

ISRAEL PUT TO THE TEST

BIBLE TEXT : Deuteronomy 8:1-20; Hebrews 3:17-19; 4:1, 2

LESSON 123 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "We see that they could not enter in because of unbelief" (Hebrews 3:19).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Deuteronomy 8:1-20

¹ All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers.

² And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, *and* to prove thee, to know what *was* in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

³ And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every *word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

⁴ Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years.

⁵ Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee.

⁶ Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him.

⁷ For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills;

⁸ A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey;

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

As a Father

God said that He was a Father to Israel, and He loved them and took care of them as much or more than any father would his son. Just as children need to be trained and taught obedience, so God had to teach the Israelites to obey Him. They had the Ten Commandments and knew the will of God, but He sometimes had to be very severe with them to make them mind.

God wanted to teach the Children of Israel that obeying Him was more important than having food to eat. After they obeyed Him they received the food, too; but what was most important was listening to the words of God. He let them suffer sometimes in order to teach them to obey Him. We, as Christians, will have to suffer sometimes, too, in order to learn to trust God more.

Life in Obedience

God said, "All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live." There was life in obedience — and death in disobedience, as the Israelites who disobeyed learned through judgment.

If the Children of Israel had loved God as they should have, they would have believed what He said and would have obeyed Him. Their trust in Him would have been so complete that at the end of their day they could have prayed as David prayed: "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety" (Psalm 4:8).

The wanderings of the Israelites was not so peaceful. They wandered restlessly in the wilderness for forty years and God proved to them that they did not trust Him. We know that when they first came to the borders of Canaan, they sent spies ahead to search the land rather than march in triumphantly as God wanted them to. They proved there that they had very little faith. Joshua and Caleb believed, for they said, "We are well able to overcome it." The rest of the people had no faith and all they could see were the giants and high-walled cities. If the Children of Israel had gone ahead according to the words of the men of faith, they would have enjoyed the things of the Promised Land. Rather, they listened to the cowards, and were condemned to bleach their bones in the wilderness. All the Children of Israel who were twenty years old or older when they left Egypt, died before entering Canaan, and were buried in the desert.

Faith and Hope

In Hebrews 11 we read: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." And in Romans 8:24: "Hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" We do not need to have faith for the things we see, but through faith we receive from God the things we cannot see.

⁹ A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any *thing* in it; a land whose stones *are* iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.

¹⁰ When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee.

¹¹ Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day:

¹² Lest *when* thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt *therein*;

¹³ And *when* thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied;

¹⁴ Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;

¹⁵ Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, *wherein* were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where *there was* no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint;

¹⁶ Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end;

¹⁷ And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of *mine* hand hath gotten me this wealth.

¹⁸ But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for *it is* he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as *it is* this day.

¹⁹ And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and

God had proved again and again that He would supply all the needs of His people. He had given them food and drink, and prevented their clothes from wearing out. Yet the moment there was nothing to see, they became frightened and thought they were going to die. God had brought water out of a dry rock, for them, and still the very next time they could not see water they thought they would famish for thirst. Their unbelief caused them to murmur, or complain against God, and that made them rebellious. When they turned from God, He smote them with plagues; one time the earth opened and swallowed the sinners; another time fire burned them. There was death in disobedience, and it was all caused by unbelief.

Trial of Faith

God says that without faith it is impossible to please Him. The Christian life is a walk by faith. We are justified by faith, to begin our Christian career. After that, everything we receive from God we get by faith.

We may think we have a great amount of faith when we are enjoying the blessings of the Lord. We know He is near, because He is giving us good things. But God is going to try the faith of every one of His Children. The trial may come in the form of a correction: "For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth" (Proverbs 3:12).

We may have a shortage of food, or of clothes to wear. Are we going to worry about it, or are we going to have faith in God and let Him supply us? How much faith do we have when we are sick? Do we know that Jesus is going to heal us, or are we afraid we are going to die, and wish we could get someone to do something for us? At such times we find out how much faith we have. Can we rest contentedly in God's hand when things go wrong for us?

We know a Christian has trials — sometimes more than when he was a sinner. The Psalmist said, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all" (Psalm 34:19). A Christian can always pray when he is in trouble, and the Lord will take care of him; the sinner must bear his burdens alone. However, if the Christian loses his faith during a trial, he will suffer the punishment the disobedient Israelites suffered, unless he repents.

Pure Gold

God is preparing His people for Heaven. He wants them to be pure gold for His Kingdom, and gold must be refined in order to be beautiful and useful. When gold is mined, it is mixed with cheap metals and is hardly recognizable. It must be heated so that all the undesirable metals will be separated from the gold and can be removed. The gold is melted in huge kettles; and as the dross is removed, the gold becomes clearer and clearer, until the attendant can see his image reflected in it as in a mirror.

We are as the gold and Jesus is the Attendant who is watching to see us become so clear and clean that He can see His image reflected in us. When we are first saved we may not always know just the right thing to do, and God will have to correct us. We compare that trial with the turning on of the heat to melt us so the undesirable traits in us may be removed. Later on we may need more patience, and the Lord will turn on the heat some more to make us more beautiful. Through trials we will become stronger in the Lord if we keep our faith in Him, and eventually the last bit of dross will be removed and Jesus will be able to see

walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.

²⁰ As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.

Hebrews 3:17-19

¹⁷ But with whom was he grieved forty years? *was it* not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

¹⁸ And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

¹⁹ So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Hebrews 4:1-2

¹ Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left *us* of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

² For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*.

His image in us. We want to be so much like Jesus that the world will recognize us as His sons and daughters.

Sometimes we wonder about the trials that come to us. Jesus knew they would come, and He told Peter to warn us: "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (I Peter 4:12, 13).

Suffering for Jesus

Jesus was willing to suffer for us; should we not be willing to suffer a little for Him? Jesus suffered to do us good; we suffer for our own good. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Hebrews 12:11).

We learn more about Jesus as we suffer with Him. When all is going well we may sometimes forget to pray; but when we are in need we will cry earnestly unto Him, and commune with Him, listening to what He has to tell us.

We want to have the faith in God that will keep on believing even when we can see no answer to our prayers. That faith will make us strong soldiers for the Lord. "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (I Peter 5:10).

How pleased Jesus is when He can try our faith and we prove true and really trust Him! We will stand by the principles God has laid in our hearts even though we have to suffer for it. We will trust the Lord for the healing of our bodies and not turn to physicians and medicine. We are happy, too, when we have been tried and come forth victors.

"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 1:6, 7).

QUESTIONS

- 1 What is faith? (Hebrews 11:1).
- 2 What did faith in God bring to the Israelites?
- 3 What happened when they disobeyed?
- 4 Why did the Israelites not enter Canaan?
- 5 How can we show that we have faith in God?

