

## **Ekev** Deuteronomy - Devarim (3:23-7:11)

The Children of Israel listen to Moses speak before they enter Canaan, God's promised land. Moses said, "If you listen to God's laws, and keep them safe and observe them, then God, your God, will keep God's Covenant made with your forefathers (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), to love you and bless you and multiply you. You will be blessed among all the nations, with offspring and God will take sickness from you and drive against your enemies in the land.

When you conquer the land, do not leave any idols for it is a deadly trap. If you are wondering how will we be able to drive out more powerful nations, don't be afraid. Remember what God did to Pharaoh and all of Egypt. God, your God, is with you - a great and awesome God. You must safeguard and keep the entire mandate I say today in order to survive and flourish and inherit God's promised land.

These past 40 years, you have had many hardships. These have been tests from God to see into your hearts and watch your actions. God even let you go hungry in the wilderness before giving you a new food, manna. This was to teach you that it is not by bread alone that man lives, but by all God says. Therefore as a parent reprimands his or her child, so does God, your God, reprimand you.

Keep God's Commandments and walk in God's ways and you will retain your awe for God. For God is bringing you into this good land, a land for which you will lack nothing. When you eat and are satisfied, then you must bless God for all that God has given you. Do not forget God by not following God's Commandments, for you will become haughty and forget God Who brought you out slavery in Egypt. When you have prosperity, do not think it is because of your personal power but know that it is God, your God, who gives you the power to become prosperous. God does this so you can keep the Covenant that God made with your fathers, even as God keeps it today.

Don't think it is because you are so good that God will drive away your enemies. It is because they are so wicked and it is time for God to fulfill God's promise to your forefathers. You are a stubborn stiff necked people. Think of all the times you made God angry, so angry, God wanted to destroy you. Remember the time when I was on the mountain with God for 40 days and 40 nights without eating or drinking. That was when God wrote upon the two stone tablets, God's Covenant of the Ten Commandments spoken by God. But then, God said to me, 'Look down the mountain.

The people you brought out of Egypt have become corrupt by making an idol. See how quickly they turned aside from My path! They are a stubborn nation and I will destroy them.'

Moses said, "The mountain was still burning with fire when I came down it with the stone tablets. Then I saw you worshipping a golden calf and sinning against God and I threw the tablets down, shattering them before your eyes. Immediately I prayed before God to forgive you and I prayed for my brother Aaron whom I left in charge. Then I went back up the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights without eating or drinking. God was very mad at you and Aaron and I pleaded to God and God relented that time. So remember how I melted that sinful golden calf into powder and threw it into the river.

God told me to 'Carve out the two stone tablets like the first and come to me on the mountain and I will inscribe the same as the first and you shall place them in an ark.' And I did and God instructed me to return journeying towards the land God promised your forefathers.

Now Israelites, what does God, your God require of you? Only to fear God, your God and to walk in all God's ways, loving God and serving God with all your heart and with all your soul. Keep God's commandments for your own good.

Behold! It is to your God that the heavens and the earth belong. For God, your God, is God of gods and Lord of lords, God Almighty, Who is great, Who is mighty; Who is awesome; God Who is always fair and does not take bribes. God grants justice to the orphan and widow and loves the strangers and so too you must do too, for you were once strangers in Egypt. Cling to God and praise God Who performed these mighty and awesome deeds for you. So love God, your God and safeguard God's trust and God's commandments. You will then long endure on the Land God promised our forefathers to give to them and their offspring, a land flowing with milk and honey.

The eyes of God are always this land. So you must place these words upon your heart and upon your soul and bind them as a sign upon your hand and let them be for frontlets between your eyes and teach them to your sons and speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk upon the way, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the door posts of your house and upon your gates so that the days of your children may long endure in the promised land. If you keep these commandments, God will drive out your enemies and the land shall be yours just as God promised.

**Questions:** 1) Why following God's rules for your own good? 2) Why is fearing God so important? 3) Do humans live by everything that comes from God today? How? **Illustration Ideas:** Moses speaking to the Israelites...Moses remembering the golden calf...smashing the tablets...the Ten Commandments...the promised land flowing with milk and honey