

And You Are Still Living? – *Deuteronomy 4:15-43*

Introduction – The title is taken from an alternative translation for the end of verse 33. Building up to the giving of the Law to the next generation, poised to go and take the Land in Jehovah's name, Moses reminds them of the amazing covenantal love of their LORD and the privilege that is theirs who have heard the voice of God – and lived. It is through the Word of God that we find our existence, our community, our condemnation, our redemption, our refuge and future hope; it is how we live as the people of God in covenant.

Against Deconstruction (vv15-20) – Since God did not reveal Himself in physical form, Israel was not to represent Him in such a way either. When a people worship a false god or make idols they “uncreate” this world and in the end there is nothing but chaos. The order of idols here is in the opposite order of the creation account. Similarly, in Romans 1:22 we see a descent from worshipping man to worshipping bugs (or the primordial goo of the evolution story). And just because the stars are glorious, we are not to worship them (v19). God had brought them out of such pagan systems of bug and sun worship and the slavery that ensued (v20).

Words Matter (vv21-22) – What God said to do matters, as Moses had discovered with his rash actions and words (Num 20:10-11, Psalm 106:32-33). If Moses was punished for disobedience, how much more would Israel?

Worship Matters (vv23-24) – Notice the similarity of the people of God in separate administrations. Here, the people of God were on the verge of a great invasion and are warned not to make idols - for God “*is a consuming fire, a jealous God.*” Just before the fall of Jerusalem, the people of the New Covenant were on the verge of a great invasion and were warned against another kind of idolatry, for God “*is a consuming fire*” (Heb 12:29). His jealousy over us is His covenant love.

Taking Heed to His Word over the Long Haul (vv25-31) – This Covenant of Life and Community before God was to be heeded “*unto a thousand generations*” (Deut 7:9). Moses was sure they would dwell in the land (v25); but warned them of growing old and finishing badly – and so should we all be warned. Generations will come and go, and so Moses calls upon the permanent things (heaven and earth) to bear witness (v26). False and stupid worship produces false and stupid people and the necessary consequences (vv27-28). But discipline and tribulation concentrates the mind and heart, and our merciful God uses such instances to call us back to Himself, promising to have mercy upon repentant people (vv 29-31). And if the only first reason you want to return to God is because the pig food stinks, that is just fine with a merciful God: “*...He will not forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.*” We may forget God's Word and covenant love; He never does.

Covenant Love (vv32-40) – No other people have had anything like the covenant love God bestows upon Israel (and the New Israel). No other people hear God's voice the way we have heard His voice – and are still living (v33). No people have been so miraculously delivered from their slavery like Israel (v34). But this had been done so that they might know that there is no other god (v35), and that they might hear His Word by His own voice (v36). He did this just because He loved them and all their descendants, chose them, gave them life and an inheritance (vv37-38). There is no other God (v39) and so listen to His Words and live (v40). He establishes cities of refuge, because He is the gospel-city of our refuge (vv41-43).

Take Heed: To Your God – Not to idols, not to false-images or our own manufacturing. We must take heed to Jesus Christ and His Word declared to us. God cannot be contained in an icon; but He does speak to us.

Take Heed: To the Covenant and Its Community – Behold the love of God expressed in His Word and declared in His covenant actions of grace and mercy. One must be enveloped in the truth of His love for you and His covenant people (Eph 1-3) in order to then turn in His strength and walk in His ways (Eph 4-6). To be in covenant with God immediately places you in covenant with brothers and sisters. This is the community of faith and this is the church who has been given the world in Jesus Christ.

Take Heed: To the Law and Its Wisdom for Life – If you do not have faith, you will not look into the perfect law of liberty and find life. But when God grants you faith, the Word not only makes sense, but directs you in every way.

Take Heed: And Do not Grow Lax – We must walk in faith, but not in presumption. Not with ourselves, and not with our children and grandchildren. We must not grow old and complacent; we must not destroy our grandchildren. He is your brother. She is your sister. This is a great temptation, but God has promised to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers (Mal 4:6).

Take Heed: Return with Word-wrought Revival – When you hear the Word in the power of the Spirit through the gift of faith, you see the jealousy of God over You, His consuming fire, and you are equipped, trained, and sent to serve your God with great confidence. When you hear this sermon rightly, you cannot believe that you are still living *coram Deo* and you cannot wait for more of His Word to be delivered to you.