**Love and Obey the Lord**

Are you ready to trade in your car for a hover craft? I remember about 30 years ago a speaker at a bank meeting about future changes told the audience that hover craft would be commonplace by the year 2005. That prediction failed miserably along with a few others such as: Nuclear powered vacuum cleaners by the year 1965, apes would be trained to perform household chores by 2020, food would be replaced by nano particles as a source of nourishment by 2020. Then there are the predictions of the failures of: railroads, light bulbs, telephones, home computers and the internet. As Yogi Berra sagely observed, it’s hard to make predictions, especially about the future. The economist John Maynard Keynes predicted in the 1930’s that the work week would shrink to 20 hours per week, a claim that a Senate subcommittee doubled down on in the 1960’s, predicting a 14 hour work week. Labor saving instruments such as home computers and smart phones seem to have an effect opposite the intention as people work almost non stop, constantly monitoring their devices. What would you do if you suddenly had 26 hours per week in additional leisure time? In our study of Deuteronomy chapter 11, God makes provisions for the Israelites that should have freed them to worship Him more.

The chapter begins with Moses continuing his sermon to the people with the central theme that they were to love God and obey His commands. He told them that they were eyewitnesses to the miracles that God performed. It is significant that Moses mentioned 2 times God had inflicted punishment on Pharoah and Dathan. This would have been a warning of the price of disobedience. Moses also said that their children had not witnessed those things so he was speaking to those old enough to remember them but not old enough to have been part of the group destined to die in the desert before they reached Canaan. Moses told them that observing God’s commands would provide them strength to take over the land. He compared the land in Canaan to the land in Egypt. He said that they had to irrigate the land in Egypt which was a laborious task to turn desert land into soil suitable for a garden. Canaan was much different. It had a diverse mix of mountains and plains and enjoyed abundant rainfall. Moses told them that if they were faithful to Gods commands that critical times so that their harvests would be plentiful.

Next Moses warned them about worshiping other gods telling them that the price they would pay would be drought, causing them to perish from starvation. Moses told them to pass along to their children what he had taught them, encouraging them to write God’s commands on their doorframes and gates so they would be constantly reminded. Moses told them that if they would do as he instructed then God would drive out the nations before them and they would occupy the land from the desert to the Mediterranean Sea. Moses had given them the 2 options, obey God and prosper (the blessing) or disobey and suffer (the curse) and he told them to proclaim the blessing and curses from Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal.

As God’s chosen people, the Israelites enjoyed advantages not available to other nations. As we have discussed previously, food was constantly in short supply and families had to devote almost all their time to food production. In comparing Egypt to Canaan, Moses was making the point that while they lived in Egypt, they struggled mightily to produce enough food for their survival. Raising crops was not natural, they had to literally fight nature by irrigating the crops with water from the Nile. He contrasted that with Canaan which had naturally rich, fertile soil that they did not have to irrigate, God provided the rain to water their crops. Nations of that time also had to devote substantial resources to defending themselves. War was a constant threat and kings had to rely on conscripted soldiers to fill the ranks of their armies. While Israel had an army, it was God himself who fought their battles. With 2 of their basic needs met, the Israelites were free to worship God and know His laws. In the musical Fiddler of the Roof, Tevye imagines his life as a rich man who would have time to pray in the synagogue. We don’t need more free time to worship God, we just need to make it a priority.