

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 4

This chapter contains an exhortation to Israel to keep the commands, statutes, and judgments of God, urged from the superior excellency of them to those of all other nations, (^{<R04B>}Deuteronomy 4:1-8), from the manner in which they were delivered, out of the midst of fire, by a voice of words, but no similitude seen, (^{<R04D>}Deuteronomy 4:9-15), and particularly the Israelites are cautioned against idolatry, from the consideration of the goodness of God to them, in bringing them out of Egypt, (^{<R04E>}Deuteronomy 4:16-20), and the rather Moses is urgent upon them to be diligent in their obedience to the laws of God, because he should quickly be removed from them, (^{<R04I>}Deuteronomy 4:21-24), and should they be disobedient to them, it would provoke the Lord to destroy them, or to carry them captive into other lands, (^{<R04J>}Deuteronomy 4:25-28) though even then, if they repented and sought the Lord, and became obedient, he would be merciful to them, and not forsake them, (^{<R04K>}Deuteronomy 4:29-31) and they are put in mind again of the amazing things God had done for them, in speaking to them out of fire, and they alive; in bringing them out of another nation, and driving out other nations to make room for them; all which he improves, as so many arguments to move them to obedience to the divine commands, (^{<R04L>}Deuteronomy 4:32-40) and then notice is taken of the three cities of refuge, separated on this side Jordan, (^{<R04M>}Deuteronomy 4:41-43), and the chapter is concluded with observing, that this is the law, and these the testimonies, Moses declared and repeated to the children of Israel in the country of Sihon and Og, who were delivered into their hands, and their lands possessed by them, which laid them under fresh obligations to yield obedience to God, (^{<R04N>}Deuteronomy 4:44-49).

Ver. 1. *Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments,* etc.] The laws of God, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, which they are exhorted to attend to and obey, in consideration of the great and good things the Lord had done for them, ever since they came from Horeb, where they were given them; such as providing for them, and feeding them

in the wilderness, preserving them from every hurtful thing, and delivering their enemies into their hands, the two kings of the Amorites, which they are put in mind of in the preceding chapters; hence this begins with “therefore hearken”; for nothing is a greater incentive to obedience than the kindness and goodness of God:

which I teach you for to do that ye may live; the law was taught by Moses, but the Gospel of grace and truth by Jesus Christ; and it was taught by him, as well as it was to be hearkened to by them, in order to yield obedience to it; for not bare hearing, but doing the law, is the principal thing of any avail; and which was to be done, that they might live; not a spiritual and eternal life, which are not by the works of the law, but are had only from Christ, through his grace and righteousness; but a corporeal life, and a comfortable enjoyment of the blessings of it, and particularly that that might be continued to them:

and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers giveth you; the land of Canaan, which the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had promised to give to their posterity, and which they were to hold by their obedience to his laws.

Ver. 2. *Ye shall not add to the word which I command you, nether shall you diminish ought from it*, etc.] Neither make new laws of their own, and join them to the law of God, and set them upon a level with it, or prefer them before it; as the Scribes and Pharisees did in Christ’s time, who by their traditions made the word of God of none effect, as do the Papists also by their unwritten traditions; nor abrogate nor detract from the law of God, nor make void any part of it: or else the sense is, neither do that which is forbidden, nor neglect that which is commanded; neither be guilty of sins of omission nor commission, nor in any way break the law of God, and teach men so to do by word or by example; not a jot or tittle is either to be put to it, or taken from it, (^{<2815>}Proverbs 30:5,6 ^{<4158>}Matthew 5:18,19 ^{<6218>}Revelation 22:18,19)

that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you; in his name; or which he delivered unto them as his commandments, and which were to be kept just as they were delivered, without adding to them, or taking from them.

Ver. 3. *Your eyes have seen what the Lord did because of Baalpeor*, etc.] Because of the idolatry the people of Israel fell into by worshipping that

idol, being drawn into it by the daughters of Moab and Midian, through the counsel of Balaam, with whom they committed fornication; which led them to the other sin, and both highly provoking to God. The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan are,

“what the Word of the Lord has done to the worshippers of the idol Peor;”

for all the men that followed Baalpeor, the Lord thy God hath destroyed them from among you; 24,000 persons died on that account; which being a recent thing, fresh in memory, and what they were eyewitnesses of, was a caution to them to avoid the same sins, as it is to us on whom the ends of the world are come, (⁴⁰²⁰Numbers 23:9 ⁴⁶⁰⁶1 Corinthians 10:6-8,11).

Ver. 4. *But ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God,* etc.] To the worship of the Lord your God, as the Targum of Jonathan; attended the service of the sanctuary, were observant of the laws of God, and walked in his statutes and judgments; did not apostatize from him by idolatry or otherwise, but kept close unto him, and followed him fully:

are alive everyone of you this day; which is very remarkable, that in such a vast number of people not one should die in such a space of time, it being several months since that affair happened; and besides, in that time there was a war with the Midianites, and yet not one person died in that war, nor as it seems by this account by any disease or disaster whatever; (see ⁴⁶¹⁴Numbers 31:49).

Ver. 5. *Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me,* etc.] He had faithfully delivered them, without adding them, or diminishing from them, and had diligently instructed the Israelites in them, had taken pains to lead them into a thorough knowledge and understanding them:

that ye should do so in the land whither ye go possess it; do in like manner as the commandments the Lord direct to; or that which is right ^{f53}; proper and fitting to be done, by doing which they continue in the land they were about to possess, therefore when in it were to be careful to them; some of them could not be done till they came into it, and all were to be done in it.

Ver. 6. *Keep therefore and do them,* etc.]. Observe them, take notice of what is expressed by them, and perform them, both as to matter and manner, as they require:

for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations; that is, their wisdom and understanding would appear to other nations by their observance of the commands of God:

which hear all these statutes; which they had a report, got knowledge of by some of the philosophers who travelled into those parts, and by the translation of the Bible into the Greek language:

and say, surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people; that had such a body of laws, in which they were instructed, and according to which they were governed, and in which they walked; that were so agreeable to reason, truth, justice, and equity; insomuch that so far as they became known they were admired and copied after, both by Greeks and Romans; and hence it was that the oracle⁵⁴ declared, that only the Chaldeans and Hebrews were a wise people; the Hebrews came from Chaldea, as Abraham the father of them.

Ver. 7 *For what nation is there so great,* etc.] Not so much for their number, for they were the fewest of all people; nor for the largeness of their territories, for the land they were going to possess was but a small country; nor for their wealth and riches, and warlike exploits, though they were not contemptible in either; but for their happy constitution in church and state, being directed and governed in both by laws which came immediately from God himself; for their knowledge of divine things, and for spiritual blessings and privileges they were favoured with, of which a special instance is given:

who hath God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God is, in all things that we call upon him for? God was nigh unto them in respect of relation, being their covenant God and Father, and they his sons and daughters, to whom the adoption belonged; and with respect to place and presence, his tabernacle being in the midst of them, the seat of his Shechinah, or divine Majesty, being in the most holy place, between the cherubim over the mercy seat; and he going before them in the pillar of cloud by day, and in the pillar of fire by night, and who might be applied unto at all times for whatsoever they stood in need of; and who was always near unto them, to give them advice and counsel, help and assistance; to hear their prayers, and communicate unto them things temporal and spiritual they stood in need of: and so the Lord is nigh to all that call upon him in faith, with fervency, and in sincerity and truth; and herein the glory and greatness of a people, as of Israel, lies, in being nearly related to God, a people near unto

him, both as to union and communion; and in having a communication of good things from him. God is both a God at hand and afar off, (~~423~~Jeremiah 23:23 ~~458~~Psalm 145:18).

Ver. 8. *And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous*, etc.] Founded in justice and equity, and so agreeable to right reason, and so well calculated and adapted to lead persons in the ways of righteousness and truth, and keep them from doing any injury to each other's persons and properties, and to maintain good order, peace, and concord among them:

as all this law which I set before you this day? which he then repeated, afresh declared, explained and instructed them in; for otherwise it had been delivered to them near forty years ago. Now there was not any nation then in being, nor any since, to be compared with the nation of the Jews, for the wise and wholesome laws given unto them; no, not the more cultivated and civilized nations, as the Grecians and Romans, who had the advantage of such wise lawgivers as they were accounted, as Solon, Lycurgus, Numa, and others; and indeed the best laws that they had seem to be borrowed from the Jews.

Ver. 9. *Only take heed to thyself*, etc.] To walk according to this law, and not swerve from it:

and keep thy soul diligently; from the transgressions and breaches of it:

lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen; either the statutes and judgments set before them, and the circumstances of the delivery of them; or the punishment inflicted on the breakers of them; or the favours bestowed on those that observed them:

and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life; out of thy mind and memory, and have no place in thy affections, through a neglect and disuse of them:

but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons; their children and grandchildren, that they may be trained up in them in their youth, and so not depart from them when grown up, and in years; (see ~~880~~Deuteronomy 6:7).

Ver. 10. *Specially the day that thou stoodest before the Lord in Horeb*, etc.] Above all things Moses would have them take care not to forget the

day the law was given from Mount Sinai, which was so awful and solemn, when they saw the fire, the smoke, the lightning, and heard the thunder and the sound of the trumpet; all which were very shocking and terrifying: and though the men of this generation were but young then, being under twenty years of age, yet many of them were old enough to observe these things, and which one would think should never wear out of their minds:

when the Lord said unto me, gather me the people together; not the elders of the people only, but the whole body of the people, as he did, and brought them to the foot of Mount Sinai, (¹²⁹⁷Exodus 19:17),

and I will make them hear my words; the ten commands which were spoken by the Lord himself aloud, with an articulate voice, in the hearing of all the people; and was such a terrible voice of words, that they that heard it entreated it might be spoken to them no more, (⁸²⁹Hebrews 12:19)

that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth; to reverence him the lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy; to fear to offend him by breaking his laws, so holy, just, and good, and delivered in such an awful and solemn manner:

and that they may teach their children; the words they had heard, teach them obedience to them, and to be careful not to act contrary to them; since that would bring down judgments upon them, and deprive them of the favour they enjoyed, of which they had seen instances.

Ver. 11. *And ye came near and stood under the mountain*, etc.] At the foot of it, in the lower part of the mountain, as the Targum of Jonathan, and agrees with (¹²⁹⁷Exodus 19:17)

and the mountain burnt with fire unto the midst of heaven; the flame and smoke went up into the middle of the air: with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness; which thick darkness was occasioned partly by the smoke, which went up like the smoke of a furnace, and partly by the thick clouds, which were on the mount, and covered the face of the heavens, which were black and tempestuous with them; the Septuagint renders it a “tempest”, (¹²⁹⁸Exodus 19:18 ⁸²⁸Hebrews 12:18), which denotes the obscurity of the law, and the terrors it works in the minds of men.

Ver. 12. *And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire,* etc.] For the Lord descended on Mount Sinai in a cloud, in fire, and was in the thick darkness, from whence he delivered out the ten commands:

ye heard the voice of the words; distinctly and plainly, not only the sound of them, but the words themselves, and so as to understand what was meant by them;

but saw no similitude; not any likeness of the person speaking, by which they could form any idea of him in their minds, which was purposely done to prevent idolatry:

only ye heard a voice; that was all.

Ver. 13. *And he declared unto you his covenant,* etc.] So the law was called, because it contained, on the part of God, things which he would have done or avoided, to which were annexed promises of long life and happiness in the land he gave them; and they, on their part, agreed to hearken to it, and obey it, (^{<024B>}Exodus 24:3,7),

which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; which see at large in (^{<021B>}Exodus 20:1-17), and in this book afterwards repeated, (^{<021B>}Deuteronomy 5:6-21),

and he wrote them upon two tables of stone; to denote the durability of them; the Targum of Jonathan says on tables of sapphire; but it is most likely that they were written on tables of marble, since there were great quantities of it in Mount Sinai; (see Gill on "^{<021B>}Exodus 31:18").

Ver. 14. *And the Lord commanded me at that time,* etc.] When the ten commandments were delivered on Mount Sinai, and Moses was ordered to come up to God in the mount:

to teach you statutes and judgments; laws ceremonial and judicial, besides the ten commands given them:

that ye may do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it; the land of Canaan, which was on the other side of Jordan, and over which they must go in order to possess it; and when they came there, they were to hold the possession of it by attending to those laws which forbade the sins for which the old inhabitants of it were expelled out of it; and besides these, there were also several laws, both ceremonial and judicial, which

were to be peculiarly observed in the land, as well as others they were obliged to do while without it.

Ver. 15. *Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves*, etc.] As to keep all the laws given them, so particularly to avoid idolatry:

for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire; and therefore, as they had nothing that directed and led them, so they had nothing that could be a temptation to them, to make any form or likeness, and worship it.

Ver. 16. *Lest ye corrupt yourselves*, etc.] And not themselves only, but the word and worship of God, by idolatry, than which nothing is more corrupting and defiling, nor more abominable to God:

and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure; a graven image, in the likeness of any figure, an idea of which they had formed in their minds;

the likeness of male or female; of a man or a woman; so some of the Heathen deities were in the likeness of men, as Jupiter, Mars, Hercules, Apollo, etc. and others in the likeness of women, as Juno, Diana, Venus, etc. Some think Osiris and Isis, Egyptian deities, the one male, the other female, are respected; but it is not certain that these were worshipped by them so early.

Ver. 17. *The likeness of any beast that is on the earth*, etc.] As there are scarce any but the likeness of them has been made and worshipped, or the creatures themselves, as the ox by the Egyptians, the sheep by the Thebans, the goat by the Mendesians, and others by different people:

the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air; as the hawk, and the bird called Ibis, and another by the name of Cneph by the Egyptians, and the eagle by others.

Ver. 18. *The likeness of anything that creepeth on the ground*, etc.] As serpents by many; and indeed that creature is introduced into almost all the idolatries of the Heathens, which seems to take its rise from the serpent Satan made use of to deceive our first parents:

the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth; as the crocodile and hippopotamus, or river horse, by the Egyptians; and Dagon

and Derceto, supposed to be figures in the form of a fish, among the Phoenicians.

Ver. 19. *And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven*, etc.] The starry heaven, which to do in itself is not sinful; and may be lawfully and commendably done, to raise admiration at the wonderful works of God in them, and lead to adore the author of them: but if not guarded against may be ensnaring:

and when thou seest the sun and the moon, and the stars, [even] all the host of heaven; those bright luminaries, so glorious to behold, and so useful and beneficial to the earth, and the inhabitants of it:

shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them; should have an impulse on their minds and their hearts, be inclined and drawn to the worship of them, partly by considering their splendour, glory, and usefulness, and partly by the example of others; for the worshipping of these seems to be and is the first kind of idolatry men gave into, at least it was very ancient; (see ^{<138126>}Job 31:26,27),

which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven; the sun and the moon by their constant revolutions visit all the parts of the world, and stars are fixed in both hemispheres, so that all nations of the earth receive the benefit and advantage of all these heavenly bodies; but were never designed to be the objects of their worship, as might be learnt from their being divided to them, sometimes one part of the earth enjoying them, and then another, and not present with them all at one and the same time, which, if deities, would have been necessary; (see ^{<91916>}Psalms 19:6 ^{<4155>}Matthew 5:45).

Ver. 20. *But the Lord hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace*, etc.] The allusion is to the trying and melting of metals, and fleeing them from dross, by putting them into furnaces strongly heated, some of which are of earth, others of iron; the word, as the Jewish writers ^{f55} observe, signifies such an one in which gold and silver and other things are melted; (see ^{<91216>}Psalms 12:6 ^{<2173>}Proverbs 17:3) even “out of Egypt”; which is here compared to an iron furnace, because of the cruelty with which the Israelites were used in it, the hardships they were put under, and the misery and bondage they were kept in; but out of all the Lord brought them, as he does all his people sooner or later out of their afflictions, sometimes called the furnace of affliction, (^{<23810>}Isaiah 48:10) where their

graces are tried, and they are purged, purified, and refined from their dross and tin. This the Lord did to Israel, he brought them out of their distressed state and condition:

to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day: to be the Lord's inheritance, as they now were, (^{<R1D>}Deuteronomy 32:9) as well as they were quickly to inherit the land of Canaan, for which they were brought out of the land of Egypt; and indeed they were already, even that day, entered on their inheritance, the kingdom of the Amorites being delivered into their hands.

Ver. 21. *Furthermore the Lord was angry with me for your sakes,* etc.] (see ^{<R1D>}Deuteronomy 3:26):

and sware that I should not go over Jordan; this circumstance of swearing is nowhere else expressed:

and that I should not go in unto that good land; the land of Canaan; he might see it, as he did from Pisgah, but not enter into it:

which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance; to them and to their children after them.

Ver. 22. *But I must die in this land,* etc.] The land of Moab, in a mountain in it he died, and in a valley there he was buried, (^{<R1D>}Deuteronomy 32:50 34:5,6),

I must not go over Jordan; this he repeats, as lying near his heart; he had earnestly solicited to go over, but was denied it:

but ye shall go over, and possess that good land; this he firmly believed and assures them of, relying on the promise and faithfulness of God.

Ver. 23. *Take heed unto yourselves,* etc.] Since he should not be long with them, to advise, instruct, and caution them:

lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which he made with you; what that required of them, and what was promised unto them on the performance of it, and what they must expect should they break it, and particularly be so forgetful of it, and the first articles in it, as follows:

and make you a graven image, or the likeness of anything which the Lord thy God hath forbidden thee; a graven image in the likeness of men or women, of any beast on the earth, or fowl in heaven, or fish in the sea.

Ver. 24. *For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire*, etc.] To his enemies; his wrath is like fire to burn up and destroy all that oppose him and break his commands, and especially idolaters; whose sin of all others is the most provoking to him, since it strikes at his being, his honour and glory; wherefore it follows,

even a jealous God; who is jealous of his honour in matters of worship, and will not suffer his glory to be given to another, nor his praise to graven images, without resenting it or punishing for it.

Ver. 25. *When thou shalt beget children, and children's children*, etc.] Children and grandchildren, and several ages and generations have passed:

and shalt have remained long in the land; many years and even ages, or have grown old ^{f56} in it: now they were in their infancy, and as such they were about to enter into it; during the times of the judges, they were in their childhood, or youth; in the times of David and Solomon, they were in their manhood; after that, in their decline; and in the times of Jeconiah and his brethren in their old age, when for their sins they were carried captive:

and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of anything; (see Gill on "^{f516}Deuteronomy 25:16").

and shall do evil in the sight of the Lord thy God, to provoke him to anger; that sin of idolatry, that God provoking sin, is chiefly intended.

Ver. 26. *I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day*, etc.]

Should they be guilty of such a sin, since they were so strongly and publicly cautioned against it; and even the heaven and the earth were called upon as witnesses of the law being set before them, which so expressly forbids it, (^{f309}Deuteronomy 30:19)

that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto you go over Jordan to possess it; though they were now about to go over Jordan and inherit the land of Canaan, yet they would not enjoy it long, but be taken and carried captive out of it; as the ten tribes were by Shalmaneser king of Assyria, and the two tribes by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and both for their idolatry and other crimes.

Ver. 27. *And the Lord shall scatter you among the nations*, etc.] As they were by both captivities; the ten tribes were dispersed among the cities of the Medes, and the two tribes throughout the empire of Babylon:

and ye shall be left few in number among the Heathen, whither the Lord shall lead you; or be “men of number”¹⁵⁷, so few that they might be easily numbered; which intimates that it should be other wise with them than when in Egypt; there they were multiplied and increased the more they were afflicted, but in these captivities they should be greatly diminished.

Ver. 28. *And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men’s hands, wood and stone*, etc.] Idols made by men, cut out of wood and stone; these they should be enticed into the service of, or compelled to serve; which was still more brutish and stupid than to worship the sun, moon, and stars, which were not the works of men’s hand, but the glorious works of the eternal God. But since in their captivities they were not subject to idolatry, but were cured of it thereby, another sense of the words is given by some, as by Onkelos and Jonathan, who paraphrase the words of serving the people, that serve idols; but what follows confirms the first sense:

which neither see, nor hear, nor taste, nor smell; senseless things, which have none of the senses of seeing, hearing, and smelling, nor the faculty of eating, which they need not to support life, of which they are destitute; and therefore it must be monstrous stupidity to worship such lifeless, senseless, objects; (see ~~1950s~~ Psalm 115:4-7).

Ver. 29. *But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God*, etc.] By prayer and supplication, acknowledging and confessing sin, and desiring that God would be gracious and forgive it, and bring them out of their miserable condition; even if out of those depths of affliction and distress, and though scattered about in the world, and in the uttermost parts of it:

thou shalt find him; to be a God hearing and answering prayer, gracious and merciful, ready to help and deliver:

if they seek him with all their heart and with all their soul; sincerely and affectionately.

Ver. 30. *When thou art in tribulation*, etc.] In a strange land, in the power of a foreign enemy, and used ill:

and all these things are come upon thee; captivity, thralldom, hard labour, and want of the necessaries of life:

[even] in the latter days: in their present captivity for the rejection of the Messiah:

if thou turn to the Lord thy God; as the Jews will when they are converted and brought to a sense of their sin, and of their need of Christ, and seek to him as their Saviour, as they will do in the latter day, (^{<A086>}Hosea 3:5 ^{<A086>}2 Corinthians 3:16)

and shall be obedient unto his voice; not of the law only, but of the Gospel also, proclaiming peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by him whom they have pierced.

Ver. 31. *For the Lord thy God is a merciful God*, etc.] In Christ, in whom he has proclaimed his name as such, of which Moses had a comfortable view, (^{<A086>}Exodus 34:6-8) and therefore could attest it from his own knowledge and experience:

he will not forsake thee; though in a strange country, but bring them from thence into their own land again, and favour them with his gracious presence in his house and ordinances:

neither destroy thee; from being a people; and in a very wonderful manner are they preserved among the nations of the earth to this day:

nor forget the covenant of thy fathers, which he sware unto them; that a Saviour should come and turn away ungodliness from them, and take away their sins; (see ^{<A086>}Romans 11:26,27).

Ver. 32. *For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee*, etc.] Inquire into and consult the annals of former times, of ages past:

since the day that God created man upon the earth; trace them quite up to the creation of the world, and men in it:

and [ask] from the one side of heaven to the other; traverse the whole globe, and examine the records of every nation in it in both hemispheres:

whether there hath been any such [thing] as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? whether they can give any account of anything seen, heard, or done like what follows; suggesting that they cannot furnish out an instance to be mentioned with it.

Ver. 33. *Did [ever] people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of fire*, etc.] None ever heard the voice of God as they did, much less speaking such words as they heard, and still less out of the midst of fire, which was their case, (^{<A086>}Deuteronomy 4:12,15)

as thou hast heard, and live? which was stranger still, when they might have expected they should, and doubtless feared they would be, as it was wonderful they were not, consumed by it.

Ver. 34. *Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation,* etc.] As he now had done, namely, the nation of Israel out of the nation of the Egyptians; this he not only had assayed to do, but had actually done it; whereas no such instance like it could be produced, and especially as done in the manner this was:

by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war; the word “temptations” may be considered as a general word, as Aben Ezra thinks, and may signify the temptations by signs, etc. or the various essays and trials, ways, means, and methods taken by the Lord to bring about the event; by “signs” may be meant those which were required of Moses, and done by him before the people of Israel, and before Pharaoh, as proofs of his mission from the Lord, (^{<0241>}Exodus 4:1-9,30 7:9) and by “wonders”, the ten plagues of Egypt, which were done by a supernatural and miraculous operation, and were amazing things; (see ^{<0781>}Psalms 78:11-13); and by “war”, either the slaying of the firstborn, with the destruction of the judges and gods of Egypt, as Aben Ezra; or the Lord’s fighting for Israel at the Red sea, as Jarchi; he saved them and destroyed the Egyptians, and showed himself to be a man of war, (^{<0244>}Exodus 14:14,25 15:3)

and by a mighty hand and stretched out arm; phrases frequently used when this affair is spoken of, and are expressive of the mighty power of God in the above instances, and in the issue of them, bringing Israel out of Egypt; though Aben Ezra interprets it of the pillar of fire and cloud in which the Lord went before them:

and by great terrors; which the same writer interprets of the drowning of Pharaoh and his host in the sea, and dividing it for Israel; but may be understood not only of the terrors which possessed him and his people then, but at other times, especially at the time of the thunder and lightning, and when they sat in thick darkness, and particularly when all their firstborn were slain; (see ^{<0248>}Deuteronomy 26:8),

according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes; among the men of Egypt, as the above writer, Pharaoh and his courtiers: the above things were done as before them for their terror, so before Israel for their encouragement.

Ver. 35. *Unto thee it was showed,* etc.] What the Lord did in Egypt:

that thou mightest know that the Lord he [is] God, [there is] none else besides him; that he is the one only living and true God, and there is no other: this phrase is often used by the Prophet Isaiah, to express the same great article of faith.

Ver. 36. *Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee,* etc.] Thunder is the voice of God, and by which he instructs men in the greatness of his power, (^{<3864>}Job 26:14 40:9 ^{<3928>}Psalms 29:3), etc. unless his voice in giving the law, which was for the instruction of Israel, is meant; for that was heard on earth, on Mount Sinai, to which the following refers:

and upon earth he showed thee his great fire; on Mount Sinai, which burned with it:

and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire; the ten commands, and therefore may well be called, a fiery law; (see ^{<3942>}Deuteronomy 4:12,15,33).

Ver. 37. *And because he loved thy fathers,* etc.] Not their immediate fathers, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, and entered not into the good land because of their unbelief, but their more remote fathers or ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who had some singular testimonies of the love of God to them, Abraham is called their friend of God, and Isaac was the son of promise in whom the seed was called; and Jacob is particularly said to be loved by God, when Esau was hated:

therefore he chose their seed after them; not to eternal life and salvation, but to the enjoyment of external blessings and privileges, to be called by his name, and to set up his name and worship among them, and to be a special people to him above all people on the earth, as to outward favours, both civil and ecclesiastical:

and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt; which was done not only in the sight of the Egyptians openly, they not daring to hinder them, as the wonders wrought to oblige them to let them go out, done in the sight of the Israelites as before observed, but in the sight of God, he going before them in the pillar of cloud and fire, smiling upon them the Israelites, and looking with a frown upon the host of the Egyptians, and conducting the people by the angel of his presence.

Ver. 38. *To drive out nations from before thee, greater and mightier than thou art*, etc.] The seven nations of the land of Canaan, which were more in number and mightier in power and strength than they, and particularly the Amorites, who were already driven out and dispossessed of their country, even the kingdoms and nations of Sihon and Og:

to bring thee in to give thee their land for an inheritance, as [it is] this day; referring, as Aben Ezra observes, to the inheritance of the land of the two kings of the Amorites, which the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, were put into the possession of already.

Ver. 39. *Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart*, etc.] Own and acknowledge it now with thy mouth, and lay it up and consider it in thine heart hereafter, as a truth of the greatest importance to be professed and held fast, and to be thought of and meditated upon continually, and never to be forgotten:

that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath; that he has made both, and is the possessor and Lord of them, and does what he pleases with them; that the one is his throne, his dwelling place, and the other his footstool; and that the inhabitants of both are his creatures, and under his authority and command, and he can dispose of them as he pleases:

[there is] none else; no God in heaven or in earth beside him.

Ver. 40. *Thou shall keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments*, etc.] All his laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, partly being under obligation to him for all the great and good things done by him for them before enumerated, and partly and chiefly because he is the Lord God in heaven and in earth, and has a right to command and ought to be obeyed:

which I command thee this day; in the name of the Lord, and which he repeated, opened, and explained, and charged them afresh to observe; otherwise they were such that had been given long ago:

that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee; that they and theirs might enjoy temporal mercies, and continue in the land of Canaan, and partake of all the blessings in it, as follows, and of the sanctuary of the Lord, and the privileges of it:

and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for ever; that is, that they and theirs might live long in the land of Canaan, which the Lord gave for an inheritance for ever, provided they kept his law, and were obedient to his commands; (see ⁽¹⁶²⁵⁾Deuteronomy 6:25 ⁽²⁰¹⁹⁾Isaiah 1:19), and though they have had several interruptions by their captivities, and especially by their present very long one, yet when they shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, they shall have their land restored to them again, and shall never more be dispossessed of it.

Ver. 41. *Then Moses severed three cities,* etc.] To be cities of refuge, according to the command of God, (⁽⁰⁵¹⁴⁾Numbers 35:14) this he did when he had conquered the two kingdoms of the Amorites, that God had given them for an inheritance to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, (⁽⁰⁰³⁸⁾Deuteronomy 4:38) though Jarchi says, and so other Jewish writers, that persons were not received into them until the three cities appointed in the land of Canaan were separated for the like use; (see Gill on “⁽⁰⁵¹⁴⁾Numbers 35:14”) and these were,

on this side Jordan, toward the rising sun; on that side of the river on which the plains of Moab lay, and the kingdoms of the Amorites, and to the east of Jordan: so Jarchi remarks,

“on that side which is on the east of Jordan;”

(see ⁽⁰⁰¹⁸⁾Joshua 20:8).

Ver. 42. *That the slayer might flee thither,* etc.] For refuge; the slayer of a man, but not any slayer, but

which should kill his neighbour unawares; by accident to him, without any design and intention to kill him; ignorantly, as the Septuagint version; and so Onkelos:

and hated him not in times past; it having never appeared that there had been a quarrel between them, and that the slayer had shown any enmity to the man slain any time before the fact, or bore a grudge against him, or spite unto him:

and that, fleeing unto one of these cities, he might live; in peace and safety unto his own death, or unto the death of the high priest, when he was

released from his confinement to the city of his refuge, and might return to his tribe, house, family, and possessions.

Ver. 43. [*Namely*], *Bezer in the wilderness*, etc.] In (^{<6108>}Joshua 20:8), it is added “upon the plain”; this perhaps was the wilderness of Moab, in the plains of it, the same with Bozrah, (see ^{<24824>}Jeremiah 48:24 ^{<6108>}Deuteronomy 2:8) and in the Apocrypha:

“Hereupon Judas and his host turned suddenly by the way of the wilderness unto Bosora; and when he had won the city, he slew all the males with the edge of the sword, and took all their spoils, and burned the city with fire,” (1 Maccabees 5:28)

it was in the

plain country of the Reubenites, or lay in that part of the country which was allotted to them, and which they gave to the Levites, (^{<3158>}1 Chronicles 6:78),

and Ramoth in Gilead of the Gadites; it lay in that part of Mount Gilead, and among the cities of it, which fell to the share of the tribe of Gad, and was by them given to the Levites, (^{<3180>}1 Chronicles 6:80), this city is frequently in Scripture called Ramothgilead; (see ^{<1043>}1 Kings 4:13 22:20)

and Golan in Bashan, of the Manassites, or “Gaulon”, as the Septuagint, and from hence the country round about was called Gaulanitis; all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, was given to the half tribe of Manasseh, and out of it this city was given by them to the Levites, (^{<3357>}1 Chronicles 6:71), and appointed a city of refuge: now as these cities were typical of Christ, there may be something observed in the names of them as agreeing with him.

“Bezer” signifies “a fortified place”; Christ is the fortress, mountain, and place of defence for his people, and strong hold to which the prisoners of hope turn, the strong tower whither the righteous run and are safe.

“Ramoth” signifies “exaltations”; which may point both at the exaltation of Christ in human nature at the right hand of God, and the exaltation of his people by him, who are raised by him from a low estate to sit among princes, and to inherit the throne of glory, and by whom he is exalted in his person, office, and grace. “Golan” signifies “revealed” or “manifested”: so Christ has been manifest in the flesh, and is revealed to sinners, when they are called by his grace; to whom they flee for refuge, and lay hold on him, the hope set before them.

Ver. 44. *And this is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel.*] Not the law concerning the cities of refuge, but the law of the ten commands repeated in the following chapter; so Jarchi remarks,

“this which he should set in order after this section;”

as he does in the next chapter, where he repeats in order the ten precepts, and makes observations on the manner of the delivery of them, and urges obedience to them.

Ver. 45. *These are the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments,* etc.] The laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, delivered in the following chapters; which are renewed, repeated, and explained: which Moses spake unto the children of Israel, after they came forth out of Egypt; in the third month after they came from thence these laws were delivered to him at Mount Sinai, and he declared them to them; and now afresh, near forty years after, repeated them to them in the plains of Moab.

Ver. 46. *On this side Jordan, in the valley, over against Bethpeor,* etc.] Where the Israelites abode some time; (see ^{CHRY}Deuteronomy 3:29),

in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon; which was now conquered, and in the hands of the Israelites:

whom Moses and the children of Israel smote, after they came out of Egypt; not as soon as, or quickly after they came from thence; for it was but a few months ago since this conquest was made, whereas it was near forty years since they came out of Egypt.

Ver. 47. *And they possessed his land, and the land of Og king of Bashan,* etc.] Seized upon them, and took them as their own, and divided them for an inheritance among two of their tribes and half another:

two kings of the Amorites; which is more than once observed, that it might be taken notice of that these were of the nations of the Canaanites Israel were to root out, and possess their land:

which were on this side Jordan, toward the sun rising; which lands and kingdoms lay to the east of Jordan, on that side of it on which were the plains of Moab, where Moses and Israel now were.

Ver. 48. *From Aroer, which is by the bank of the river Arnon, etc.]* A city of Moab, which was situated on the bank of the river Arnon, that was on the border of Moab, (^(H126)Deuteronomy 2:36 3:12),

even unto Mount Sion, which [is] Hermon; the meaning is, that the lands of these two kings conquered by Israel reached from the city Aroer on the river Arnon to Mount Hermon, the one being the southern, the other the northern boundary of them. Here Hermon has another name Sion, and is to be carefully distinguished from Mount Zion near Jerusalem; it lying in a different country, and being written with a different letter in the Hebrew language. In the Septuagint version it is called Seon, and by the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem the mount of snow; (see Gill on ^(H119)Deuteronomy 3:9”).

Ver. 49. *And all the plain on this side Jordan eastward, etc.]* The plains of Moab, on that side of Jordan to the east:

even unto the sea of the plain; the sea of Sodom, the salt sea:

under the springs of Pisgah; that rose from Mount Pisgah, the same with Ashdothpisgah, (^(H117)Deuteronomy 3:17).