

Israel is nearing the end of their forty year journey through the wilderness and Moses will soon die and pass on to Joshua the responsibility of leading the children of Israel into Canaan. In this lesson's passage Moses is reminding Israel of the privilege they have had being the focus of the LORD's attention and favor. Moses also reminds them of their responsibility to obey the LORD's commands in order for the blessings to continue.

The book of Deuteronomy records an address that Moses made to the children of Israel as they were nearing the end of their 40 year journey through the wilderness. In order to prepare the people to enter the promised land, Moses reminded them of what the LORD had done for them and how He had provided for them. He also repeats the law of God and stresses the importance of obedience so that the LORD will bless them once they are in the land of Canaan. The book ends with the death of Moses after he has named Joshua as the LORD's choice to lead the children of Israel into the promised land.

33 Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?

In v. 32 Moses tells the people to ask around and discover if anything like the things that the LORD has done for them has ever happened before in the history of mankind. Moses then gets specific and asks if any people besides Israel have ever had the privilege of hearing the voice of God speaking from the midst of a fire and lived to tell about it? He's referring to v. 12 where Moses reminded them of when the LORD spoke to them from the fire on Mt. Horeb/Sinai (Ex. 19:18-19; 20:18-22). That event is certainly unique in the history of mankind.

34 Or hath God assayed to go *and* take him a nation from the midst of *another* nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?

“Or hath God assayed to go *and* take him a nation from the midst of *another* nation” – Moses points to another unique event that the LORD accomplished for Israel: when God brought them out as a nation from the midst of another nation (Egypt). The LORD has never done this for any other people.

“by temptations [testing; trials], by signs, and by wonders, and by war” – These refer to the miraculous signs and plagues that the LORD executed in Egypt. “War” may refer the LORD fighting for Israel against Egypt to convince Pharaoh to let the people go.

“and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors [awe-inspiring deeds]” – The LORD worked powerfully to bring Israel out of Egypt with awesome deeds.

“according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes” – Israel was witness to all that the LORD did in their behalf in Egypt.

35 Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he *is* God; *there is* none else beside him.

The LORD revealed His mighty power to Israel so that they would understand that He alone is God and that the gods of the other nations cannot compare to Him in power and sovereignty. This is something He has not done for any other nation.

36 Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire.

“Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee” – The LORD spoke from heaven with the purpose of instructing Israel in the importance of obedience and so that they would reverence Him. **Ex. 20:18-20** *“And all the people saw the thunders, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.”*

“and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire” – The voice came from heaven but they heard it coming from the fire, which was the earthly manifestation of God's presence.

37 And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt;

“And because he loved thy fathers” – The “fathers” were Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the patriarchs of the nation of Israel.

“therefore he chose their seed after them” – The LORD had promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that He would bless their descendants and give them the land of Canaan. God chose Israel to be His people out of all the nations of the earth.

“and brought thee out in his sight [His face; His presence] with his mighty power out of Egypt” – Oftentimes the LORD works “behind-the-scenes” and we don't see the obvious signs of what He is doing. However, in this case the LORD took an obvious role in bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt so that even the Egyptians could see that it was the LORD at work. Other translations render the phrase “in his sight” as “personally” or “in His presence,” reflecting the LORD's active participation in liberating Israel. Moses is reminding Israel that the LORD did not rescue them from Egyptian bondage in such a mighty way because of any virtue in them, but because He loved Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and would accomplish the promises that He had made to them.

Deut. 7:7-8 *“The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”*

38 To drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou *art*, to bring thee in, to give thee their land *for* an inheritance, as *it is* this day.

“To drive out nations from before thee greater [larger in number] and mightier than thou *art*” – The LORD brought Israel out of Egypt with the express purpose of giving them the land of Canaan but these other nations outnumbered Israel and were stronger than they were. Therefore the LORD would drive these nations out so that Israel could take possession.

“to bring thee in, to give thee their land *for* an inheritance” – Giving them this land will be a fulfillment of the promise made to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. As an inheritance, Israel will possess the land forever.

“as *it is* this day” – The LORD had already made them victorious against the nations that they had encountered. They had even conquered two Amorite kings so that the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half of the tribe of Mannasseh had already taken possession of their inheritance east of the Jordan river. They were now poised on the threshold of entering the land of Canaan and seeing the LORD drive more of the indigenous nations out from before them. However, the fulfillment of this promise would not come because Israel had earned or deserved it. **Deut. 9:5** *“Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”*

39 Know therefore this day, and consider *it* in thine heart, that the LORD he *is* God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: *there is* none else.

“Know therefore this day, and consider [bring back to mind] *it* in thine heart” – Moses wants the children of Israel to understand and never forget the reality of Who the LORD is and what He has done for them.

“that the LORD he *is* God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath” – Moses wanted them to always remember that the LORD is the one true God, not only in heaven, but upon the earth as well. The LORD is capable of accomplishing His will on earth just as easily as He can in heaven because He is God. Currently He allows His will to not always be done on earth, which is why Jesus includes the line in His model prayer: *“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven”* (**Matt. 6:10**). The prayer is for the day when Christ’s kingdom will be established on earth and the Father’s will will be accomplished on earth just as completely as it is already being done in heaven.

“*there is* none else” – The LORD is not one of many gods competing to have His will accomplished on earth. Instead, He is the only God and His will supersedes that of any false god. The children of Israel need not look to the false gods of the Canaanites because they already serve the One true God.

40 Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong *thy* days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, for ever.

“Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day” – Moses is reciting the law of God during this speech to the children of Israel to remind them of what is required of them. In light of the facts he’s already mentioned as well as those he is about to mention, they are to obey the commandments of the LORD.

“that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee” – Obedience brings the blessings of God, while disobedience brings judgment. Moses’ statement holds true for the current population as well as to their descendants going forward.

“and that thou mayest prolong *thy* days upon the earth” – “The earth” refers to the land that the LORD is giving them. Their continued obedience will insure that they, as a nation, will be able to remain in the land. Their disobedience will result in them being expelled from the land like the nations of Canaan that the LORD is driving out from before them. This prediction came true centuries later when the LORD allowed both the Assyrians and the Babylonians to conquer and carry the Israelites away captive because of Israel’s continued disobedience and rebellion against God.

“which the LORD thy God giveth thee, for ever” – The LORD has given the land to Israel forever as a nation, but their disobedience and rebellion will cause them to be temporarily expelled from it. He restored Israel to the land after the Babylonian captivity and in the future He will restore Israel to the land during the millennial reign of Christ and on into eternity.