. Whatever this means, God would have to do it (as we shall see). God would have to give them the new heart to love and serve Him like this, and to enable them, through the obedience of faith (v. 22) to realize all that He had promised them—all that was for their “good” (v. 13; cf. v. 18).

But how? Israel would have to wait. In time, more revelation would clarify these matters (cf. Deut. 10.1-10; Ezek. 36.26, 27), at the same time increasing hope and faithfulness among the people who knew their God. And in the work of Jesus and His Spirit, we see clearly how all this was accomplished (cf. Gal. 4.1-7). Thus we, even more than Israel, should know that He is the God to be praised, for He is God Who fulfills all His Word.

Let us therefore, who have new hearts to obey Him, be careful to fear, follow, love, and serve Jesus in everything we do, giving praise to God the Father in all things.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

God has given us a *Love Manual* to teach us how to proclaim to Him, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit our undying devotion. And here is how we do it:

- Fear Him.
- Walk in all His ways.
- Love Him with all our heart and soul.
- Serve Him with all our heart and soul.
- Keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD.
- Hold fast to Him and no other (Deut. 10.12, 13, 20).

The very beginning of the Law, the first three commandments, are about our love relationship with Him:

“I AM the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me.”

“You shall not make for yourself a carved image...to bow down to them or serve them. For I, the LORD your God, AM a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.”

“You shall not take the Name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His Name in vain” (Ex. 20.2-7).

“Their sorrows shall be multiplied who hasten after another god...” (Ps. 16.4).

“I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My Name’s sake and have not become weary. Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent” (Rev. 2.2-5).

“If you love Me, keep My commandments.”

“He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him” (Jn. 14.15, 21).

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD...for You are my praise” (Jer. 17.7, 14)—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

“Thus we, even more than Israel, should know that He is the God to be praised for He is God Who fulfills all His Word.”

“For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2.39)—those who fear Him, who walk in all His ways, who love Him with all their heart and soul, who keep His commandments and statutes, and who devotedly hold fast to Him all the days of their lives. He is our one and only Love. And our love for Him causes us to do His will, and to love others, for His praise, honor, and glory.

### *Reflection*

1. What does it mean to fear God? Why should God want us to fear Him?

2. Can we truly love the Lord Jesus if we do not fear Him? Explain.

3. How does serving others follow from loving Jesus? How did He demonstrate that in His own life?

*Consider the greatness and glory of God; and his goodness and grace; these persuade us to our duty. Blessed Spirit! Oh for thy purifying, persevering, and renewing influences, that being called out of the state of strangers, such as our fathers were, we may be found among the number of the children of God, and that our lot may be among the saints. Matthew Henry(1662-1714), Commentary on Deuteronomy 10.12-22*

*Pray Psalm 105.1-7.*

To whom will you make known the deeds of the Lord, what He has done for you? Seek His Presence earnestly, in prayer throughout the day, that you may be emboldened to live and speak for Him.

Sing Psalm 105.1-7.

*(Warrington: Give to Our God Immortal Praise)*

Give thanks unto the LORD Most High; call on His Name, before Him cry!  
Make known His deeds in every land; sing praise for all the works of His hand.

Glory in God, rejoice in heart, all you who seek His holy part.  
Him and His strength and Presence seek; His works proclaim, His judgments speak.

You holy children of Abraham, you chosen ones of Jacob, stand!  
He is our LORD, of wondrous worth; His judgments are in all the earth..

## 7 Physician of the Soul

*Pray Psalm 139.23, 24.*

Search me, O God, and know my heart;  
Try me, and know my anxieties;  
And see if *there is any* wicked way in me,  
And lead me in the way everlasting.

*Sing Psalm 139.23, 24.*

(Ripley: *Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah, O My Soul*)

Search my heart, O LORD, and know me, as You only, LORD, can do.  
Test my thoughts and contemplations, whether they be vain or true.  
Let there be no sin in me, LORD, nothing that Your Spirit grieves.  
Lead me in the righteous way, LORD, unto everlasting peace!

*Read Deuteronomy 30.1-10; meditate on verses 8-10.*

*Preparation*

1. Why did God promise to do for His people?
2. What would this accomplish for them?

*Meditation*

Having commanded the people to circumcise their hearts—to remove the shield of sinfulness that kept them from obeying God’s Law—the Lord here promises to carry out that work for them (v. 6). He is not talking about the physical heart, of course, but the spiritual one, here representing the whole soul (cf. v. 10). This refers to the work of the Holy Spirit Whom Jesus and the Father would send once Jesus’ work had been complete (cf. Ezek. 36.26, 27; Jn. 14.15-17, 26; 15.26, 27).

This passage glimpses ahead down the corridor of Israel’s history to show why such a work is necessary. Israel would go into captivity to foreign nations because they would not keep the Law of God (v. 1). As they came to realize their sin and repented, God would bring them back to the land of promise again (vv. 2, 3). But this would be merely temporary, for God would drive them out again, scattering them throughout the nations of the Roman Empire under the directive of Pompey.

But God promised to gather His chosen people from every nation, that they might possess the promises together (vv. 4, 5) and have their hearts circumcised to know and love the LORD (v. 6). Jesus is both the promise of the Father and the physician of dead souls, Who quickens them to life by the cauterizing power of His Word and the breath of His Spirit. When that work begins, the great enemy of God’s people will be bound, and the plundering of his realm will begin (v. 7). The people whom Jesus heals will prosper in His salvation as they walk the path He walked in obedience to the commandments of God (vv. 8-10; cf. 1 Jn. 2.1-6).

Thus they will rejoice in the salvation of the LORD Who rejoices over them for good (v. 9), as they seek and serve Him with all their heart and all their soul (v. 10). This is the work of Jesus, Whom God has sent to fulfill and carry out all His precious and very great promises to us His people. In Him, all who believe undergo the circumcision of baptism, the sign and symbol of the cleansing of our sins and our union with the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 2.11-15).

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

For every person who loves and obeys God, there is this abundant promise of always belonging to Him. When we are trusting fully in our Savior's ability to save and forgive, we are forever invited to return to Him from wherever we have wandered—whether it is a momentary flash of disbelief or a more cumbersome time of sin. God calls us to “return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you...with all your heart and with all your soul that the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you. If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you” (Deut. 30.2-4).

Therefore, our beloved Savior came to earth to fulfill this glorious promise of redemption. “From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day” (Matt. 16.21).

Why would we ever willfully want to wander away from this kind of love? Sheltered and gathered together with Him in His amazing love and grace.

And the compassionate gathering of God's people is a promise for now and for later: “Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven” (Mk. 13.26, 27).

As soon as we become His, we never need fear being left on our own. For He has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Deut. 31.6; Heb. 13.5).

But a covenant involves two parties, and our part of the covenantal promise is this: follow His Law; love Him with all our heart and soul; and continually repent and return when we have wandered away through disobedience or disbelief.

However, it is also true that if a person willfully and continually sins, without thought of repentance or remorse, if that person wantonly continues to sin, and leaves their first love permanently, then this is also a fate:

“Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the LORD. And again, ‘The LORD will judge His people.’ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10.29-31).

But when we are following Jesus in a fearful, respectful, obedient way, we can snuggle up in the truth of God's compassionate words: “For the LORD will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers, if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in the Book of the Law, and if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deut. 30.9, 10).

“The LORD will perfect that which concerns me;  
Your mercy, O LORD, endures forever;  
do not forsake the works of Your hands” (Ps. 138.8).

*Reflection*

1. How can you tell when your heart before the Lord Jesus might be a little askew? What should you do at such times?
2. How would you try to encourage a fellow believer who was drifting from the Lord? What promises would you share?
3. Why does Jesus need to “circumcise” our heart before we can follow Him? How do we know when He has done that?

*[H]e only wishes to teach us that, although God should pardon our sins, that blessing would be but transient, unless He should keep us in subjection to His Law. And, in fact, He regenerates by His Spirit unto righteousness all those whose sins He pardons. John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Deuteronomy 30.1-10**

*Pray Psalm 139.1-5.*

Give thanks to Jesus, the great Physician of your soul, who healed your soul and daily attends to its health and growth by His Word and Spirit. Devote yourself and your day to serving Him.

*Sing Psalm 139.1-5.*

(Ripley: *Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah, O My Soul*)

You have searched me, LORD, and known me, when I sit and when I rise;  
from afar, my thoughts discerning, all my path before You lies.  
Every word, before it's spoken, You behold and know it well.  
Both behind me and before me, Your sweet Presence I can tell!



*Questions for Reflection or Discussion*

1. Deuteronomy is a book about the Law of God. Why should we expect to find many signs, types, and pointers to Jesus in this book?
2. How does Deuteronomy encourage us as to the coming work of our Lord Jesus Christ? What has He done which Deuteronomy foretold?
3. How does Deuteronomy portray the work of Jesus in relation to the Law of God?
4. The captivity theme (Exodus) appears again in Deuteronomy. What kind(s) of captivity? How does the promise of Jesus relate to this theme?
5. What's the most important lesson you have learned from seeing Jesus in Deuteronomy?

*For Prayer:*

*For Prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

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