

528 Bread Without Scarceness

In our last week's Reflection, via Nebuchadnezzar's great golden image of Daniel Chapter 3 we came across a false image of today, that of "Progressivism". As with all false gods and false images, Progressivism is just one example, among the others of our day, of sinful, fallen Man rejecting Almighty God as our Creator, and His Son Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, and the Holy Bible as His unique, unrivalled "Word of God".

After this rejection began in Eden it has of course since become widespread and deeply-rooted (eg., Romans 5.12, 15b, 16b-21). One of the reasons why the Lord God formed His covenant people through Abram and Sarai is to give us all a clear set of precedents as to how God-fearing people are to live their lives. Soon after the Israelites had been given the Law, the scene is set in Deuteronomy 6.1-2 with Moses uttering God's words to His chosen people, words which have a fine summary in Deuteronomy Chapter 8. As God's people of today, now under the New Covenant of grace by faith in Jesus Christ, through such words the Holy Spirit still teaches us so much of relevance for faithful Christian discipleship in these increasingly challenging days.

We will now go through Deuteronomy Chapter 8 marking the main instructions and applying them to our own Christian discipleship for our guidance and blessing. Moses is the spokesman for God's words: (8.1, KJV) "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 sware unto your fathers". Simple obedience to God's commandments is the key for the Israelites on their journey to the Promised Land, and for Christ's disciples on our journey to the Promised Land of heaven (egs., Philippians 3.20 / Hebrews 13.14).

(8.2) "And thou shalt remember all the ways 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". We keep in mind God's faithfulness towards us in Christ over the years, and we accept His testing of us regarding our level of obedience to His commandments.

(8.3) "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 alone, but by [every] word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live". Here are both God's provision and God's testing, with the crucial words which Jesus quoted in His defiance of Satan (Luke 4.4).

(From 8.5-6) “Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, [so] the Lord thy God chasteneth thee ...”. Such divine chastening is uncomfortable for us, yet is done for the Lord’s own good purposes (eg., Hebrews 12.6-11).

(From 8.7-10) “For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land” – of brooks, wheat, barley, vines, fig trees, pomegranates, oil olive, honey... “wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness ... When thou hast eaten and art full, then shalt thou bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee”. What a reminder for us, that the Lord loves to bless! - and His blessings are released by our loving obedience.

(8.11) “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, lest ...”. The Israelites were prone to forget the Lord and His showered blessings, as are we. So – (egs., Psalm 146.1-2 / I Thessalonians 5.16-18 / II Timothy 3.14-17).

(From 8.14,17-18) With their prosperity, “Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God ...”, (and all His blessings over so many years), “And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of [mine] hand hath gotten me this wealth ... But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth ...”. Here are the old, continuing dangers of earthly wealth, prosperity and material comfort – (egs., Matthew 6.24,33-34; 19.24 / Luke 12.16-21 / I Timothy 6.6).

(From 8.19-20) “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 ... because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord your God”. The Israelites did indeed forget the Lord their God so they repeatedly “perished” as a nation, but now, still largely in unbelief, they exist once more as a nation: the Lord is clearly at work! (egs., those two “untils” of Luke 21.24b and Romans 11.25b).

For our Christian part we “pray for the peace of Jerusalem” (Psalm 122.6a), and in Christ under the new covenant of grace, may we remember, and love, and obey “the Lord our God” on our journey to our “Promised Land”, that blessed place of “bread without scarceness”.

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