

Lesson 14: The Sermons of Moses

Reading Preparation:

- Deuteronomy 4; 6-11; 17-18;
- Psalms 78:1-8

Outline:

1. [The Book of Deuteronomy](#)
2. [Journey to Kadesh from Sinai](#)
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Lesson Notes:

[1. The Book of Deuteronomy](#)

Keith H. Meservy states,

"Deuteronomy is the Greek name of the fifth book of the Bible. It means "Second Law," or "A Copy of the Law." The Hebrew name of the Book, "These are the words" is taken from the first words of Deuteronomy." ("The Good News of Moses" in Studies in Scripture, Vol. 3. Edited by Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet. Salt Lake City: Randall Book Co., 1985, 206).

The LDS Bible Dictionary notes,

Deuteronomy "contains the three last discourses of Moses delivered in the plains of Moab just before his death (translation)." (Deuteronomy. LDS Bible Dictionary in Holy Bible. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, 656).

Keith H. Meservy continues,

"The book of Deuteronomy, ... shows us that more painful to Moses than leaving them [children of Israel] was any thought that through some negligence or thoughtlessness they might leave God and lose all the gains made in the wilderness. He was concerned that their old yearnings might prevail over their new commitments." ("The Good News of Moses" in Studies in Scripture, Vol. 3. Edited by Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet. Salt Lake City: Randall Book Co., 1985, 207).

Moses had just spent approximately forty years in the Desert with the Israelites. He was well aware of their cycle of righteousness and wickedness. Without their continued focus on the Lord, they would once again fall into unrighteousness and lose their opportunity to be God's covenant people.

Brevard S. Childs notes,

The four lessons to be learned from Deuteronomy are:

1. *"Deuteronomy emphasizes that God's covenant is not tied to past history, but is still offered to all the people..."*
2. *"The promise of God to his people still lies in the future..."*
3. *"Deuteronomy teaches that the law demands a response of commitment..."*
4. *"The Mosaic law testifies to the living will of God whose eternal purpose for the life of his people offers the only grounds for hope and salvation"*

(Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979, 224, numbers added; see also Keith H. Meservy. "The Good News of Moses" in Studies in Scripture. Vol. 3. Edited by Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet. Salt Lake City: Randall Book Co., 1985, 53).

Victor L. Ludlow emphasizes,

The value to the Latter-day Saints is:

1. "The Latter-day Saints can read it and then better appreciate their role as covenant Israelites.
2. "The Latter-day Saints can study it and then evaluate their own commitments to the Lord.
3. "The Book of Deuteronomy can inspire readers today to evaluate their covenant relationship with the Lord"

(Unlocking the Old Testament. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981, 53, numbers added).

In view of the information stated, it is especially important we read and understand the lessons to be learned from this the last of the five books of Moses found in our Bible.

2. Journey to Kadesh from Sinai

Adam Clark states,

"The Israelites were eleven days in going from Horeb (Sinai) to Kadesh-barnea, where they were near the verge of the Promised Land; after which they were thirty-eight years wandering up and down in the vicinity of this place, not being permitted because of their rebellions, to enter into the promised rest, though they were the whole of the time within a few miles of the land of Canaan!" (Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible. Abridged by Ralph Earl. Grand Rapids, Michigan.: Barker Book House, 1967, [Nineteenth printing, March 1991], 205).

As noted by Adam Clarke, thirty-eight years the children of Israel had been wandering. Surely if the Lord had wanted to get his children out of Egypt and into Canaan, He would have chosen a more direct route. But I believe their wandering was designed by the Lord to help Israel get Egypt (the world) out of their lives. Unfortunately, this was something that took much longer, a second generation and forty years longer.

When finally Israel was finally encamped on the Moab side of the Jordan, across from Jericho, with just three members [Moses, Caleb and Joshua] of the original company, Moses' work was done—or nearly so. It is now an occasion for a farewell address—for review, reiteration, and re-emphasis.

3. Sermons of Moses

Keith H. Meservy provides the following outline:

1. "First Speech (Chapters 1-4):
Recitation of the events that took place between the departure from Sinai and the arrival east of the Jordan River.
2. "Second Speech (Chapters 5-26):
This discourse contains Moses' account of the events that took place at Sinai, and the instructions that Israel received there, often called the Deuteronomic Law (Chapters. 12-26).
3. "Third Speech (Chapters 27-30):
These chapters contain Moses' final instructions to his people, including blessings and curses that he promised to them, based on their behavior"

(The Good News of Moses," in Studies in Scripture, Vol. 3. Edited by Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet. Salt Lake City: Randall Book Co., 1985, 206, numbers added).

This outline provides a reference as we proceed to explore the three discourses that Moses delivered to the children of Israel prior to his death (translation). Note that while the substance of each is different, the common thread is Israel will not forget the covenants she made with the Lord. If she will be faithful, great promises and blessing await her as she takes her residence in the promised land. She must remember and obey her God.

4. Highlights of Moses' First Discourse

As we begin our discussion of the important aspects of Moses' first discourse, we begin with a verse in Chapter Four.

Deuteronomy 4:2

2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

In this first verse, Moses is cautioning those who will come after him not to add to the revelation which he has written for this can only be done by one called by the Lord and inspired by the Holy Ghost. The Apostle John wrote a similar statement in his closing chapter of the book of Revelations.

Revelation 22:18

18 ...If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

Some have incorrectly assumed this meant that no further revelation would be received beyond what is found in the Holy Bible. Well meaning individuals often quote the above verse in Revelation to support their argument against

continued revelation, mistakenly referring to Revelation as the last book in the Bible. They forget the prior verse in Deuteronomy [Fifth book of Bible], as well as after John, the Revelator, who written the book of Revelation, would also later write his three epistles seemingly in violation of his own directive.

May I offer for your consideration that each book in our current Bible were written as separate books. The verse in Deuteronomy applies only to the book of Deuteronomy, not to any scripture that follows, just as the same warning in Revelation applies only to the book of Revelation. To believe otherwise is to arbitrarily close the heavens and to presume to be able to deny God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, the opportunity to speak freely to his designated prophets through the power of the Holy Ghost. If there was ever a time in the history of mankind when honest men and women needed divine guidance, it is now.

Deuteronomy 4:9

9 Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, least thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and least they depart from the heart all the days of the life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons.

Moses is concerned that the experiences which the children of Israel have had in the wilderness, the lessons they have learned, will, with the passing of time, be forgotten. He directs the parents to teach these significant truths to their children and their grandchildren. If the forgetting of the Ten Commandments by the generations since is one example, his concern is well-founded.

Deuteronomy 4:12

12 And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice.

Moses is reminding the Israelites that they actually heard the voice of God with their own ears as he declared to them the Ten Commandments from the midst of the fire at Mount Sinai. Is he also reminding them that they only heard the voice of God because, due to their own feelings of unworthiness, they chose not to have him in their midst, but instead to speak through Moses (Exodus 20:19). They came to understand that their own unrighteousness caused them to forfeit unique privileges. I believe this is still true today. I believe there are spiritual manifestations that occur around us each day, but because of our preoccupation with the temporal world in which we live, and our own "spiritual insensitivity," we miss out on these spiritual moments.

Deuteronomy 4:23

23 Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee.

The transgression of making a graven image is one of the most serious violations of the commandments of God. It involves the breaking of one of the Ten Commandments, and has served in the past to bring about the downfall and destruction of Lord's people.

Deuteronomy 4:32-35

32 For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it?

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

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 the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?

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

In these verses Moses reminds the children of Israel that never before in the history of mankind had God become so directly involved in behalf of a people as he had been for the Israelites. His major purpose in doing so was to teach his children to live his commandments and to learn to trust in him.

Keith H. Meservy states,

*"How like life are wildernesses. A veil separates us from God—our support. Life and death are issues, without the knowledge of that God knows our particular wilderness and has chartered our way. Under such circumstances we venture forth. Surrounded by opposition, we discover in the process that he has chartered the way, the dangers are known, and to the extent that we trust him he will guide and direct us to the water and bread of life, help us overcome the poisonous serpents that bite, and help us triumph over every hostile force. Gradually we learn that after our faith has been tried, the blessings come—the discovery that God was there. If there had been no trial, there would have been no blessing." ("The Good News of Moses," in *Studies in Scripture*, Vol. 3. Edited by Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet. Salt Lake City: Randall Book Co., 1985, 220-221).*

What was the main purpose of the wilderness camp-out? We turn to,

Deuteronomy 4:39

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.

The purpose was for the children of Israel to come to know God and that they could turn to Him for all their needs, temporal and spiritual. In turn, He would bless their lives if they would obey him and keep his commandments. We need not journey in the wilderness as did the children of Israel, but if we would know the Lord and become counted as His chosen people, we too must keep His commandments and do his will. As the children of Israel learned, there is no other option open to us!

5. Excerpts of Moses' Second Discourse

We begin this discourse with Moses making a statement that he will repeat in his last discourse (Deuteronomy 30:6) and which Jesus Christ will designate as "the first and great commandment" (see Matthew 22:37; Mark 29-30; Luke 10:27).

Deuteronomy 6:5

5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all they soul, and with all thy might.

Ellis T. Rasmussen notes

"This [commandment] would indeed embrace all, for he who loves does that which pleases the one he loves; and if one did that which pleases God with all intelligence and intent ('heart'), all his innermost spirit ('soul') and all his being and strength ('might'), whom would he injure or defraud or to whom be unjust? He would live the good life." (Patriarchs of the Old Testament. Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union, 1964, 204).

How does one gauge their desire to have God in their lives? It is an easy statement to make. Recall Agrippa's statement to the Apostle Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (Acts 26:28). It is, however, difficult even for the sincere follower to maintain.

Keith H. Meservy offers the following measure,

*"How willing one is to comply with God's laws and live by his standards becomes a test of how much one actually wants God." ("The Good News of Moses" in *Studies in Scripture*, Vol. 3. Edited by Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet. Salt Lake City: Randall Book Co., 1985, 216).*

The Lord has been watchful over the children of Israel even before Egypt. We learn from Moses' second discourse that for the children of Israel to take possession of the land of Canaan is in keeping with ancient covenants made with the patriarchs of old.

Deuteronomy 6:10-11

**10 And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not,
11 And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not;...**

Moses raises further caution for the Israelites in the following verses.

Deuteronomy 6:11-13

**11 ... when thou shalt have eaten and be full;
12 Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the household of bondage.**

13 Thou shalt fear [respect] the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.

Read the words of another prophet, Helaman, found in the Book of Mormon, Another Testament of Jesus Christ.

B/M, Helaman 12:1-6

1 And thus we can behold how false, and also the unsteadiness of the hearts of the children of men; yea we can see that the Lord in his great infinite goodness doth bless and prosper those who put their trust in him.

2 Yea, and we may see at the very time when he doth prosper his people, yea, in the increase of their fields, their flocks and their herds, and in gold, and in silver, and in all manner of precious things of every kind and art; sparing their lives and delivering them out of the hands of their enemies; softening the hearts of their enemies that they should not declare wars against them; yea, and in fine, doing all things for the welfare and happiness of his people; yea, then is the time that they do harden their hearts, and do forget the Lord their God, and do trample under their feet the Holy One-yea, and this because of their ease, and their exceedingly great prosperity.

3 And thus we see that except the Lord doth chasten his people with many afflictions, yea, except he doth visit them with death and with terror, and with famine and with all manner of pestilence, they will not remember him.

4 O how foolish, and how vain and how evil, and devilish, and how quick to do iniquity, and how slow to do good, are the children of men; yea, how quick to hearken unto the words of the evil one, and to set their hearts upon the vain things of the world!

5 Yea, how quick to be lifted up in pride; yea, how quick to boast, and do all manner of that which is iniquity; and how slow are they to remember the Lord their God and to give ear unto his counsels, yea how slow to walk in wisdom's paths!

6 Behold, they do not desire that the Lord their God, who hath created them, should rule and reign over them; notwithstanding his great goodness and his mercy towards them, they do set at naught his counsels and they will not that he should be their guide.

Lest you become so discouraged that you think that there is no reason to hope for change either for the children of Israel or ourselves, let me share, again from the Book of Mormon, how we can truly become members of God's covenant people.

B/M, Mosiah 3:19

19 For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticing of the Holy Spirit and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.

When our will becomes "swallowed up" in our desire to do the will of the Lord, we will undergo a change of heart from within. We then will be able to put off our natural inclinations and become the individual God will have us become. Because we are His spirit children, we have within us this capacity, if we so choose.

Moses knows that remembering is going to be difficult. He, therefore, counsels them as parents to teach their children regarding the lessons they learned in the desert

Deuteronomy 6:20-23

20 And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies and the statutes, and the

judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you?
21 Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's
bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt
with a mighty hand:
22 And the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore,
upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household,
before our eyes: [we were eye witnesses]
23 And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring
us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our
fathers.

It is eyewitness accounts help us to remember, especially when they are taught by those who experienced the events themselves.

We learn in Deuteronomy 7:1-5, one of the reasons for the destruction of the seven nations of Canaan (Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites) who were "greater and mightier than thou" was because they were an idol worshipping people.

Deuteronomy 7:2, 5

2 And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them: thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them.
5 But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their alters, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire.

The commandment by the Lord to the children of Israel to destroy the people who presently occupy the land of Canaan is not arbitrary nor without prior warning. They had been told that if they continued in their unrighteous living they would be destroyed. They had ignored the call to repentance, and this was the resultant of their actions. This will also be the final result for each of us if we fail to heed the word of the Lord to repent. Blessings or consequences, it is our choice.

The Old Testament Institute Student Manual confirms,

"The kinds of evil of which the Canaanites were guilty were so infectious, so contaminating, that to have shown mercy and let them survive would have proven to be the spiritual downfall of Israel... The Canaanites as a whole were deserving of death; God's patience allowed them a few centuries from Abraham's day to Joshua's and then His judgment was order executed. The failure of Israel to execute it fully became finally their own judgment." (Old Testament Institute Student Manual: Genesis-2 Samuel. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Chris of Latter-day Saints, 1980, [Second Edition, Revised, 1981], 219).

Moses reiterates that the children of Israel are a holy people unto the LORD. In spite of all they had been through together, they were still chosen of the Lord

Deuteronomy 7:6-8

6 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.
7 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye are the fewest of all people:
8 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.

God had not chosen them because of who they were, but who they could become. It will require them to keep his commandments and to follow his laws, but if they will follow Him and his prophets, they have the potential to become God's chosen people upon the earth.

Deuteronomy 7:17-18, 23

17 If thou shalt say in thine heart, These nations are more then I; how can I dispossess them?
18 Thou shalt not be afraid of them: but shalt well remember what the LORD thy God did unto Pharoah, and unto all Egypt;

23 But the LORD thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed.

Remember, remember how the Lord dealt with the Egyptians. They were in bondage to the Egyptians, however, when they trusted in the Lord, he gave them their freedom. If they will continue to trust in the Lord, He will fight their battles and destroy the opposing forces.

Deuteronomy 8:2-5

2 And thou shalt remember all the way in 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 them with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth men 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.

Again, Moses told them the purpose of their being in the Desert. It is true life in the wilderness had been hard. It is also true that it is in the difficult experiences of life that people come to discover their dependence upon the Lord. We usually do not seek out the adversities of life, even if we know that they often provide our greatest opportunities for growth. Just as Moses taught, I believe, it is as we travel in our own wilderness, custom designed by a loving Heavenly Father and His Son, we may learn to be humble, tried, and tested. Our own wilderness experience, like that of the children of Israel, is designed to help us learn to be diligent in keeping the Lord's commandments regardless of our circumstances.

Deuteronomy 8:14, 19-20

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;

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

If, however, we fail to learn the lessons of the wilderness; if they and we forget, and do not follow the commandments of the LORD, we will suffer the consequences of our choice. In the Doctrine and Covenants, in a series of revelations received by the Prophet Joseph Smith in these latter days, we read the following.

Doctrine and Covenants 130:20-21

20 There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated.

21 And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.

I believe that the first law in heaven is free agency, and shortly thereafter comes obedience. We commit ourselves, not upon threat of punishment, but because we want to be like Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who is the epitome of obedience to Our Father.

Boyd K. Packer taught,

"Obedience to God can be the highest expression of independence. Just think of giving to him the one thing, the one gift, that he will never take... Obedience-that which God will never take by force-he will accept when freely given. And he will return to you freedom that you can hardly dream of." ("Obedience" in *Speeches of the Year, 1971*. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, December, 1971; see also *"Spiritual Crocodiles,"* in *Ensign*, May, 1976, 32).

Deuteronomy 9:3-4, 6

3 Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God is he which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire he

shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee.

4 Speak not thou in thine heart... For my righteousness the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee.

6 Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people.

Moses now teaches the children of Israel that they are able to enter the promised land because of the unrighteousness of the former inhabitants, not because they are so righteous themselves. They must not forget it is by the mercy of the Lord that they are given this land of milk and honey. They must be ever humble and obedient or they too will lose this land to others who are more righteous than they.

Deuteronomy 9:9-10

9 When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tablets of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water.

10 And the LORD delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God;...

Moses reviews with them the special event he experienced when in an attitude of fasting and prayer, he had gone to the mount to commune with the Lord. While on the mount, he had received the "two tables of stone written with the finger of God." It was while he was yet on the mount the Lord told him of their actions during his absence.

Deuteronomy 9:16-17

16 And I looked, and behold, ye had sinned against the LORD your God, and had made you a molten calf: ye had turned aside quickly out of the way which the LORD had commanded you.

17 And I took the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands, and brake them before your eyes.

Moses fasted again forty days and nights and returned again to the mount. The Lord was ready to destroy them but he plead with the Lord for them as well as for Aaron.

Deuteronomy 9:18-20

18 And I fell down before the LORD, as at first, forty days and forty nights; I did neither eat bread nor drink water, because of all your sins which you sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

19 For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the LORD was wroth against you to destroy you. But the Lord hearkened unto me at that time also.

20 And the LORD was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time.

Moses wants them to remember their sins against the Lord, and for them to know that because of their actions, he was ready to destroy them. As their prophet, he had plead for mercy on behalf of them and for Aaron, and the Lord had spared their lives.

Deuteronomy 9:24

24 Ye have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you.

Why is Moses repeating experiences the children of Israel already know? Unfortunately, the greatest problem the Israelites have, as well as us, is they are slow to remember how merciful the Lord has been with them during their journey in the Desert. Their actions did not merit mercy, but in spite of their actions, the Lord continued to reach out to them and to be long suffering towards them. Only as they/we remember the mercy of the Lord, is there any hope that when temptation comes in our life, will we turn away, and hold firm to their covenants. Only if we remember!

Deuteronomy 10:12-13

12 And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear [reverence] the LORD thy God, to

walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the
LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul,
13 To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his
statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?

The Lord does not ask of us the impossible. He only asks us to obey Him and keep his commandments. If we do, he does immediately bless us. He knows the way, and if we will follow him, someday we will be able to return again to his presence.

Daniel H. Ludlow clarifies the word "fear,"

"The word fear in the King James Version... is a classic example of a word in the scriptures which does not mean the same today as in the original language... the Hebrew word which is often used to denote a relationship to God is yare, which has the basic meaning of 'reverence' or 'awesome respect'. Joseph Fielding Smith states [that the meaning of the phrase] To fear the Lord [means] to love him." (A Companion to your study of the Old Testament. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981, 188).

Deuteronomy 10:16, 20

16 Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and
be no more stiffnecked.
20 Thou shalt fear [reverence] the Lord thy God; him
shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear
by his name.

Words like "circumcise... the foreskin" and even "cleave," may be words that are less meaningful to some of us. To the Israelites who practiced the law of circumcision as part of the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 17:10-11), and understood the importance of cleaving unto another as man and wife (Gen. 2:24), these words carried important meaning. Their meaning was not lost to those who heard Moses' words.

Deuteronomy 11:13-15

13 And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken
diligently unto my commandments which I command you this
day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all
your heart and with all your soul,
14 That I will give you the rain of your land in his due
season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou
mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil.
15 And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle,
that thou mayest eat and be full.

While the land of Canaan will be a land of milk and honey, it will be necessary for them to work the land in order to produce the food they will need. An essential part of the success of an agrarian culture, is the amount of rainfall the land receives. If they will be obedient to the Lord, the rain will be given to them and their animals in the proper season.

Adam Clark states,

"God, by promising this provided they were obedient, and threatening to withhold it should they be disobedient, shows that it is not a general providence that directs these things, but that the very rain of heaven falls by particular direction, and the showers are often regulated by an especial providence." (Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible. Abridged by Ralph Earle. Grand Rapids, Michigan.: Baker Book House, 1967, [Nineteenth printing, March 1991], 213).

This will become for Israel another way in which she can gauge her obedience to the Lord as a nation. There is nothing that will awaken a people to examine their standing before the Lord, than a famine in the land. Recall the famine that initially brought the Israelites to Egypt.

Deuteronomy 11:26-29

26 Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a
curse;
27 A blessing, if ye will the commandments of the LORD
your God, which I command you this day.
28 And a curse, if you will not obey the commandment of
the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I
command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye
have not known.
29 And it shall come to pass, when the LORD thy God hath
brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to
possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon mount
Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal.

Moses provides a object lesson for the children of Israel as he designated two mountains that are opposite to one another, each stood about 2500 feet high, in the very centre of the land not only from west to east, but also from north to south to symbolize blessing and cursing. Mount Gerizim is appointed to be the mount of blessing, and Mount Ebal the mount of cursing. These two mountains, due to their height, are visible in most directions to those who live in Israel. They will from now on provide a visual reminder to the children of Israel that as the Lord has power to bless them as they are obedient; He also has the power to curse them.

Deuteronomy 17:2-3, 5

2 If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy God, in transgressing his covenant,
3 And hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded;
5 Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, even that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die.

Moses is greatly concerned, and even prophetically may have seen, in vision, the downfall of Israel. He admonishes them yet again "not to go after other gods" and if guilty, he recommends "that the man or woman shalt [be] stone[d]... till they die." The death penalty is a nation's most severe punishment for breaking the laws of the land. It should be reserved for those crimes that can lead to the destruction of the nation. The first commandment is "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). When we fail to honor God, who is the provider of all that we have, including our freedom and our lives, we undermine the very foundation upon which a nation is built. To break the first commandment will lead a nation and her citizenry to discount all other commandments and will eventually lead to their destruction. At times it is necessary that a few die, in order to preserve the continued existence of the nation.

Deuteronomy 17:14-20

14 When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me;
15 Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.
16 But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.
17 Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.
18 And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites:
19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them.
20 That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.

The Old Testament Institute Student Manual states,

"The Lord understood his children for He knew that some time after their entry into the promised land they would seek a king in order to be like surrounding nations. This is exactly what happened two hundred years later (1 Samuel 8). Through His foreknowledge, the Lord, gave counsel, through Moses, regarding the qualities they should look for in their king. He should meet the following criteria: (1) He should be a man selected by the Lord (vs.15); (2) He is to be an Israelite (vs.15); (3) He should not "multiply horses," (vs.16). Because the horse was used primarily in warfare, not to increase the number of horses would infer he would not settle disputes by war; (4) He should not "multiply wives"

(vs.17). Marriages were also made for political as well as personal reasons. "Multiply wives," may infer alliances which may lead to the worship of false gods. This situation would lead to Solomon's downfall as king (1 Kings 11:41); (5) He should not seek to "greatly multiply to himself silver and gold (vs.17). Throughout history, kings have often sought to aggrandize themselves by building projects whose payment required placing heavy taxes upon the people. This is contrary to God's counsel; (6) He should govern by following God's law as recorded in the "book... which is before the priests the Levites" and "fear [reverence] the LORD his God" (vs.18-19). David gave similar words of counsel to Solomon (1 Kings 2:2-4); and (7) He is not to be 'lifted up' in pride (vs. 20) nor was he to be above his breather," nor "turn... aside from the commandment[s] (vs.20). Had the children of Israel followed this advanced directive of the Lord given through his prophet, much of their sorrow and unhappiness could have been avoided!" (see Old Testament Institute Student Manual: Genesis-2 Samuel. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1980, [Second Edition, Revised, 1981], 226).

Deuteronomy 18:10-11

**10 There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,
11 Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.**

The Canaanites were a superstitious people who believed in and practiced divination and black magic. It was for this reason Moses gave the Israelites specific instructions not to become involved in the practices of their neighbors. This is yet another warning to the children of Israel that if they had heeded would have protected them from the sorrow and hardship they will experience through their disobedience.

6. Parallel Between Moses and Jesus Christ

Deuteronomy 18:15, 17-19

**15 The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;
17 And the LORD said unto me,...
18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.
19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.**

This scripture makes it clear (see also Acts 3:22-24, 26), that the prophet like unto Moses is Jesus Christ who will come in the flesh in the Meridian of time.

B/M, 3 Nephi 20:23

23 Behold, I am he [Jesus Christ] of whom Moses spake, saying: A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him ye shall hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that every soul who will not hear that prophet shall be cut off from among the people.

As recorded in the Book of Mormon, Another Testament of Jesus Christ, He spoke to those gathered at the temple on the American continent. Here He confirmed the words he had previously spoken to Moses that He is the prophet who would be raised up, like unto Moses. We may then ask ourselves, how are Moses and Jesus Christ alike?

LeGrand Richards notes the following similarities:

1. "Both knew God face to face.
Moses: Deuteronomy 34:10
Messiah: John 6:46
2. "The life of each was sought in infancy.
Moses: Exodus 1:22
Messiah: Matthew 2
3. "Both had command over the sea.
Moses: Exodus 14:21
Messiah: Matthew 8
4. "Both were subject to transfiguration.
Moses: Exodus 34:29-33

Messiah: Matthew 17:21

5. "Families of each sometimes opposed them.

Moses: Numbers 12:1-2

Messiah: John 7:5

6. "Both Moses and Christ were meek.

Moses: Numbers 12:3

Messiah: Matthew 11:29

7. "Both rejected the glory of the world.

Moses: Hebrews 11:24,26

Messiah: Matthew 4:8-11"

(Israel, Do You Know? Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954, [paperback edition, 1990], 84-86).

LeGrand Richards concludes,

"Surely Jesus Christ, the Son of God, met all the requirements necessary to justify our accepting Him as the promised prophet like unto Moses. When He came He was rejected by His own, and in this respect He was also like unto Moses, for when Moses went up into the mountain to commune with the Lord, the children of Israel turned away from Moses and made a molten calf from their jewels." (Israel, Do You Know? Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954, paperback edition, 1990, 86; also Daniel H. Lundlow. A Companion to your study of the Old Testament. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981, 193).

7. Psalm 78

We turn now to the counsel given by David as recorded in the 78th Psalm regarding the direction Moses had previously given regarding the importance of the fathers teaching their children.

Psalm 78:4, 7-8

4 We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.

7 That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:

8 And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God.

Approximately two hundred and fifty years had passed since the Exodus. David is reminding Israel of the words of Moses to the children of Israel (see Deuteronomy 6:20-23) for the fathers to teach their children. Why did Moses and David feel that this was important? So that the children would not repeat the transgressions of their ancestors. As George Santayana (1863-1962) stated, "Those who fail to learn the lessons of history, are doomed to repeat it." Any nation that fails to teach their children the lessons they have learned so that they may benefit from their experience has failed in one of their most crucial responsibilities.

8. Conclusion

Moses through his two discourses as recorded in the book of Deuteronomy has tried to admonish the children of Israel to learn the lessons which they have been taught while in the Desert and to apply them as they enter the promised land. He warns them that if they fail to apply their knowledge and forsake their God, they will experience severe condemnation. It took forty years of wandering and a new generation before the Israelites would be prepared to enter the land of Canaan. Moses has yet one more discourse to give them that we will address. We will also explore an alternative explanation to Moses death known as translation and why this was necessary. We conclude this chapter with a reminder of one of Moses' most important directives to the children of Israel. We must ask ourselves, have we learned this most important lesson?

Deuteronomy 10:12-13

12 And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear [reverence] the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul.

13 To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes,...