

—{1}. **Deuteronomy 8:1-10** **What God Has Given**

A. Introduction

1. A Scene on the Arabah, near the Jordan River

- a. Abba, Abba, I can see the mountain in the land of promise!
- b. Yes, Beni, we are very near.
- c. Abba, Abba, are we going into the land now?
- d. Beni, Beni, you will have to wait for what Moshe has to say
- e. Abba, Abba, look! My shirt is too small; will I get a new one before we go into the land. I should have a new one!
- f. Beni, that shirt is like new. It isn't worn at all. Perhaps you can have one of my shirts from when I was your age; it's like new, too. Go and ask Immeken. (Pause)
- g. Abba, Abba!
- h. Yes, Beni.
- i. Abba, Abba, I need new shoes, too!
- j. Why, Beni? ... those aren't even scuffed up?
- k. Abba! ... they're too small too!
- l. Alright, Beni; we'll save them and the shirt for your young brother; ask Immeken for new shoes and shirt and give her the old ones to keep. (Pause)
- m. Abba, Abba!
- n. Yes, Beni; what now?
- o. Abba, I have an idea!
- p. What is it, Beni!
- q. Well, Abba, there is lot's of manna this morning and tomorrow we will be in a hurry to go to the assembly that Moshe has called; let's gather enough manna for tomorrow as well!
- r. Oh Beni! Beni! ... we cannot do that!
- s. Why? Abba, why?
- t. Because Beni, because ... if we do that it will all go rotten.

- u. But Abba! ... we do that at the end of every week before Shabbat; we gather two days manna then; why not now!
- v. Well, Beni, Shabbat is a day Yahweh has set apart for rest, and so we are not to work gathering food that day; but the six days of the week we are to work; that includes gathering food. Now go play with your brother. (Pause)
- w. Abba, Abba!
- x. Yes, Beni! ... are you back again?
- y. Abba, can I go to the assembly tomorrow?
- z. Yes, Beni ...

2. In Deuteronomy 1:3 we read these words: “And it came about in the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, that Moses spoke to the children of Israel, according to all that the LORD had commanded him *to give to them*” (NAS), which introduces today’s Scripture reading:

B. Scripture Reading

1. in this passage let us note the following
 - a. 1. God’s purpose was Israel should be a blessed people
 - b. 2. Moses explained why they had suffered hardships
 - c. 3. Israel needed to be reminded
 - (A) a. how God had blessed them in their past
 - (B) b. how God was going to bless them in their future
 - d. 4. Behind their earthly blessing was a spiritual reality
2. Deuteronomy 8:1–10, “All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore *to give to your forefathers*. And you shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. And He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD. Your

clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. Thus you are to know in your heart that the LORD your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son. Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; a land where you shall eat food without scarcity, in which you shall not lack anything; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you." (NAS)

3. now let us keep in mind that while these words were spoken to God's people
 - a. we need to observe that term 'God's people' can refer to two distinct groups of people
 - b. the first group is the geo-political nation
 - (A) the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
 - (B) and particularly as they lived in the land of Palestine
 - (C) who were to be a testimony to Yahweh to mankind
 - (D) and through whom was to come the Chosen One
 - c. the second group is the spiritual nation
 - (A) being the spiritual descendants of

C. Thanksgiving Holiday

1. this is the Thanksgiving weekend
 - a. it's a terrible fact, but true,
 - (A) how often we need to be reminded to give thanks
 - (B) how soon we forget all that has been given to us
 - (C) it was true of the Israelites; it is true of us
 - b. as parents
 - (A) we try to get our children to learn those two golden little words: "Please" and "Thank You"
 - (B) we teach to them a simple "thanksgiving prayer" or "grace" such as "God is great, God is good, let us thank Him for our food."
 - (C) we seek to overcome the attitudes taught on the TV by such programs as "the Simpson's" – a

really terrible show – that the things we enjoy are ours by right since we earned them, so why give thanks?

(D) and at the AWANA Cubbies, I observed Maureen using positive reinforcement, saying at snack time to one of them “I’m glad you said, ‘Please.’”

c. but for us adults too

(A) we find it easy to forget the joys and pleasures which we have experienced

(B) if you want a graphic example of this, consider how quickly the sports fans of a certain team forget its past successes and start to complain as soon as they lose

(C) so, the minute the slightest aggravation comes our way to cloud our sky

(D) gone is all our gratitude for the blessings we received

(E) and our attitude seems to say to God, “What have You done for me lately?”

2. So, this morning, it is a good thing for us to pause, to meditate and to consider all the reasons for giving thanks to God

a. a number of weeks ago I was talking with David Ian [my son]

(A) who is teaching English at a university in Korea

(B) he is attending a Korean language church

(C) he said that this is sometimes stressful

(D) much harder than following a conversation in Korean

(E) because the pastor is working through a reasoned series of points, one voice for quite a few minutes

(F) and, Korean being a second language to David,

(G) if he stops to think about one of the points

(H) it is hard to get back into the message because he has missed some of the intervening ideas being expressed

(I) whereas in your first language you can sort of hear these in the back of your mind while you think of one

b. frequently I provide a hand-out to you

(A) to help you to follow the points of the message

(B) particularly so when we are explaining some passage

- (C) or are teaching some Christian truth
 - c. but on communion Sundays
 - (A) when we are frequently meditating on Christ's death
 - (B) I usually do not have a hand out
 - (C) because, if there is some Scripture verse read, or idea expressed
 - (D) and it sets you to meditating, even wool-gathering, on that verse or truth
 - (E) then I believe it is profitable for you to stop and do so
 - d. and, this morning, for that same reason, there is no hand-out: so that as the Holy Spirit may impress you with some truth, you will stop and contemplate that truth, and, in so doing, may spend that time in worshipping God in the giving of thanks to Him
3. for we, like the nation of Israel,
- a. have been created for a single, ultimate purpose
 - b. have been redeemed for that same ultimate purpose
 - c. that we may worship God
 - d. that our thoughts, words, actions might glorify Him
 - e. and it seems impossible to distinguish between the various forms of worship
 - f. praise is thanksgiving, and thanksgiving is praise
 - g. when you read through the Psalms you find the writer
 - (A) praising God, giving the reason as all God's works
 - (B) "Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, *bless His holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits*" (Psalms 103:1-2 NAS)
 - (C) thanking God, giving the reason as who God is
 - (D) "I will give thanks to the LORD according to His righteousness, And will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High." (Psalms 7:17 NAS)
 - h. may our hearts be turned in worship to God this morning
4. to do so, let us take the points that Moses made to Israel, and briefly apply those same points to us this morning
- a. 1. God's desire is to bless mankind

- b. 2. There is a reason why we have to suffer hardships
- c. 3. We need to be reminded
 - (A) a. how God has blessed us in the past
 - (B) b. how God is going to bless us in our future
- d. 4. The earthly blessing is a sign, the spiritual is reality

D. 1. God's desire is to bless mankind

1. when Abraham was called by God

- a. and he followed and obeyed by faith
- b. "looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Hebrews 11:10 NAS)
- c. he was given a promise by God, "And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." (Genesis 22:18 NAS)
- d. so there you have God Himself declaring His purpose

2. so God's attitude to man is kindly, loving, good

- a. Jesus taught that our "... Father who is in heaven ... causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous." (Matthew 5:45 NAS)
- b. which reflects Psalm 145:9, "The LORD is good to all, And His mercies are over all His works." (NAS)
- c. Paul speaking to the Gentiles at Lystra, "and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness." (Acts 14:17 NAS)

E. 2. There is a reason why Christians have to suffer hardships

1. it is a proof of God's caring attitude to His children

- a. "for those whom the Lord loves he disciplines, and he scourges every son whom he receives." (Heb. 12:6 NAS)
- b. which Paul knew from personal experience for he says, "And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me—to keep me from exalting myself!" (2 Cor. 12:7 NAS)

2. so, when afflictions come, we are reminded
 - a. "For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison" (2 Cor. 4: 17 NAS)
 - b. "All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness." (Hebrews 12: 11 NAS)
 - c. God is working all things together for your good

F. 3. We need to be reminded

1. how God has blessed us in the past
 - a. perhaps you have an IQ above the average and so can hold a well-paying job ... Who gave to you that mind?
 - b. perhaps you have a manual skill to do intricate work that is admired by others ... Who graced you with that gift?
 - c. perhaps you have physical strength and stamina permitting you to do work that would be beyond others ... Who granted to you those physical endowments?
 - d. perhaps you have a patience to carry out tasks faithfully day by day, year by year, that would weary and exhaust other's endurance ... Who bestowed this on you?
 - e. God's blessings go far beyond material goods to embrace every aspect of life: "Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow." (James 1: 17, NAS)
 - f. we need constant reminding of God's goodness and to be grateful for it. Friday I had occasion to go to Whitby and came back along the road from Port Perry. I saw property of rolling hills and a grand house with a for sale sign, and the thought went through my mind, 'that would be a nice place to own.' Well, most of you know how the Lord has blessed us with a very lovely situation, and my heart was smitten with the same thought and with my ingratitude. How I need constant reminding to be grateful to God!
2. (We need to be reminded) how God will bless in the future
 - a. In their most troubled time, Jesus assured his disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and

receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also." (John 14:1-3 AV)

b. and Paul, quoting Isaiah, reminds us "but just as it is written, 'things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and *which* have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him.'" (1 Corinthians 2:9 NAS)

G. 4. Earthly blessing is only a sign; spiritual blessing is the reality

1. all these things

a. the good things of the earth here before us this morning

b. the physical benefits of every sort we enjoy each day

c. the gift of each day as we arise to new opportunities

d. the cunning God has put into our hands, our fingers, our feet, our mind, our voice, our tongue;

e. are but a token of the spiritual,

f. are but a dim reflection of His ultimate goodness to us

2. the practical outpouring of God's love in salvation

a. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son {His unique, one of a kind Son}, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." (Jn 3:16 NAS)

b. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8 NAS)

c. "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:10 NAS)

d. "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ," (Ephesians 1:3 NAS)

H. if we as Christians do not express our gratitude to God for this, both privately and publicly, what kind of testimony is that to the world? ... what conclusion unbelievers make about God? Let us then, this morning, give to God thanksgiving, praise and worship for His infinite grace in what He has done for us. And the greatest ingratitude is to reject the gift God has given of salvation through Jesus Christ.

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Various English versions of the Holy Bible are used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in [square brackets]. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NLT	1996 New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

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