DEUTERONOMY

Chapter 8

*Do Not Forget the Lord*

**Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land that the Lord promised on oath to your forefathers. 2 Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. 3 He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. 4 Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. 5 Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the Lord your God disciplines you. 6 Observe the commands of the Lord your God, walking in his ways and revering him. 7 For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land—a land with streams and pools of water, with springs flowing in the valleys and hills; 8 a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; 9 a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills. 10 When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. 11 Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. 12 Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, 13 and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, 14 then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. 15 He led you through the vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. 16 He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you. 17 You may say to yourself, “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.” 18 But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today. 19 If you ever forget the Lord your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed. 20 Like the nations the Lord destroyed before you, so you will be destroyed for not obeying the Lord your God.**

**8:1** *whole commandment*. All of God’s Commandments are intricately woven together, forming a unit. This exhortation ties in to 6:5. (TLSB)

**8:2** *Remember.* See note on 4:10. *test.* See v. 16; see also note on Ge 22:1. (CSB)

*humble you, testing you*. God already knows what is in our hearts, so He does the testing for our sake, not His. These tests are designed to teach Israel to trust God more fully. Cf Heb 12:7–8. (TLSB)

**8:3** *manna.* See v. 16; see also note on Nu 11:7. (CSB)

God’s provision of manna humbled the Israelites. They quickly found that they could not provide for themselves. Instead, they had to trust in God for their daily bread. God provided only enough manna for each day (Ex 16:4–5) in order that the Israelites might learn to rely fully on God for sustenance. We pray that God would daily provide for us each time we pray the Lord’s Prayer (Mt 6:11). Ambrose: “It is therefore a good thing for us to be bedewed with the exhortations of the divine Scriptures, and that the word of God should come down upon us like the dew. When, therefore, you sit at the table of that great man, understand who that great man is. Set in the paradise of delight and placed at the feast of wisdom, think of what is put before you! The divine Scriptures are the feast of wisdom, and the single books the various dishes. Know, first, what dishes the banquet offers, then stretch forth your hand, that those things which you read, or which you receive from the Lord your God, you may carry out in action, and so by your duties may show forth the grace that was granted to you” (*NPNF* 2 10:28). (TLSB)

*man does not live on bread alone.* See note on 6:13; quoted by Jesus in response to the devil’s temptation (see Mt 4:4; Lk 4:4). Bread sustains but does not guarantee life, which is God’s gift to those who trust in and live by his word: his commands and promises (see vv. 1, 18). God’s “discipline” (v. 5) of his people by bringing them through the desert taught them this fundamental truth. There they were humbled (cf. v. 14) by being cast in total dependence on the Lord. (CSB)

**8:5** God disciplines believers to strengthen their faith or to return them to His righteous path in order that He might bless them. Cf Lv 26:14–42. (TLSB)

**8:7–9** A concise description of the rich and fertile land of promise that the Israelites were about to enter and possess (see 11:8–12). See map No. 2 at the end of the Study Bible. (CSB)

**8:9** *iron … copper.* The mountains of southern Lebanon and the regions east of the Sea of Galilee and south of the Dead Sea contain iron. Both copper and iron were plentiful in the part of the Arabah south of the Dead Sea. Some of the copper mines date to the time of Solomon and earlier. Zarethan was a center for bronze works in Solomon’s time (1Ki 7:45–46). Some bronze objects from this site precede the Solomonic period, and today there are copper works at Timnah in the Negev. (CSB)

*iron*. The mountains of southern Lebanon and the territory east of the Sea of Chinnereth are rich in iron. *copper*. Copper mines and smelters have been found by archaeologists in the Arabah Desert south of the Salt Sea (TLSB)

**8:11, 14, 19** *forget.* See note on 4:10. (CSB)

**8:12–14** Ter: “[The Lord is] teaching man not to be studious of the stomach” (*ANF* 4:105). When we have everything we want, it becomes easy to forget the Lord. (TLSB)

**8:15** *water out of hard rock.* See Ex 17:6 and note. (CSB)

**8:16** *test.* See v. 2; see also note on Ge 22:1. (CSB)

**8:17–18** See Zec 4:6 and note. (CSB)

**8:18** *remember.* See note on 4:10. (CSB)

God faithfully remembered His covenant promise to Abram (Gn 12:2–3) and continually provided for His people. (TLSB)

**Ch 8** God weaves a pattern of worship into the lives of the Israelites. By remembering and keeping God’s commands, they honor His name and show God’s grace to the nations surrounding them (4:6). Their disobedience dishonors God’s name. How easily Christians today look upon themselves as self-made, dishonoring God in the process. Instead, may we pray as J. S. Bach did, “To God alone be glory” (*Soli Deo Gloria*), for there is no other Savior. • Father, forgive us. We are poor, miserable sinners, often content to go our own way and seek our own glory. We ask that You send Your Holy Spirit to lead us to repentance, and then feed us with Your sustaining bread of life. Amen. (TLSB)