

Remembering is Doing – Deuteronomy 8:1-20

Introduction – Forgetting, as biblically defined, is not an excuse but rather another sin to be confessed. Remembering, as biblically understood, is not simply an exercise of proposition recall. You have heard that your theology works out your fingertips; so it is with remembering. Remembering works itself out in all areas of your life. Remembering is doing.

Remembering and Forgetting – As Israel goes in to possess the land, they are to keep every commandment of God (v1), remembering Him (v2). They were to “*remember the Lord your God*” who gave them their success, power, and wealth (v18). On the other hand, they were not to “*forget the Lord your God*” which is defined as “*by not keeping His commandments*” (v11). Therefore, remembering and forgetting are not simply things going on or not going on up in our heads. Obeying God’s commandments is remembering Him, and not keeping His commandments is forgetting Him.

Remembering Him in the Wilderness (vv2-6) – The forty years in the wilderness was, among other things, a test. It was a trial that God brought to Israel to humble them and to know what was in their heart. God allowed them to hunger (v3). And this is true for all Christians and for all trials. God leads us in these trials to humble us, to test our hearts and to see if it is God that we trust for everything. Every trial is to be received as from the hand of God. Response to trials begins with thanksgiving and humility. When we are in the wilderness (“why me?”, “why this?”, “why now?”), we are to remember the God we worship, Who led us into this barren place. And remembering Him IS keeping His commandments (v6).

The Teaching of Manna – God did not simply give the manna to relieve their hunger, but to teach them that “*man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD*” (v3). Jesus was tested in His forty days of fasting in the wilderness and, when tempted to make bread from stones by the devil, stood on this Word of promise (Luke 4:3-4). The God we worship (and no other gods, commandment #1) has not created a world autonomous from Himself. We are to see the Word of God becoming our bread and not stones becoming our bread. This flies in the face of seeing bread coming from dirt and not the sky all the time; and it flies in the face of seeing hands make the bread with or without belief in God (more on that). And His provision covers more than food (v4). It covers everything (v7ff). When we undergo trials, this is the chastening (the disciplined education) of the Lord (v5).

Remembering Him in His Blessings (vv6-10) – There is no such thing as “ordinary” bread as opposed to “heavenly” bread. It all comes from the Word of God, and so does everything He blesses His people with. Our God created all things and sustains all things, so everything is directly from His hand. We are to look at all He gives us and extol His name (and not our own name, as is warned in the following section). The abundance, variety, and creativity of God’s blessings are immeasurable. This good land contains water, grain, orchards, oil, honey, much bread, and mountains full of metal.

Forgetting Him in His Blessings (vv11-17) – Verse 11 is central, defining for us what forgetfulness really is. In addition, when we are not keeping God’s commands, we will correspondingly forget that all of the things we have directly came from Him. We will forget our deliverance from slavery, our deliverance from previous trials, His previous provisions and care for us, and His teachings that He brought us through all those circumstances. We will instead point to ourselves and say, “*My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth*” (v 17). Carnal eyes cannot see the connection of health, wealth, power, dominion, and life to obeying God. Carnal hearts worship false gods who teach you to manipulate the world around you as though it was autonomous from Yahweh who keeps covenant with His people over generations. And a truncated, non-covenantal way of thinking about evangelical Christianity leads to this kind of forgetfulness and idolatry; whole sections of most Christian’s lives are considered to have nothing to do with Yahweh. We have forgotten Him. This was the insanity of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 4:30) and the death of the rich fool (Luke 12:16-21).

Remember and Do Not Forget: Life and Death (vv18-20) – The teaching is summarized and driven home here. First, remember Yahweh your God (and remember what remembering means). Second, look to the blessings and see them as from the Word of God, formed and sustained by Him. Third, bless the LORD as an overflow of the satisfaction He has given. That is life.

Do Not Forget – This was the central warning (v11) and is expounded even more (vv19-20). Simply put, obey or die. And this does not exclude the gospel, for we are commanded to obey the gospel, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and to confess His name with our lips (Rom 10:9-10). Going full circle, when we believe, we remember and we do so by obeying, receiving, blessing, transforming and being transformed – in our union with our covenant-keeping Savior.