

In Plenty and in Want - *Deuteronomy 6:10-25*

Introduction – In this passage of commentary on the first commandment (Deut 5:7, 6:14) and in this chapter as a whole, we should notice how much Jesus loved Deuteronomy (Luke 10:27, 4:8, 12, Matt 5:33). This book was used by Jesus in His teaching and as He stood against the temptation of the devil; and so it should be loved and used by us as well.

Temptations Due to Unmerited Prosperity (vv10-15) – God has promised to give Israel the land (10), full of unearned blessings (11), and the temptation will be to forget the LORD who delivered them and brought them into this place (12). But we don't only forget God, we will always serve somebody, and so we are warned not to go after any other gods, especially the gods who are worshipped by those around us (13-15). We must fear God and worship Him alone, for He has a proper jealousy among us. When God blesses us materially, there is a temptation to forget Him and that it all came from Him (James 1:17) and how we are to thankfully receive and use it to His glory (1 Tim 6:9-10, 17-19). We cannot and do not get full outside of the grace of God.

Jesus Was Tempted (Luke 4:5-8) – At just this point, Jesus was tempted. He was to receive all the kingdoms of the world, but the devil offered them to Him the *easy* way. How often are we tempted to receive material blessing if we would just follow the gods of our world? Jesus wanted the kingdoms of the world, but He wanted them through His obedient service to His heavenly Father and His suffering on behalf of the kingdoms He would purchase. He was going to bind the strong man and take them.

Real Fear of Real Consequences – We are to fear God (v13) and serve Him only, “*lest the anger of the LORD your God be aroused against*” us and He destroy us (v15). Those who are eternally elect will not fall, but it remains true today that covenant members can fall into apostasy and out of their covenant status (Rom 11:19-22). Material prosperity and covenant succession are both wonderful blessings, but can easily become temptations to a great fall (Luke 18:25).

Temptations Due to Providential Hardship (vv16-19) – But temptation not only comes when there is prosperity; temptation comes when our faith is tested in times of hardship. At Massah the people brought a charge against the LORD (Ex 17:1-7) and the issue was not simply that they were griping. The language insinuates a legal charge against God, as though He was being put on trial. God instructed Moses to strike the rock from which water flowed for their lives. Paul tells us that this rock was Christ and an example for us (1 Cor 10:4) and the typology is clear as you consider the text. A formal complaint is brought against God and although He was testing them, He allowed them to put Him on trial. Then He had Moses strike Him and, through that suffering, waters of life poured out for the people.

Jesus Was Tempted (Luke 4:9-12) – The devil tempted Jesus to live as though He would never suffer. But Jesus was not afraid to jump off a cliff; in fact, He would go through a much more painful suffering and death – trusting in His Father's care all the way. And He would not test the LORD as though He did not have to suffer. He would allow Israel to strike Him and from Him would come rivers of living water.

Blessing Will Come – And so, in plenty or in want, “*you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you...as the LORD has spoken*” (vv18-19). We only can do this by faith, that is, belief in the faithfulness of our good and mighty God to His own Word.

Tell the Stories to Your Children (vv20-25) – And here is a third temptation: the peer pressure future generations face when the stories have grown distant and the meaning of our distinctive and exclusive worship becomes fuzzy. The promises are to us and to our children to a thousand generations. And yet, with each generation there is this real temptation: Why are we doing this, and why are we not following the latest trends, the newest ideas, the modern gurus of our enlightened culture?

When They Ask - Hopefully, your children wonder “*why are we so different in the way we live?*” The answer to this question should come in the form of a story, a story you have personalized, a story that has and is driving your life with gratitude and hope. We were slaves to a false-god (Pharaoh was considered a god) but we were brought out from that land, that way of worship, that bondage, and have been given over to a new God, the LORD. Look at what this God has given to us and promised us. Look at how these stories pointed to the Great Story of our Deliverer and our deliverance. Then and only then it makes sense to teach the last verses: “*And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our god, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day. Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the LORD our God, as He has commanded us*” (vv24-25).

In Sum – Prosperity and fullness do not remove temptations, in fact they bring them. So do hardship and suffering. And every new generation must itself embrace these promises by faith – a faith that leads to faithful obedience. We are tempted to forget the story of our redemption; we are tempted to forget to pass on that story. There is living water, but if we refuse it, lost in the desert of empty souls, we will perish.