

The Dangers in Abundance

Deuteronomy 31: 19-21

Our text comes at a critical time for the nation of Israel. God had chosen Moses to lead the people out of bondage in Egypt toward the Promised Land. Due to disobedience, Moses had been forbidden to make the crossing into Canaan. He was now nearing the end of life and Joshua had been chosen to lead the people into the Promised Land.

Although they would enjoy great and abundant blessing in Canaan, they would be tempted to abandon their faith in the Lord for the gods of the Canaanites. God knew they would eventually turn their backs on Him in search of other gods and idols. Prior to his death, Moses reveals words of wisdom and warning from the Lord, given to the people.

This may seem an odd passage to consider in our day, but I am convinced it is relevant and needful. Last week we celebrated Thanksgiving. There is no doubt that God has blessed us with a land of abundance and untold blessings. However, much like the nation of Israel, we too have turned our backs on the Lord. America's abundance has become her downfall. We have become proud and arrogant, refusing to acknowledge the good hand of God in our midst. Those who embrace Christ by faith and share the Gospel are viewed as out of touch and a hindrance to progress. Few are genuinely thankful to the Lord for His goodness in our lives. Like Israel of old, our abundance has created greed, arrogance, and rebellion. I want to consider the [insights](#) of this text as we discuss: [The Dangers in Abundance](#).

I. The Testimony of the LORD (19) – God gave Moses a song to rehearse before the people. The song is recorded in the next chapter and would serve as an enduring testimony of the Lord. This testimony would remind them of:

A. God's Word (19a) – [Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel.](#) The song God gave to His people would actually be recorded in Scripture as a portion of the divinely inspired Word. Moses was instructed to teach this song (literally God's Word) to the people, making them very familiar with its message. It would be several generations in the future before the people as a whole would rebel against God, but even then they would not be able to claim ignorance. God had given them a word of warning and fully expected them to live according to His divine precepts.

- I realize we must use caution when comparing Israel to the church and making application for our lives. However, the fundamental principle remains the same: just as Israel of old, we too have received the Word of God. In fact we have much more to give account for, having received

the entire revelation of God. America has more Bibles per capita than any other nation in the world, and yet most are unfamiliar with it. A large majority of Americans may agree that the Bible is the Word of God, and yet they are uninterested in its message or living according to its precepts. Like Israel, America is unable to claim ignorance in regard to the Word of God.

B. God's Witness (19b) – [put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel](#). God knew the people would eventually turn from Him, seeking their own way while serving other gods. When that time came, His Word, and this song in particular, would be a witness against them. They would know it by heart, learning it from childhood, and yet they would abandon their faith and serve other gods.

- The Word continues to stand as a witness today. Although we have entered a new covenant by grace in Christ, we are still expected to live according to the Word of God. It stands as a witness to God's holiness and our utter depravity. It reveals man's inability to obtain righteousness within himself. It declares Jesus Christ as the way of salvation for all men. Although the majority has rejected the Lord and His Word, America stands without excuse because we have the witness of God's Word. The Word of God will serve as the standard in judgment. [John 12:48 – He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.](#)

II. The Iniquity of the People (20) – God spoke to Moses of the coming iniquity within Israel. Sadly there is a great parallel to our modern society. Notice:

A. The Setting (20a) – [For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swore unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey](#). God reveals to Moses that when the people enter the land He had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, a land of flowing abundance, they would rebel against Him. God was faithful to His promise. He brought them into the land of their dreams, a land that offered everything they needed to survive. Israel was blessed beyond measure and yet they abandoned their faith.

- Does that not sound familiar to America? We have more than we could possibly need. We are blessed beyond measure, with more materially and financially than any other nation. One cannot deny that God has been gracious to us! Having received all this, one would think we would be grateful and submissive to the Lord, but the opposite is true in our day. Most don't even recognize the blessing of God in their lives. Few take time to worship Him, and many in America refuse to embrace His Son in salvation!

B. The Satisfaction (20b) – *and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat.* God spoke of a time when the people had inhabited the land for many years and had experienced its abundance. They will have literally become fat from the abundant harvests of the land. One would think this would have produced thankfulness and gratitude, but it would only generate a desire for more. They would become a people who served the lusts of the flesh and carnal desires rather than offering praise and worship to the God who had blessed them so abundantly.

- If that doesn't describe America, I don't know what does! We have become a people with an insatiable appetite for more. Few ever find real happiness and contentment. Their lives are driven by the desire to possess more. They seek satisfaction in the things that please the flesh. I am sure many enjoyed a meal of abundance last week and never took the time to thank the Lord for His blessing. We are such a materialistic society that Sunday is no longer viewed as the Lord's Day. It has been reduced to another day within the week to earn a profit. Society is driven by the dollar and the stock market. How do you imagine God feels as He looks upon our pursuit for more and more, while we never offer any worship or praise for His goodness? The majority today is much more concerned with their material wellbeing than they are the spiritual needs in their lives.

C. The Sin (20c) – *then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant.* After inheriting the land of promise, and becoming fat from its abundance, the people would reject the Lord and turn to other gods. While enjoying the goodness He provided, they make their way to the groves and high places to worship false gods and idols of their imagination. They are happy to received God's goodness, and yet engage in gross sin at the same time.

- Isn't that tragic? We look at this passage and wonder how a people could do such a thing, and yet America is guilty of the same. There is no doubt that God has blessed America. Had His mighty hand not been upon us, we would have already perished. He continues to bless us, but most are consumed with the gods of this world. They may not have an idol on the mantle, but it may be in the garage. They may not attend a house of worship for a false God, but they worship human ability. Of those who do believe in life beyond the grave, most deny that Jesus is the way of salvation.

- We have become a people of idolatry and worship of the gods of pleasure. Billions are spent each year to satisfy the flesh. God has been rejected and most resist any reference to Him in public. We are living in a land that has embraced wholesale sin on a national level.

III. The Sovereignty of the LORD (21) – Finally God reveals His sovereign knowledge and dealings with Israel. There is great insight for us as well. Consider:

A. The Prophecy (21a) – *And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness.* While many of them likely dismissed these words of warning, God knew they would come to pass. He knew them better than they knew themselves, as well as their future. His Word was sure and it would certainly come to pass.

- I don't claim to be a scholar, but I am unable to find any prophetic words specific to the United States. In fact, I am convinced she will be rendered irrelevant in the end times. However, God knows our future. He knows the path America will take and the hearts of her people. I do believe we would be foolish to think that God would punish Israel and allow unconfessed sin and utter rebellion to reign in America without judgment!

B. The Pretense (21b) – *for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed.* Here is the great tragedy in Israel's coming demise. These words of warning were familiar to them when they faced judgment. They had studied them, even memorizing them, and yet they followed the path God had warned against. Knowing what the consequences of sin would be, they chose to continue their sinful path.

- As I have already said: we are not without a witness either. While I agree, the Word of God is not known as it once was, many today are familiar with the Word. Many are aware of the holiness of God and the consequences of sin, and yet they continue their sinful path of rebellion. Preachers and committed Christians are viewed as fanatics who only want to spoil everyone's fun. America was founded on the Word of God, and yet she has, for the most part, rejected it!

C. The Perception (21c) – *for I know their imagination which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I swear.* God knew the hearts of the people and the lusts they harbored. He knew they would rebel against Him before He ever brought them into Canaan. He was not caught by surprise at their rebellion and worship of false gods.

- As bad as the situation is America, we must bear in mind that God is not unaware of the sinfulness we face. In fact, He knew we would progress to this point before the Pilgrims ever landed at Plymouth Rock. He sees and knows the history of this nation from beginning to end. He is Lord and sovereign over all. As bad as it is, God's plan for America will be fulfilled.

- I am not pleased with the course of our nation, but I do rejoice that we serve a sovereign God. Judgment will come to America, but the saved are secure in His mighty hand. We are promised a home in heaven throughout eternity. We cannot know what we will face in the future, but God knows and He is more than able to keep us through whatever we face. The church will continue to face persecution, but she will never perish! We must remain strong in the faith!

Conclusion: This has not been a message that lends itself to rejoicing, but it is needful for our day. You will have to admit that we need a spiritual awakening and a return to our Lord. I am convinced that the church is America's only hope. If we will seek the Lord and commit to serving Him faithfully, we can bring effective change. It will not be easy, but we must submit to the Lord's will and strive to serve Him in the midst of adversity. One thing is certain: we cannot continue to course we are on and avoid judgment. May we as God's children seek Him for the pressing needs of our day!

If judgment comes to America before the Lord's return, Christ will be our only hope and security. Apart from Him, there will be no hope and no help. God has spoken through His Word today. Do you know Christ as your Savior? Have you responded to the call for salvation? If not, I urge you to come to Him today. If you wait until the storm is raging, you may be unwilling to do so then. Come while He is speaking to you in the quietness of this moment.