



# WELCOME TO BIBLE HOUSE OF GRACE

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## Deuteronomy 4

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

## Deuteronomy 4.

(A brief overview of the main topics).

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**INTRODUCTION:** this is a continuation of the previous chapter, Israel is soon to cross over the River Jordan and enter into the Promised Land. The primary focus of all the following chapters is upon Moses re-telling to the new generation about to cross the River Jordan all the covenant laws the LORD originally gave to Israel at Mount Sinai so that the new generation would renew the covenant with the LORD before they enter the Promised Land. The final chapter finishes with the LORD burying Moses and Joshua being ready to lead Israel over the River Jordan and into the Promised Land (see also the introduction to chapter one).

**NOTE:** for information of people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

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### DEUTERONOMY 4 (ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION)

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- **Deuteronomy 4:1-49** “And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you. <sup>2</sup> You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you. <sup>3</sup> Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Baal-peor, for the LORD your God destroyed from among you all the men who followed the Baal of Peor. <sup>4</sup> But you who held fast to the LORD your God are all alive today. <sup>5</sup> See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. <sup>6</sup> Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ <sup>7</sup> For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? <sup>8</sup> And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today? <sup>9</sup> “Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children’s children— <sup>10</sup> how on the day that you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, the LORD said to me, ‘Gather the people to me, that I may let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children so.’ <sup>11</sup> And you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, while the mountain burned with fire to the heart of heaven, wrapped in darkness, cloud, and gloom. <sup>12</sup> Then the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of words, but saw no form; there was only a voice. <sup>13</sup> And he declared to you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments, and he wrote them on two tablets of stone. <sup>14</sup> And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and rules, that you might do them in the land that you are going over to possess. <sup>15</sup> “Therefore watch yourselves very carefully. Since you saw no form on the day that the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, <sup>16</sup> beware lest you act corruptly by making a carved image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female, <sup>17</sup> the likeness of any animal that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, <sup>18</sup> the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water under the earth. <sup>19</sup> And beware lest you raise your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, you be drawn away and bow down to them and serve them, things that the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven. <sup>20</sup> But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be a people of his own inheritance, as you are this day. <sup>21</sup> Furthermore, the LORD was angry with me because of you, and he swore that I should not cross the Jordan, and that I should not enter the good land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance. <sup>22</sup> For I must die in this land; I must not go over the Jordan. But you shall go over and take possession of that good land. <sup>23</sup> Take care, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make a carved image, the form of anything that the LORD your God has forbidden you. <sup>24</sup> For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God. <sup>25</sup> “When you father children and children’s children, and have grown old in the land, if you act corruptly by making a carved image in the form

of anything, and by doing what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God, so as to provoke him to anger, <sup>26</sup> I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will soon utterly perish from the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess. You will not live long in it, but will be utterly destroyed. <sup>27</sup> And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you. <sup>28</sup> And there you will serve gods of wood and stone, the work of human hands, that neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. <sup>29</sup> But from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul. <sup>30</sup> When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, you will return to the LORD your God and obey his voice. <sup>31</sup> For the LORD your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them. <sup>32</sup> “For ask now of the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and ask from one end of heaven to the other, whether such a great thing as this has ever happened or was ever heard of. <sup>33</sup> Did any people ever hear the voice of a god speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and still live? <sup>34</sup> Or has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, and by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great deeds of terror, all of which the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? <sup>35</sup> To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD is God; there is no other besides him. <sup>36</sup> Out of heaven he let you hear his voice, that he might discipline you. And on earth he let you see his great fire, and you heard his words out of the midst of the fire. <sup>37</sup> And because he loved your fathers and chose their offspring after them and brought you out of Egypt with his own presence, by his great power, <sup>38</sup> driving out before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land for an inheritance, as it is this day, <sup>39</sup> know therefore today, and lay it to your heart, that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other. <sup>40</sup> Therefore you shall keep his statutes and his commandments, which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land that the LORD your God is giving you for all time.” <sup>41</sup> Then Moses set apart three cities in the east beyond the Jordan, <sup>42</sup> that the manslayer might flee there, anyone who kills his neighbor unintentionally, without being at enmity with him in time past; he may flee to one of these cities and save his life: <sup>43</sup> Bezer in the wilderness on the tableland for the Reubenites, Ramoth in Gilead for the Gadites, and Golan in Bashan for the Manassites. <sup>44</sup> This is the law that Moses set before the people of Israel. <sup>45</sup> These are the testimonies, the statutes, and the rules, which Moses spoke to the people of Israel when they came out of Egypt, <sup>46</sup> beyond the Jordan in the valley opposite Beth-peor, in the land of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon, whom Moses and the people of Israel defeated when they came out of Egypt. <sup>47</sup> And they took possession of his land and the land of Og, the king of Bashan, the two kings of the Amorites, who lived to the east beyond the Jordan; <sup>48</sup> from Aroer, which is on the edge of the Valley of the Arnon, as far as Mount Sirion (that is, Hermon), <sup>49</sup> together with all the Arabah on the east side of the Jordan as far as the Sea of the Arabah, under the slopes of Pisgah.

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### Moses warns Israel

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Moses warns Israel to keep the LORD'S laws and commandments, not to add or take from them and keep their soul diligently so they do not forget the things that they have seen when they enter the Promised Land and take possession of it and remember the LORD is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

Israel was not to:

- Let the things they have seen concerning the LORD depart from their heart.
- Make carved images in the form of any figure, male or female, or of any animal, winged bird, fish or anything that creeps on the ground.
- Bow down and worship the sun, the moon, the stars or all the host of heaven.
- Forget the covenant the LORD made with this generation.

**NOTE:** Israel was not to worship creation because the LORD is the creator and has given creation to all people under the heavens (Deut. 4:22).

Moses calls heaven and earth as a witness against Israel telling them they would be utterly destroyed and scattered among the nations from the land that they are about to go and possess, if their children and their children's children act corruptly when they grow old by making a carved image in the form of anything or do what is evil in the sight of the LORD and provoke Him to anger. He reminds Israel that those who had held a fast to the LORD at Baal-peor are alive today and they saw the plague from the LORD that killed twenty-four thousand Israelites because they began to whore with the daughters of Moab and had sacrificed and bowed down to their gods (Num. 25:1-9).

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### **The LORD is a consuming fire, a jealous God**

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The word jealous carries two ideas, one good and one bad. Good jealousy is to be protective, watchful and trusting of someone. Bad jealousy is to be envious, covetous, resentful and bitter. When God is spoken of as being jealous it carries the idea that God's only desire for His people is for their well-being so His wrath and judgment falls upon any nation that brings harm upon His people and should His own people act corruptly or turn to other gods (i.e., commit spiritual adultery against God) they bring God's judgment upon themselves. It is very much like a man who is deeply in love with his wife and she betrays him by constantly sleeping with another man.

The husband of course is not only going to stop buying her gifts and showering her with presents, but is also going to withdraw any favours he has been giving his wife. Likewise, it is with God when his people act corruptly and betray Him by turning to other gods, He withdraws his protective watchfulness, His trust and His blessings.

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### **Israel was to be a testimony to all nations**

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Moses tells Israel if they keep the LORD'S laws it would be their wisdom in the sight of all nations, the nations would say of Israel, "they are a great and wise nation, an understanding people, there is no other great nation that has statutes and rules so righteous as all the law Israel has", and Israel would say, "there is no other great nation that has a God so near to it as Israel's God is to us whenever we call upon him?"

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### **Mount Horeb: (also called Mount Sinai)**

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Moses reminds Israel of the day they stood before the LORD at Mount Horeb (Mount Sinai), by telling them that the LORD told him to gather the people to hear the LORD'S words that they may learn to fear Him, so he assembled them before the LORD at Horeb. They stood at the foot of the mountain, while it burned with fire to the heart of heaven wrapped in a cloud of darkness and the LORD spoke to them out of the midst of the fire. They heard the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a voice, and the LORD declared to Israel his covenant, the Ten Commandments written on two tablets of stone which he commanded Moses at that time to teach Israel, so they would keep and do them when they entered the land they are about to go over to possess.

The LORD tells Israel that He has taken them and brought them out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be a people of his own inheritance, as they are this day (Deut. 4:20) and that He would not permit Moses to enter the Promised Land (Deut. 4:21-22).

- **Deuteronomy 4:21-22** Furthermore, the LORD was angry with me because of you, and he swore that I should not cross the Jordan, and that I should not enter the good land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance. <sup>22</sup> For I must die in this land; I must not go over the Jordan. But you shall go over and take possession of that good land.

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## Israel a unique nation

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Moses asks Israel, has any God ever attempted to take a nation for himself, from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders and by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm or by great deeds of terror? Did any people ever hear the voice of a God speaking out of the midst of a fire, as Israel has heard and still live, has such a great thing as this has ever happened or ever been heard of since the day that God created man on the earth, Moses asks the people these questions to show Israel that they are a unique people to the LORD their God. Moses reminds the people the LORD did all these things for Israel in Egypt before their eyes so that they would know that the LORD is God and there is no other besides him.

Out of heaven the LORD let Israel hear His voice that he might discipline them and on earth the LORD let Israel see his great fire and they heard his words out of the midst of the fire. He did these things because he loved Israel's fathers and chose their offspring after them, by His own presence, by his great power He brought Israel out of Egypt, and drove out before Israel nations greater and mightier than themselves (Sihon and Og kings of the Amorites) to give their land to Israel for an inheritance and establish in their heart that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other.

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## Israel was to teach their children

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If the fathers of Israel make known God's commandments and His laws to their children and their children's children and they keep them it would go well with them and their children and they would live a long life in the land that the LORD their God is giving them

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## Cities of refuge

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Moses set apart three cities of refuge on the opposite side of the Jordan River to the Promised Land (the east side). The cities of refuge were for the manslayer to flee too. A manslayer was anyone who had killed their neighbour unintentionally and without having any enmity toward them. The cities were to protect them from anyone seeking revenge and until they could be judged fairly by the people. Following are the three cities that were set aside as cities of refuge.

1. Bezer in the wilderness on the tableland for the Reubenites.
2. Ramoth in Gilead for the Gadites.
3. Golan in Bashan for the Manassites.

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## God's promise to Israel

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Moses tells Israel that if they and their future generations act corruptly before the LORD and turn to other gods the LORD will be scatter them amongst the nations and only a few will remain in their land. But the LORD gives them the following promise: if they seek God with all their heart and all their mind while they are living amongst these foreign nations who act corruptly and worship other gods they will find the LORD their God when they are in tribulation in the latter days and they will return to the LORD their God and obey His voice, because the LORD their God is a merciful God. He will not leave them or destroy them or forget the covenant with their fathers that he swore to them (Deut. 4:25-31).

**How stunning is this:** today we look back over history and see that Israel did forsake the LORD their God, they did commit gross sins and they did rebel against the faithful prophets of the LORD and led their children astray. The LORD kept His promise and used Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon as His servant not only to destroy the city of Jerusalem, the temple of God and bring the farming land of Israel and Judah to ruin, but also to take Israel captive for seventy years. At this time Israel and Judah (two rebellious nations) were scattered amongst the nations but at the end of the seventy-year captivity returned as one united nation to their beloved city Jerusalem and rebuilt the temple and are still returning to Jerusalem even today. Sadly they did not recognize their Messiah when he came to them, but even that is in God's sovereign and eternal plan and the day is coming when God will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they will mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn (Zech. 12:10-14).

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### Here is great comfort

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Though we may not understand why things happen as they do we can be confident that somehow in God's eternal wisdom and eternal foreknowledge man's free will works within God sovereign will. It matters not what nations might do or how corrupt and godless they become God in his eternal foreknowledge has already seen it and purposed His eternal plan accordingly.

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### CONCLUSION

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Israel is in the land of king Sihon and king Og (two kings of the Amorites) who Israel defeated on the opposite side of the Jordan River to the Promised Land (the east side). Prior to crossing the River Jordan and entering the Promises Land Moses spoke to all the people of Israel the things concerning Israel's history, the Exodus from Egypt, the wilderness journeys and the laws of the LORD.

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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