

**December 8, 2019 - Deut. 7:12 – 8:20**

**Torah Reading: Deuteronomy 7:12 – 8:20**

**Psalm 118**

**Haftarah: Isaiah 54:10-11 + 55:6-13**

### **Promises for the Faithful**

**Deuteronomy 7:13** - "And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he swore unto thy fathers to give thee."

"He will love thee" - What seems like God's reciprocal response to His command for us to "love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." (**Deuteronomy 6:5**) is actually not a "*quid pro quo*":

- **Romans 5:8, 10** - "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ... For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

### **Blessings - verses 13-15**

Abundant children, fertility, good harvests and increasing flocks. No barrenness, which always carried a reproach in the ancient world.

### **Healing**

**Deuteronomy 7:15** - "And the LORD will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee."

See **Deuteronomy 28:27** - "The LORD will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed."

Not only that, but:

- **Deuteronomy 28:28** - "The LORD will afflict you with madness, blindness, and confusion of mind..."

- **Deuteronomy 28:61** - "The LORD will also bring upon you every sickness and plague not recorded in this Book of the Law, until you are destroyed."

The reference is to the incident at the bitter waters of Mara.

- **Exodus 15:25-26** - "And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them, And said, If thou wilt

diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth (*rapha*) thee."

*rapha'* - to mend, repair, restore to health. Often used of spiritual healing as well as physical:

- **Isaiah 57:19** - "I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal (*rapha*) him."

- **Psalms 41:4** - "I said, LORD, be merciful unto me: heal (*rapha*) my soul; for I have sinned against thee."

The opposite of spiritual health is to be subject to the wrath of God as demonstrated against Egypt in the plagues.

In fact, in the Book of Revelation, there are really only two scenarios, revisited from various viewpoints. One is the saints in heaven falling down before the Lamb in worship and song. The other is a description of the plagues falling on the unrepentant on the earth.

This is not a guarantee that believers will be free of disease, nor that the unrepentant will be stricken with every disease in the book (or out of it). We don't see either of those things happening. What is guaranteed is spiritual wholeness for believers, and the wrath of God on unbelievers.

Both of these scenarios come together in Christ, who although He was the only spiritually whole person in history, took on the wrath of God in order to bring us salvation and redemption.

- **Galatians 3:13** - "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us..." The curse included all the diseases of Egypt mentioned here.

This is in fact what Peter was talking about, quoting Isaiah:

- **1 Peter 2:24** - "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed (*iaomai*).

Gos has the power to heal, but these verses are talking about a return to spiritual wholeness.

Recently I heard a televangelist said they don't have a "flu season" at their church. But we've also found medical records indicating some of these faith healers hide their ailments from their own followers. That doesn't prove or disprove anything, but it shows the contortions we can go through to try to conform reality to our beliefs.

- **Matthew 13:15** (quoting **Isaiah 6:10**) - "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal (*iaomai*) them."

### The Hidden Canaanites Within

**Deuteronomy 7:20** - "Moreover the LORD thy God will send the hornet among them, until they that are left, and hide themselves from thee, be destroyed."

The use of the hornet as God's instrument is in relation to hidden enemies that are not known or cannot be reached. (Israel's enemies are represented as "bees" in Psalm 118 - hornets are bigger and more dangerous).

"hide" = *cathar* - to hide, conceal, disguise, keep secret

Spiritually, this is a promise that God will expose and take care of hidden or secret sin within us. Not necessarily something we're purposely hiding, but rather something we don't recognize as sin at all, or which we've blinded ourselves to.

- **Psalm 19:12** - "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret (*cathar*) faults."

God didn't say He would send hornets against us until we fess up. He promises to penetrate the inner recesses of our being, to expose and drive out anything that is resisting our full allegiance to Him. Whatever is keeping us from loving Him with all our heart and mind and soul and strength, any remaining pockets of resistance or idolatry.

This is a similar case to the uncleanness acquired unknowingly from a "grave of the deep" i.e. from a corpse buried in the ground. Atonement for this unknowable sin was said to be provided to those bringing a sacrifice through the golden diadem of the High Priest, on which was written "Holiness Unto the Lord" (B.Zevachim 88b).

- **Exodus 28:26, 38** - "And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD...And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, and Aaron shall bear the iniquity committed in the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow, even in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD"

Spiritually, like the phylacteries worn on the forehead, it represents Christ (our high priest) atoning for our unknown or unrecognized sins/thoughts through His own holiness. (It was also said to atone for the sin of arrogance by Israel). The Talmud (Shabbat 63b) notes the thread attaching the diadem encircling the High Priest's forehead was "from one ear to the other." This emphasis on the High Priest's ears — organs for listening — indicates that he needed to be particularly "receptive to the inner voice of elevated thought."

**Deuteronomy 7:22** - "And the LORD thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee."

See also **Exodus 23:28**.

The Targum of Jonathan adds, by way of explanation, "when they shall come to devour their carcasses" - the carcasses of the slain Canaanites; who, if destroyed all at once, would be so many, that they would lie unburied, which would invite the beasts of the field to come out of their lurking places to feed upon them, and which might lead them on to mischief among the Israelites.

By increments, the Canaanite will be driven out. We would like a one-time deliverance, like the Exodus. This give Israel the opportunity to settle and take root in each new territory.

Jesus described the danger of too wide a victory without first claiming and controlling the land:

- **Matthew 12:43-45** - "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation."

## Deuteronomy 8

Moses reminds Israel how God humbled them in the wilderness, and focusing on the Manna.

**Deuteronomy 8:2-3** - "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. 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."

Targum: "but by all which is created by the Word of the Lord is the life of man" i.e. to recognize that everything - food and drink included - comes from God and not our own efforts.

Jesus quotes this during his own temptation in the wilderness:

- **Matthew 4:3-4** - "The tempter came to Him and said, 'If You are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.' But Jesus answered, 'It is written: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."'"

- **John 4:32-34** - "But he said to them, 'I have food to eat that you know nothing about. ... My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to complete his work.'"

Jesus was sustained by doing the will of the Father, and He was coming as the bread of heaven, to which the manna was a precursor.

Some rabbis were puzzled as to why the giving of manna was a trial.

Israel suffered hunger when the provisions from Egypt ran out (**Exodus 16**). Rashi explains: "to test them" - [i.e.,] that they will not leave any of it over, and that they will not go out on the Sabbath to gather [the manna].

- **Exodus 16:4** - "Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no."

Usually tests are hard, or something bad. Here it was abundance and provision.

A similar test would happen when God blessed them in the Promised Land with abundance. Would they remain faithful?

**Verses 7 - 20** are about how they will respond to that test.

**Deuteronomy 8:4** - "Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years."

Rashi - The clouds of glory would rub their [the Israelites'] clothes and clean them so that they looked like freshly laundered clothes. And also their children, as they grew, their clothes grew along with them, like a snail's shell, which grows along with it- [Pesikta d'Rav Kahana p. 92a]

**Deuteronomy 8:5** - "Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee."

Chastisement can mean instruction, discipline, correction, nurture.

- **Hebrews 12:7-9** - "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have all had earthly fathers who disciplined us, and we respected them. Should we not much more submit to the Father of our spirits and live?"

## The Test of Prosperity

Prosperity was not only a blessing, but would serve as a test of faithfulness for the people.

**Deuteronomy 8:9** - "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."

**Deuteronomy 8:10** - "When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee."

This verse is the basis for the Jewish blessing AFTER a meal. If you had eaten any of the species of foods mentioned in these verses, a different, special blessing was prescribed.

There is a saying in the Talmud (Berachoth, p. 35a.), "It is forbidden to any man to take any enjoyment from this present world without thanksgiving; and every one who does so is a transgressor."

## Pride

**Deuteronomy 8:12** - "Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein;"

This was one reason for dwelling in booths at Tabernacles - to humble the people in recalling how they lived during the 40 years in the wilderness.

**Deuteronomy 8:14** - "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;"

**Deuteronomy 8:17** - "And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth."

For us, to forget this is a spiritual death sentence.